

CHAPTER 5.0: RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Accurate record keeping and reporting are crucial to the successful management of your CDBG-funded activities. The *failure to maintain* adequate documentation of CDBG-funded activities continues to be one of the most serious administrative issues undermining program performance and regulatory compliance of subrecipients in the CDBG Entitlement program.

Without adequate record keeping, you and your grantee cannot track performance against your contract goals and your grantee cannot provide adequate management support in its oversight of your activities. Insufficient documentation and reporting on your part leads to serious monitoring findings, and those findings are likely to be much more difficult to resolve in cases where records are missing, inaccurate, or otherwise deficient.

It is very important, therefore, that you adhere to the record-keeping and reporting requirements of the Entitlement program and other pertinent regulations. Adequate documentation means knowing:

- What information needs to be collected and why.
- When that information should be collected (and how often).
- How the information should be acquired, organized, and stored.
- How the information should be reported.
- The required retention period for records.

This chapter addresses the minimum standards for documentation with respect to general record-keeping requirements, file organization and maintenance, retention of records, access to records, and reporting requirements. The end of the chapter contains a comprehensive chart identifying key records for each of three record types: administrative records, financial records and project records.

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AS YOU READ THIS CHAPTER, THINK ABOUT ...

1. Whether your agency has a *clearly defined process* for acquiring, organizing, storing, retrieving, and reporting information, especially about your CDBG-funded activities.
2. How you can *strengthen your documentation and reporting systems* to meet the requirements outlined in this chapter.
3. *Who in your agency is responsible* for the majority of record-keeping and reporting tasks, and whether they are properly trained and supported.
4. How you can *streamline your record-keeping and reporting procedures* by standardizing the process and removing duplication of records from your system.
5. How your agency might begin to automate (computerize) some of the record-keeping and reporting tasks if it has not already done so.

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5.1 General Record-Keeping Requirements

Every subrecipient is required to establish and maintain at least three major categories of records:

- **Administrative records:** These are files and records that apply to the overall administration of the subrecipient's CDBG activities. They include the following:
 - Personnel files.
 - Property management files.
 - General program files: files relating to the subrecipient's application to the grantee, the Subrecipient Agreement, program policies and guidelines, correspondence with grantee and reports, etc.
 - Legal files: articles of incorporation, bylaws of the organization, tax status, board minutes, contracts and other agreements.
- **Financial records:** These include the chart of accounts, a manual on accounting procedures, accounting journals and ledgers, source documentation (purchase orders, invoices, canceled checks, etc.), procurement files, bank account records, financial reports, audit files, etc.
- **Project/case files:** These files document the activities undertaken with respect to specific individual beneficiaries, property owners, and/or properties.

Since previous chapters of this handbook have provided information about the elements necessary for financial and general administrative records, this chapter focuses primarily on CDBG requirements as they relate to project files or case files. Exhibit 5-1 at the end of the chapter provides a checklist of the most important files that should be maintained by both subrecipients and grantees for monitoring purposes.

The **general CDBG standard for record keeping** is that records must be *accurate, complete and orderly*. A grantee must establish the specific requirements for record keeping in its Subrecipient Agreement (24 CFR 570.503(b)(2)). Grantees frequently specify record keeping requirements for their subrecipients that are very similar to those found in 24 CFR 570.506, so that for the activities undertaken by subrecipients, the grantee will be able to demonstrate compliance with all applicable program requirements. Therefore, a subrecipient should anticipate having to maintain records sufficient to:

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Provide a **full description of each activity** assisted with CDBG funds, including the location where the activities occur, the amount of CDBG funds budgeted, obligated, and expended for the activity and the regulatory provision under which the activity is eligible.

- Demonstrate that each activity undertaken meets one of the **National Objectives** for the CDBG program (24 CFR 570.208 and particularly the record-keeping requirements at 570.506(b)(1) - (12)).
- Show that the subrecipient has made all necessary **determinations required for the eligibility of certain activities** under the CDBG program, including but not limited to 24 CFR 570.201(f) for **interim assistance**, 570.201(i)(2) for **relocation**, 570.201(p) for **technical assistance**, 570.202(b)(3) for **loans to refinance existing indebtedness secured by a property being rehabilitated**, 570.204 for **activities carried out by CBDOS**, and 570.206(f) for the **preparation of applications for other Federal programs**, and 570.209 for **special economic development activities**.
- Document compliance with the program rules regarding **any change of use of real property** acquired or improved with CDBG assistance (24 CFR 570.505 and 570.503(b)(7)(i) and (ii)).
- Demonstrate compliance with the program requirements regarding **acquisition, displacement, relocation, and replacement housing** (24 CFR 570.606).
- Detail the subrecipient's **fair housing** activities and **equal opportunity** compliance.
- Maintain all necessary information relative to the other program requirements specified in Subpart K of 24 CFR Part 570 (which includes **labor standards; national flood insurance; employment and contracting opportunities; lead-based paint; use of debarred, suspended, or ineligible contractors or subrecipients; and conflict of interest**).

It should be noted that subrecipients are not responsible for providing documentation for the initial environmental review of an activity, because they cannot assume the grantee's environmental responsibilities (24 CFR 570.503(b)(5)). However, actions that a subrecipient provides to the grantee in order for it to carry out these responsibilities and other actions the subrecipient takes to abate or address environmental findings must be documented.

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5.2 File Organization and Maintenance

A subrecipient should structure its project/case files and other records to comply with the general requirements specified in the preceding section and to facilitate preparation of progress and other reports, including all submissions necessary for the grantee's input into the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) and its Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

In setting up (or reviewing the adequacy of) its record-keeping system, a subrecipient should use this handbook to develop a list of all the items for which it must maintain documentation on a case/project basis and/or an activity basis. For example, if a subrecipient is carrying out a housing rehabilitation program using private contractors, **each project case file** should contain appropriate records, including:

- The owner's application for assistance, including the address of the property.
- Household size and income documentation for the owner and other households in the structure (if a multi-unit building) and other information to determine program eligibility and the appropriate level of financial assistance (underwriting).
- Other demographic information on the anticipated and actual beneficiaries of the activity for this project/case.
- The work write-up on the property.
- Evidence of any required owner contribution or private loan match.
- The financial assistance agreement between the subrecipient and owner (specifying levels of assistance, intended uses for funds, matching requirements, general program requirements, repayment and recapture procedures, requirements for occupancy by low- and moderate-income households if rental property, etc.).
- Evidence of liens to secure loan.
- Documentation of contractor solicitation and selection.
- Documentation of rent affordability, where applicable.
- A copy of executed construction contract, with all necessary provisions.

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- Documentation of compliance, as applicable, with historic preservation, flood insurance, lead-based paint, Davis-Bacon, relocation/anti-displacement, and other relevant program rules.
- Evidence of the subrecipient's periodic on-site inspection and sign-off on rehabilitation work, including final inspection.
- Copies of all change orders, with proper authorization.
- Records of disbursements made for completed and approved work. (In regard to this last item, a subrecipient must ensure that the data in its project files agree with its financial records.)

For each type of activity undertaken, a subrecipient in consultation with the grantee should determine the comparable data that must be maintained in the individual case files and establish a system for ensuring that every file contains the necessary information. Although the list will vary from activity to activity, each project or case file should include documentation of the **National Objective** being met, the **characteristics and location of beneficiaries**, the **eligibility of the activity**, the **compliance with special program requirements**, the **allowability of the costs**, and the **status of the case/project**.

A subrecipient must also devote attention to implementing an efficient method for compiling **cumulative data** on its activities **for inclusion in periodic reports** required by the grantee. The subrecipient should develop **logs for recording and totaling programmatic data** (by type of activity, for units of service, numbers of beneficiaries, etc.) as cases are initiated and as they progress to avoid searching through all of its individual case files to obtain aggregate statistics every time a progress report is due. The establishment of such logs at the commencement of a CDBG activity, based on the reporting requirements specified by the grantee (see **Section 5.5** in the following section), can save a subrecipient considerable time and effort over the course of the activity.

With an automated reporting system, it is critical to structure the computer database to permit the collection and manipulation of all data elements (i.e., characteristics of projects and beneficiaries) necessary for the production of currently required reports and reports that may be desired in the future. This requires a careful appraisal of current and anticipated future operations and an assessment of the "interface" between the computer system and the individuals who will input the data and those who will use the generated reports.

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5.3 Retention of Records

To avoid monitoring findings and facilitate audit reviews, subrecipients are required to retain their records for extended periods of time, even though an activity may be completed for some time:

- **For all subrecipients:** 24 CFR 85.42 as modified by 570.502(a)(16), or 24 CFR 84.53(b) as modified by 570.502(b)(3)(ix) (A) and (B), as appropriate:

In general, **records are to be retained for 4 years** from the date of submission of the grantee's CAPER in which the specific activity is reported for the last time, unless there is litigation, claims, audit, negotiation, or other actions involving the records, which has started before expiration of the 4-year period. In such cases, the records must be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it or the end of the regular 4-year period, whichever is longer.

5.4 Access to Records

- Representatives of the grantee, HUD, the Comptroller General of the United States, or of other authorized governmental agencies have the right of access to any pertinent records of a subrecipient to make audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcripts. (24 CFR 85.10 (e) and 84.53 (e))
- Consistent with applicable state and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, the subrecipient also must provide citizens with reasonable access to records on the past use of CDBG funds (24 CFR 570.508).

5.5 Reporting Requirements

A subrecipient's reporting requirements must be specified by the grantee in the Subrecipient Agreement (24 CFR 570.503(b)(2)). These reporting requirements must be consistent with the provisions of 24 CFR 85.40(a) and (e) and 85.41 (c) and (d) for governmental subrecipients or 24 CFR 84.51(a) for non-profit subrecipients.

Although it has broad discretion over the type and frequency of reports, **a typical grantee is likely to request three kinds of reports** from its subrecipients: information on drawdown requests, regular progress reports, and CAPER data.

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- As part of a subrecipient's periodic **drawdown requests**, all grantees should require the subrecipient to provide information on the financial status of the latter's operations, which should include (for each activity) the amount of:
 - Funds budgeted.
 - Funds received in drawdowns to date.
 - Funds obligated in most recent period and to date.
 - Funds expended in most recent period and to date.
 - Cash on hand (including program income identified as such).
 - Previous drawdowns requested but not yet received.
- Most grantees will also require regular **progress reports** from subrecipients. These reports generally will be required monthly or quarterly and will usually be designed to **track actual project accomplishments, obligations, and spending patterns against planned operations and accomplishments** as specified in the project schedule and budget portions of the Subrecipient Agreement.
- In addition, grantees will need information from their subrecipients **in connection with the grantee's input to IDIS and for preparation of its CAPER**, which it must submit to HUD. Although for some grantees the information contained in the subrecipient progress reports may be sufficient to satisfy their CAPER needs, others may need to supplement these regular reports with requests to their subrecipients for special reports. In IDIS and in its CAPER, the grantee must provide the following information on each CDBG activity funded:
 - The activity's name, matrix code, description, and location.
 - The National Objective being met.
 - The amount expended during the program year.
 - The total cost of each multi-unit housing and 570.203(b) economic development activity.

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- The amount of unliquidated obligations for each public service and planning and administration activity if CDBG funds are not disbursed during the 90 days after the end of the grantee's program year.
- Activity status and specific units of accomplishments, including compliance with the applicable National Objective, during each program year.
- For rehabilitation activities, the CAPER also requires information (organized separately for single-units and each multi-unit property) on:
 - Activity delivery costs expended in carrying out rehabilitation may be included as part of the cost of the rehab activity or may be reported as a separate activity.
 - Number of units proposed and completed.
 - Number of units in each multi-unit structure initially occupied by low- and moderate-income households following rehab.
 - For multi-unit properties, the amount proposed and expended from CDBG, other public, and private sources.
- The CAPER also requires data on:
 - The characteristics of beneficiaries of direct benefit activities (expressed in total households/persons assisted, number of extremely low-income, low-income, and moderate-income households/persons, and ethnic characteristics of beneficiaries).
 - The source and amount of program income received during the program year.
 - Number and total dollar amount of loans outstanding.
 - CDBG-acquired parcels of property to be sold.
 - Households displaced in connection with CDBG activities.

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As mentioned in **Section 5.2 in the preceding section**, a subrecipient should **carefully identify its complete CDBG reporting responsibilities as part of the process of designing its record-keeping system** for CDBG-funded activities.

A final area of reporting not discussed in this chapter concerns **annual audits**. This subject is addressed in detail in **Chapter 7.0**.

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Exhibit 5–1: Record-Keeping Checklist for Tracking Activities

- This form should be initiated when grantee awards a subgrant to a subrecipient.
- The date at the top should indicate the last time the checklist was updated.
- This form should be updated after internal project review, after monitoring visits by the grantee, or when key documents are modified or received from/sent to the grantee.

Date Checklist Last Updated: _____

Documents to be Maintained	Document Source		Status	
	Source	Date	Complete?	Location
Project Application			Y N	
<input type="checkbox"/> Original Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Amendments to Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Approval of Amendments	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Pre-Award Documentation			Y N	
<input type="checkbox"/> Articles of Incorporation/Bylaws	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit Determination	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> List of Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization to Request Funds	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorized Official	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Chart	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Résumés of Chief Admin. and Chief Fiscal Officers	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Statement and Audit	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conflict of Interest Statement	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan for Compliance with National Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lobbying Statement	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Subrecipient Agreement			Y N	
<input type="checkbox"/> Subgrant/Subaward Amount	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Date of Subgrant/Subaward	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget by Task/Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule by Task/Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard Provisions Included?	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Amendments (Dates)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____

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Documents to be Maintained	Document Source		Status		Location
	Source	Date	Complete?		
			Y	N	
Financial Records					
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Approved Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization Letter/Signatures	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management Systems (accounting books, software, reporting systems)	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Chart of Accounts	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> List of Source Documents to be Maintained	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Status Report (total budget, amount expended, unliquidated obligations, unobligated balance)	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Drawdown Request Forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Drawdown Request Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Executed Contracts/Bid Docs	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Minutes for Approval of Contracts or Bids	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Most Recent Audit Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Certification of Insurance Coverage/Bonding	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> CDBG Payroll Records	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Construction Payroll Records (Davis-Bacon applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Cost Allocation Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Financial Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Project Monitoring and Control			Y	N	
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed Monitoring Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> National Objectives Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible Activities Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Activity Status Report (scope, cost, schedule/actual vs. agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Drawdown Requests/Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Log/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Regulatory Compliance File			Y	N	
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Documents to be Maintained	Document Source		Status	
	Source	Date	Complete?	Location
<input type="checkbox"/> HUD Monitoring Results	<input type="checkbox"/> HUD/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Real Property Inventory, Management and Change of Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-discrimination, Fair Housing, EEO, ADA/504 Certifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Procurement, Bonding, Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition, Displacement, Relocation, Replacement Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Loan Status Reports (Economic Development, Rehabilitation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient/Grantee	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Flood Insurance Purchase	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Other Project/Activity Files			Y N	
<input type="checkbox"/> Plans and Specs (rehabilitation, historic preservation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Orientation and Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Case Records	<input type="checkbox"/> Subrecipient	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	_____

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Exercise for Chapter 5.0 — Record-Keeping and Reporting Requirements

Review the following examples and indicate whether the approach being taken is adequate or inadequate. Where you feel the approach is “inadequate,” explain why and what might be done differently.

1. John Smith, the program director for the CDBG-funded housing rehabilitation activities of Housing Alliance, Inc., worked diligently with his staff to ensure that every case file contained the information specified in the Subrecipient Agreement for necessary records. As a result, in preparing periodic progress reports, Mr. Smith was able to review each case file and be confident of finding all the data necessary to be included in the reports.

Adequate?

Inadequate?

Comment: _____

2. Four years had passed since the submission of the grantee’s final Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report detailing Family Support, Inc.’s counseling services. The independent public accountant (IPA) audit performed for Family Support for the time period in question had not included any findings or questioned costs relating to this project. Joanne White, the executive director of Family Support, Inc., consequently directed her staff to discard the records of this CDBG-funded activity.

Adequate?

Inadequate?

Comment: _____

3. Delroy Blaise wanted his subrecipient agency to take advantage of the efficiencies of automated data processing for its record-keeping and reporting functions but did not have anybody on his staff with computer expertise. Therefore, he hired a computer consultant who assisted the agency in purchasing a microcomputer, wrote specific software for entering data and generating reports for all the information currently required by the grantee, and trained the staff in its use.

Adequate?

Inadequate?

Comment: _____

The answers are on next page.

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Exercise for Chapter 5.0 — Record-Keeping and Reporting Requirements (continued)

Answers to questions from preceding page

Each of the three cases on the previous page is an example of a situation where the subrecipient in all probability is in *technical compliance with the requirements* for record keeping and reporting but may not be taking sufficient action to maximize the efficiency of its operations or to avoid future problems.

1. Although John Smith has taken pains to ensure that his agency could provide the grantee with the required report data, the necessity of having to search through each case file each time a report is due might be not an efficient use of his agency's personnel resources. Mr. Smith's organization should also have developed summary sheets of the case files and chronological program logs with key characteristics, from which periodic aggregate tallies could be derived much more efficiently.
2. The 4-year retention rule for records might best be viewed as a *minimum*. It is always theoretically possible that an entity like the HUD Office of the Inspector General (OIG) or the General Accounting Office (GAO) may show up to perform an audit after the 4 years have elapsed and request access to such records in support of some questionable costs. Therefore, even after the 4 years, for your own protection, it is probably best to place the records in storage for a year or so rather than to discard or destroy them.
3. When automating record-keeping and reporting functions, a key consideration is **ongoing flexibility**. In this case, because the software was designed specifically for the *current* records/reporting requirements, if the data desired by either the subrecipient or the grantee changed, it is not clear whether the agency had the technical capacity to modify its computer system accordingly. The agency may have been better served if it had purchased a more "user friendly" generic software package that its own staff could learn to modify.

These examples have been included to remind the reader that the requirements contained in this handbook represent **minimum standards** for administrative, financial, and management systems. These minimums should not automatically become your maximums. Although HUD cannot *require* grantees and subrecipients to go beyond these regulatory standards, it is often in your agency's interest to strive for the "best management practice" possible, or to build an extra margin into your systems, in recognition of the fact that there will always be some unexpected demand on these systems or other problems that will arise over time.