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Introduction to Directives Handbook

Directives are communications relaying important information or guidance about HUD programs, policy, or operations. Directives are addressed to HUD's constituents and/or HUD employees. These communications are issued under the authority of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, even though individual directives generally are not approved by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary prior to issuance (as is currently the case with rules and certain other Federal Register publications). Because directives generally do not require Secretary or Deputy Secretary approval prior to issuance, it is imperative to clear directives within the Department to ensure coordination with existing policy, compliance with other HUD or federal actions, and consistency with Administration positions, as applicable.

Directives generally supplement or elaborate upon existing regulatory or statutory requirements that pertain to HUD programs or operations. Directives generally do not implement new binding requirements on HUD's constituents unless there is an underlying statutory or regulatory authority as the basis for a directive containing such requirements. Directives generally guide the reader toward enhanced understanding of and compliance with the subject matter of the guidance.

Directives include documents such as handbooks, mortgagee letters, and notices, but may also be other forms of communications (for example, email blasts) that provide information or guidance. The stakeholders to whom directives are issued include public housing agencies (PHAs), states, local jurisdictions, multifamily owners, lenders, and HUD employees.

HUD directives are different than Federal Register (FR) publications. The Federal Register is a vehicle through which new rules, binding policy, or revised rules and policies are announced. Items that require publication in the Federal Register are prescribed by statutes, including the Administrative Procedures Act or, at times, by executive order. The process for clearing Federal Register publications is managed by the Office of Legislation and Regulations in the Office of the General Counsel (OGC).

The Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO), together with representatives of key HUD offices, has authored this Directives Handbook to assist HUD staff in understanding what constitutes directives and how directives are drafted and formatted, how the departmental clearance process for directives works, and how governing authorities relate to directives.