

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Public and Indian Housing

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Special Attention of: Notice PIH 2000-50 (HA)

Public Housing Agencies; Issued: November 20, 2000  
Resident Management Corporations  
(RMCs); Hub Directors of Public Expires: November 30, 2001  
Housing; PIH Program Center

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Coordinators; Public Housing Cross References:  
Division Directors;

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Subject: Resources Available to Assist Public Housing Agencies  
Promote Energy Conservation

## 1. PURPOSE

The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) is partnering with the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Building Technology, State, and Community Programs (BTS) to promote conservation in public housing through its Rebuild America program. Rebuild America facilitates community-based partnerships that result in energy conservation projects. PIH has also contracted with the National Center of Appropriate Technology (NCAT) to maintain an energy conservation clearinghouse. The clearinghouse will provide technical resources, web site and chat room, phone-based technical support, and a quarterly newsletter. Other federal resources that provide resources useful to housing agencies considering retrofits are U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program and HUD's Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH). This Notice provides summaries of these new services for use by Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in planning their conservation efforts.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Utility costs in public housing are approximately \$1.4 billion annually with PHA-paid utilities comprising about one-quarter of a housing agency's operating costs. HUD has developed four strategies to reduce energy and water costs: Provide training, education, and outreach; Improve regulations and policies; Measure program results; and Coordinate with and leverage federal, state, and industry programs. The Department's cooperation with Rebuild America, its new conservation clearinghouse, and the availability of other federal resources work to implement these strategies.

### **3. DOE'S REBUILD AMERICA**

The U.S. Department of Energy's Rebuild America program is a voluntary network that helps community partnerships make profitable investments in existing buildings through energy-efficient technologies. Comprised of local government, property owners, residents, energy service and equipment providers, and lenders, partnerships work to enhance community development, economic revitalization, job growth, and environmental protection.

A partnership approach brings together a wide range of community organizations who pool their influence, resources, and ideas to develop practical plans to improve the energy efficiency of the local building stock - including PHA facilities. The Rebuild America program can help a PHA to form a new local partnership or identify an existing partnership in its locality.

The first step in accessing the Rebuild America program is to contact a program services representative, either through its clearinghouse at 1-800-DOE-EREC or through the web site at <http://www.rebuild.org>.

#### **What Rebuild America can do for PHAs**

Once a partnership is formed, the Rebuild America program helps its partnerships to succeed by providing a wide range of technical and business assistance. More than 30 PHAs have already formed Rebuild America partnerships to lower their energy and water costs. A member of a Rebuild America partnership has access to technical assistance, peer experiences, regional and national forums, and workshops on specific conservation issues. In addition, Rebuild America provides referrals to state and local resources to aid PHAs in planning, financing, and implementing energy and water conservation measures. Financial and technical tools, such as manuals, guidebooks, and software, are also available. Through Rebuild America's Peer Exchange Network and Business Partners program, PHAs can connect to other PHAs and organizations that have faced similar energy conservation issues.

Rebuild America partnerships can also help PHAs aggregate their purchasing power for energy and water in order to receive lower utility rates, better understand deregulation and performance contracting issues, and explore lower-cost per unit bulk purchases of energy-efficient products.

In addition to supporting specific partnerships, Rebuild America holds special events throughout the year. Rebuild America events are designed to share information on success and lessons learned and to support successful partnerships. Typical events include conferences, peer exchange workshops, and partnering events.

#### **4. CONSERVATION CLEARINGHOUSE**

Through its cooperative agreement with NCAT, a non-profit corporation that addresses the energy needs of low-income households, HUD has started an information clearinghouse specifically targeted to PHAs for planning and implementing energy and water conservation measures. Tools available through the clearinghouse will include web based technical resources, technical assistance, and a quarterly newsletter.

##### **Web-based Information Tools**

The energy clearinghouse will provide a wide range of energy and water management information and will emphasize links to HUD, Rebuild America, Energy Star, and other conservation related sites. Content available through the web site will include:

- Chat rooms for open discussion of issues, information, and sharing of solutions
- Energy and water efficiency technology basics
- Utility management basics, including discussion of baselining energy use and costs tracking
- Electric utility restructuring for PHAs, including timelines, impacts, and potential benefits
- HUD Incentive Information, such as frozen base and additional subsidy incentives
- Frequently asked questions

The energy clearinghouse web site can be accessed at <http://www.phaenergy.org>.

## **Technical Assistance**

The energy clearinghouse will provide person-to-person technical assistance provided via an Internet chat room, e-mail, and telephone. This service will help public housing agencies to evaluate and think through opportunities for utility savings in their building stock, provide a forum for peer exchange, and make available any necessary technical materials. The toll free number for the energy clearinghouse is 1-866-275-6228 (Toll Free).

## **Quarterly Newsletter**

The clearinghouse will provide a quarterly conservation newsletter that will educate and inform PHAs on opportunities to reduce utility costs. Events and news such as industry conferences, events, and new federal or state conservation programs will also be highlighted. The newsletter will be mailed to executive directors and made available for download through the clearinghouse web site.

## **5. OTHER RESOURCES**

Two other federal programs that have technical resources that can assist public housing agencies promote conservation are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program and HUD's PATH program.

### **ENERGY STAR**

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that promotes energy efficiency through voluntary energy standards. Products and building systems that meet prescribed efficiency levels can carry the ENERGY STAR brand. The program targets residential and commercial buildings, equipment, and appliances and provides resources and tools for planning, analyzing, and implementing energy efficiency improvement measures. Products with an ENERGY STAR label are significantly more energy efficient than the minimum government standards and can be found in many categories such as appliances, heating and cooling equipment, insulation, and windows. The ENERGY STAR hotline number is 1-888-STAR-YES and its web site is <http://www.epa.gov/energystar>.

In addition to information that can be accessed through ENERGY STAR's hotline or web entrance, some of the specific tools available include:

*Building Products and Equipment.* ENERGY STAR has fact sheets and other technical information that can assist PHAs to include efficient appliances, equipment, and construction techniques in upcoming retrofits. To find this information, go to the web at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/appd/eshomes/eshaware.nsf/webpages/EnergyStarlibrary.htm>

*Products and Procurement.* ENERGY STAR also provides tools such as on-line life cycle cost calculators, sample procurement language, and details for energy-efficient products. This information can be accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/appdstar/purchasing/>

## **PATH**

The Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing is an initiative that seeks to accelerate the creation and widespread use of advanced technologies in order to improve the quality, durability, environmental performance, energy efficiency, and affordability of housing. Through PATH, public housing agencies gain access to information on advanced building technologies, guidebooks, and case studies. PHAs can also be a demonstration site for PATH technologies. PATH has an information center at 800-245-2691 and can be accessed online at <http://www.pathnet.org>. An additional "Tool Base" technical hotline at 1-800-898-2842 can be used to ask construction-related questions.

## **6. CONTACTS**

Questions relating to this Notice may be directed to Sonia Burgos, Director, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Safety and Conservation Division at 202-708-1197.

To contact Rebuild America, call 1-800-DOE-EREC or use their web site at <http://www.rebuild.org>

To contact HUD's conservation clearinghouse, call 1-866-275-6228 (Toll Free) or use the web site at <http://www.phaenergy.org>

To contact Energy Star, call 1-800-STAR-YES or use the web site at <http://www.epa.gov/energystar>.

IX. To contact HUD's Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing, call 1-800-245-2691 or use the web site at <http://www.pathnet.org>. The Tool Base hotline is 1-800-898-2842.

/s/

Harold Lucas, Assistant Secretary  
for Public and Indian Housing