U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT

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HOME Participating Jurisdiction Staff:

Since the beginning of the HOME program in 1992, the Office of Affordable Housing Programs has offered a broad range of training and technical assistance aimed at developing effective and compliant rental, homebuyer, homeowner and TBRA programs. As a result of this effort, and the everyday work experience of participating jurisdictions' and nonprofit staff, various levels of expertise in HOME program requirements have been achieved. In order to set standards for and to recognize this expertise, and to encourage further improvements in the overall level of excellence among state and local HOME program administrators, I am pleased to announce the *Certified HOME Specialist Program.*

This training and certification program will be offered to PJ and Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) staff, technical assistance providers, and HUD staff. Initially, basic certification in HOME Program regulatory requirements will be offered. Other specialty areas for certification, such as acquisition and relocation, financial management or labor standards, are planned for the future. The *Certified HOME Program Specialist – Regulations* course will use a modified 'Building HOME' primer course as its foundation. Two and one-half days of training focusing on HOME regulations will be provided followed by a certification test. The training will cover all material that will be included in the exam. The exam is comprised of short answer, true/false and multiple-choice questions, and is designed to test the attendee's knowledge of HOME program regulatory requirements. The course has been piloted twice to PJ staff, HUD staff, and HUD TA providers, and the exam, while challenging, has proven to be a fair test of program knowledge. HOME program staff completing the course and passing the exam with a minimum score of 70 percent will receive a formal certificate acknowledging their designation as a "*Certified HOME Program Specialist – Regulations*". It is hoped that this credential will be of increasing value in the future as a recognized standard of professional development and expertise. It will also qualify the recipient for priority placement in any advanced HOME program training course.

The initial delivery of the *Certified HOME Program Specialist – Regulations* training will take place in Chicago on February 28 with ten additional deliveries scheduled across the country during 2006. Registration for these classes is open nationally on a first-come, first-served basis to any state or local PJ staff person with at least one year's experience implementing HOME Program activities. In the future, these classes will also be open to CHDO and other nonprofit and public agency staff. For more information or to register for a class near you, please go to our training website at: http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/training/index.cfm.

A printed brochure with registration information will be mailed to your agency soon. You may also contact your local HUD Field Office for additional information about these sessions. In the meantime, I encourage you to visit our training website to learn more about these and other HOME program training opportunities.

Sincerely,

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Mary Kolesar
Director
Office of Affordable Housing Programs