

Office of Housing, DAS for Operations Strategic Vision Statement

1. What Operations Does and How It Operates

The Office of Operations currently performs a series of administrative functions that support the programmatic work of Housing's Program Offices. These support functions include procurement, human resources, marketing, records management, IT, general services (e.g., space management, travel), and coordination of administrative approval processes. This latter task includes responsibilities for managing clearance/approval of various types of documents, such as Directives, Regulations, correspondence, hiring and award action, and GPRA-related reports. Operations also has begun to provide Program Offices and the Assistant Secretary with a small number of specialized managerial support services in the areas of planning, analysis, marketing, and management systems.

Organizationally, each of six specialized Divisions performs a different, well-defined subset of these activities. The five Divisions each report to one of two Office Directors who, in turn, report to the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

Our clients generally see us as facilitating their work in the various administrative areas by 1) providing advice on, and helping to facilitate, the process of securing approval for specific actions, and 2) performing administrative tasks they otherwise would have to perform themselves (e.g., hiring, credit card and travel reimbursement, supply ordering, records management).

2. Who Do We Serve?

Our principal stakeholder is the Assistant Secretary, who provides the Office of Operations funding and authority, and relies on us to efficiently and effectively discharge our assigned responsibilities.

Our principal partners are our counterparts in the Office of Administration and elsewhere with whom we must frequently cooperate to satisfy all requirements associated with a given function (e.g., with OCPO for procurement, with HR for hiring, with multiple Offices for Clearance approvals).

3. Strategic Vision

As a support office in the Office of Housing, Operations' goals are to improve service to Program Office customers as well as establish internal controls that serve as a role model for the Department.

In pursuit of this vision, the Office of Operations will pursue three major focus areas:

1. Increase Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness
2. Help Ensure Compliance with Laws, Regulations, and Administrative Requirements
3. Improve the Scope and Quality of Service to Our Customers

Currently, ample opportunity exists to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of current administrative processes. At present, many processes lack well-defined roles/responsibilities, standardized work practices and formal internal controls, performance measurement, electronic tools to facilitate routing and approval, and proactive evaluation and improvement. Work processes thus can become better, faster, and cheaper with a modest amount of focused effort and resources.

Secondly, the Office of Housing still has a considerable ways to go before it will fully comply with all legal requirements and agency administrative guidelines associated with its activities. Areas of concern include the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Federal Manager's Financial Integrity Act, web certification as required by the Deputy Secretary, FOIA activity, credit card and cell phone usage, supply management, FTE management, and the staging/timing of procurement actions. Since the Office of Operations has lead responsibility for ensuring such compliance, initiatives in this area constitute a high priority.

Thirdly, while continuing to provide the services it now offers, Operations has an opportunity to reallocate resources to improve the range and sophistication of specialized managerial support services it provides the Assistant Secretary and Program Offices. To date, Operations has delivered only a limited number of such specialized services and has done so irregularly.

4. How the Strategic Vision Supports HUD Goals?

As a support unit, Operations assists the Program Office and the Assistant Secretary to meet all Office of Housing's goals. By increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of existing service delivery, ensuring greater compliance with legal/administrative requirements, and expanding the scope and sophistication of the services offered, Operations can materially increase the level and quality of assistance it provides and, by extension, the quality of its customers' program performance.

5. How the Strategic Vision Changes the Business We Do/The Way We Do Business

In increasing the quality of support provided the Assistant Secretary and Program Offices, Operations will reallocate its staff time progressively over the next 3 years from coordinating a broad range of largely manual administrative functions to providing increasingly sophisticated, higher value-added, managerial support services that enable *our* customers to better serve *their* customers.

To help enable this transition, a near-term priority will be to address the substantial number of legacy problems associated with: 1) the inefficiencies embedded within the current administrative process structure, and 2) the lack of strict compliance with various laws, regulations and guidelines.

Specifically, Operations will immediately begin *deploying formal process management (including automated workflow and internal controls) in all administrative functions it currently manages*. This will reduce significantly the effort it (and other affected parties) currently must devote to these processes, including the great deal of time required to "firefight" or otherwise expedite administrative reviews and approvals. Operations will allocate FTE savings from this effort to two other functions.

The first will be to *eliminate the legacy of non-compliance with existing requirements*. While the process improvement activity will address part of this legacy by introducing more stringent controls, such as "up front" compliance review of documents as they enter the review/approval stream, Operations also will conduct new types of outreach and training to Program Office staff to make them aware of compliance requirements and how best to address them (including how to introduce appropriate internal controls over document preparation).

The second function will be to *dialogue systematically with customer groups* to make them more aware of the types of more value-added managerial support services Operations can provide and to identify other kinds of such assistance that could help enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the customer's programs. The objective of this dialogue would be to foster the further shifting

of Operations' activities from largely routine administrative functions to these more substantive "higher payoff" services.

6. Business Process Reengineering

As just noted, Operations will undertake a reengineering of all core administrative processes to enable better, cheaper and faster process performance. Part of this reengineering effort will be to move wherever possible from sequential to concurrent reviews.

Specifically, current reviews commonly employ, for all or part of the process, a single paper package of pertinent documents that passes sequentially from office to office to secure needed reviews and approvals. In contrast, automated workflow will enable simultaneous distribution of documents to all reviewers while increasing the visibility to all process participants of all comments individual reviewers offer. This approach will substantially reduce the number of "layers" an action must pass through before it reaches a decision point.