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Special Attention:  
All Comprehensive Grant Program Public  
Housing Agencies and Indian Housing  
Authorities; Public Housing Office Directors;  
Administrators, Offices of Native American  
Programs; All Field Office Modernization  
Coordinators (Public Housing); All Field Office  
Facilities Management Personnel (ONAP)

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## **Notice PIH 96-82 (HA)**

Issued: October 11, 1996

Expires: October 31, 1997

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Cross References: Comprehensive Grant  
Program Handbook 7485.3

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Subject: New software for review of Comprehensive Grant Program Formula  
Characteristics Report

1. **Purpose.** Prior to running the formula that provides Housing Authorities (HA) their annual formula share under the Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP), HUD provides an opportunity for HAs to review the data used for the formula calculation. This Notice provides information and instructions for a new automated process to review, validate, and/or modify data used for the purpose of determining the amount of funding for HAs participating in the Comprehensive Grant Program; and for sending the report to the HAs electronically. Electronic submission of the report reduces the amount of time spent handling paper; eliminates the possibility of documents or diskettes getting lost; reduces the amount of data entry required at the Field Office; and allows more time for Housing Authorities to review Formula Characteristic Reports.
2. **Background.** The Office of Public and Indian Housing is introducing two new pieces of software that will assist Public and Indian Housing Authorities and Field Offices in reviewing and ensuring the accuracy of the Formula Characteristics Report (FCR). FCR data are used in the CGP to determine an HA's annual formula share of the national allocation of CGP dollars.
3. **Supplemental Information.** The two new pieces of software are: 1) the Formula Characteristics Verification Software (FoCVS) and 2) the Formula Characteristics module of the Integrated Business System (IBS). The HAs will use FoCVS, and the Field Offices will use the Formula Characteristics module of the IBS.

FoCVS is a small, user-friendly system designed to electronically transmit FCRs between the CGP Housing Authorities and the Field Offices. FoCVS includes project-related information and historic modernization funding data. Some additional questions are also included to collect data pertaining to lead-based paint activities and the status of developments with regard to meeting the Modernization Standards.

The Formula Characteristics module of the IBS is a new module that allows Field Offices to electronically receive FCRs from the HAs and approve accurate data. If

discrepancies are found, the Field Office will resolve the discrepancies with the HAs and make revisions to the data directly in the software. The Field Office will approve the Formula Characteristics Report electronically, which will update the IBS database with this information. This updated data will then be used as input into the running of the CGP formula.

4. Submission Deadlines. Forty-five calendar days are designated for the review, validation, and/or modification, and submission of the FCR by CGP Housing Authorities. HAs that do not have the technology required to utilize FoCVS must contact the Field Office to request paper copies of the FCR. Reports must be received by the Field Office by close of business on December 16, 1996. If transmitting electronically, an HA can transmit as late as December 15, 1996 to meet the deadline. Paper reports, however, must be mailed several days earlier to ensure receipt in the Field Office by December 16, 1996. If the HA does not submit the requested information by the due date, HUD will use the data it has available, and the HA has no appeal rights based on data error.
5. Electronic Submission. In the attached set of Frequently Asked Questions, the computer hardware requirements to utilize FoCVS are defined. This equipment is an eligible CGP cost for those HAs not already having the appropriate hardware.
6. Modernization Questions. Some additional questions have been incorporated into FoCVS to collect data pertaining to lead-based paint activities and the status of developments with regard to meeting the Modernization Standards. Answers to these questions will not affect the CGP formula calculation.

See Attachment 1, *Frequently Asked Questions* for further information.

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Kevin Emanuel Marchman, Acting Assistant  
Secretary for Public and Indian  
Housing

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** What costs to the HA are involved with submitting electronically?  
**Answer:** FoCVS will be distributed to each Housing Authority at no cost to the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority, however, must have the minimum hardware and software requirements to operate the software. This equipment is an eligible CGP cost for those HAs not already having the appropriate hardware.

**Question:** What are the minimum system and user requirements for FoCVS?  
**Answer:**

- IBM compatible computer (minimum 386 processor)
- 8 MB RAM
- Windows 3.1 or Windows 95
- a mouse
- windows skills
- SprintMail software
- a 2400 baud modem and associated communications software (9600 baud preferred) SprintMail is compatible with all modems except the Packard/Bell 28.8 combination modem/soundcard.

A free copy of the SprintMail software can be obtained by calling 1-800-366-6827. If you are currently using SprintMail for MTCS, you will not need an additional copy of the software for FoCVS.

**Question:** Will FoCVS be used by all Housing Authorities?  
**Answer:** This software will initially be used by CGP Housing Authorities. Future use of this software by other agencies is under consideration.

**Question:** How is FoCVS going to be distributed?  
**Answer:** Detailed instructions will be sent to each Housing Authority and Field Office explaining how to access the software. The software will be electronically distributed through HUD's Public and Indian Housing Communications Bulletin Board System which is accessible by the Housing Authorities. Hotline support will also be available to answer any questions.

**Question:** How will the HAs receive the formula characteristic data?  
**Answer:** All data will be transmitted to the HAs through the use of SprintMail mailboxes. When the HA enters FoCVS, the software will prompt the user to check the SprintMail mailbox. Once the Formula Characteristics data are sent by Headquarters, checking the mailbox will automatically populate FoCVS with the HA's specific data.

**Question:** When will the software and training materials be available?

**Answer:** The Formula Characteristics Verification Software will be on the bulletin board and available for use on October 28, 1996. The target date of availability for the IBS Formula Characteristics module is November 22, 1996. The target dates for mailing out the training materials and more specific instructions for the process are as follows:

FoCVS:	October 21
IBS Formula Characteristics module:	November 19

Upon receipt of the materials, HAs may access the software and begin the reviewing process.

**Question:** What is the review period for the HA?

**Answer:** Beginning November 1, 1996, the HAs will have 45 calendar days to review, validate, and/or modify, and transmit the Formula Characteristics Reports. Reports must be received by the Field Office no later than close of business on Monday, December 16, 1996. It is the responsibility of the HA to verify successful electronic transmission of the report. If transmitting electronically, an HA can transmit as late as December 15, 1996 to meet the deadline. Paper reports, however, must be mailed several days earlier to ensure receipt in the Field Office by December 16, 1996. It is the responsibility of the HA to verify that the paper copy of the FCR was received by the Field Office. If the HA does not submit the requested information by the due date, HUD will use the data it has available, and the HA has no appeal rights based on data error. Therefore, the HA should verify receipt of all mailed reports by the Field Office.

**Question:** How does the HA know that the Field Office received the Formula Characteristics Report?

**Answer:** The HA will need to access FoCVS twenty-four hours after the Formula Characteristics Report has been transmitted to verify that the transmission was successful and that the report was received by the Field Office. The system will prompt the user to check the SprintMail mailbox where confirmation messages or appropriate error messages will be displayed regarding the transmission of information to the IBS mainframe.

**Question:** What if an HA does not have the technology to use FoCVS?

**Answer:** If an HA is unable to submit electronically due to limitations in technology, the HA must request a paper copy of the FCR from the Field Office to reflect necessary revisions. If an HA is unable to submit electronically and no revisions are necessary, the HA shall return the FCR to the Field Office with the additional questions answered. If an HA is unable to submit electronically and revisions are necessary, the HA shall return the FCR to the Field Office with the changes and additional questions answered.

**Question:** How does the Field Office obtain a copy of an HA's FCR?

**Answer:** Field Office personnel may print a copy of the FCR from the Reports module of the IBS. This report will be available in the IBS on October 28, 1996. Reports must be printed and mailed by the Field Office in a timely manner upon request by the Housing Authority.

Questions pertaining to the Comprehensive Grant Program or requests for program assistance should be directed to the Field Office. HAs should contact the Modernization Coordinators (Public Housing) or Facilities Management staff (ONAP).