

2014 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Data Collection Process Updates:

Building on 2013 input and feedback from Military Housing Offices (MHO), the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) and the contractor commissioned to lead the BAH data collection efforts, Robert D. Niehaus (RDN) have designed new processes to reduce the labor burden on the MHOs, increase the speed and accuracy of the data entry and validation process, and promote increased program transparency. RDN and MHOs will collaborate on data collection rather than run parallel process as done in the past. The complete 2014 BAH Collection Process Guide can be found below.



[2014 BAH Process Guide](#)

MHOs should already be familiar with this document.

Significant process changes:

1. MHOs are encouraged to focus their efforts on providing contact information for apartment complexes, property management companies, property managers, realtors, and other Real Estate Professionals (REP) rather than the listings themselves. RDN will reach out to these contacts and enter any rental listing managed by the contacts that meet BAH program criteria. REP contact information should include the contact's website addresses whenever possible. The contact's websites should be the primary source, e.g. a management company's website as opposed to secondary sources like Apartments.com or Craigslist.org which aggregate rental listings from multiple sources. MHOs may begin adding contacts to MHO Portal now.
2. Rental data collected by RDN will be posted to the MHO Portal in real-time throughout the data collection period. In addition to providing REP contacts, MHOs will monitor and review, accept or flag the rental listings collected by RDN on an ongoing basis. MHOs should add appropriate rental properties that they're aware of as well. Collaborate with primary or secondary MHOs as appropriate.
3. After 1 Apr 2014, there is no waiting period before MHOs can officially submit data. Progress reviews will be conducted periodically and are referred to as milestones. MHOs must still submit census tract exclusions by the first milestone date of 6 May 2014.
4. RDN has identified 40 MHAs with seasonal, remote, or historically tough rental markets where it is difficult to find long-term rentals during the normal data collection period. RDN began collecting rental information 1 Feb 2014 in these markets (early start MHAs) and has provided additional information to the applicable MHOs. The list of early start MHAs can be found in the 2014 BAH Process Guide.

The remaining time-line below applies:

Now:

1. Census Tracts are reviewed in the MHO Portal. Primary MHOs shall designate tracts as either included or excluded for data collection. RDN will not collect additional rental data from excluded census tract areas. Review must be completed by 6 May 2014.
2. REP contact information is collected and entered into MHO Portal. MHOs shall provide accurate and reliable contact information for REPs familiar with the local market. MHOs should aim to initially provide at least 50 contacts by 6 May 2014.
3. RDN enters rental data and contact information in early start MHAs into MHO Portal.

1 Apr 2014: Official start of regular rental data collection period.

1. MHOs begin adding properties to MHO Portal.
2. Rental data collected by RDN will be available for review in MHO Portal. MHOs should monitor, accept or flag the rental listings collected by RDN on an ongoing basis through 15 Aug 2014.
3. RDN begins verification of MHO properties.
4. Census Tracts continue to be reviewed and designated.
5. REP contact information continues to be collected and entered into MHO Portal.

6 May 2014: First MHO Progress Review Milestone

1. Census tract review is complete.
2. Contact and rental information continues to be collected by RDN and MHOs. MHOs also continue to monitor and review rental listings collected by RDN.

7 May - 19 Jul 2014:

1. Second MHO Progress Review Milestone is 16 Jun 2014. Collection and verification process continues.
2. Third MHO Progress Milestone is 18 Jul 2014. Collection and verification process continues. Deadline for MHOs to add new unit data is 18 Jul 2014.
3. 19 Jul - 15 Aug 2014:
 - (a) RDN (only) will continue to collect data.
 - (b) MHOs may continue to review RDN collected data through 15 Aug 2014.

Resources:

1. The MHO Portal provides interactive MHA maps, process guides, tutorials, and links for designating census tracts and submitting/verifying data.
2. USPS.com provides tools to verify property addresses. No property should be submitted that is not verifiable in the postal service database.
3. Google Maps (street view) can be used to evaluate the condition and surrounding location of a property considered for submission if unable to physically view a property.
4. Office Communicator Live-Meeting can be used to train and provide real-time feedback to units to ensure quality submissions.

Other Responsibilities:

1. Area Housing Officers (AHO) should track unit(s) progression through the final milestone for their AOR and provide assistance as appropriate. Provide quality assurance reviews and regional assistance. Identify and address training needs for the MHO POCs.
2. PSC-PSD-fs will provide assistance, perform quality assurance, track overall process progression, and provide feedback to AHOs. A member(s) of the staff will attend the All Service Data Review meetings after first MHO Progress Review Milestone.
3. RDN will maintain the MHO Portal; provide user access, process guide and training opportunities to MHO POCs; collect and post rental data to the MHO Portal; verify rental units added by MHOs on an ongoing basis; analyze MHO progress; and provide technical and customer support.

Recommendations to MHO POCs:

1. Become familiar with the RDN MHO Portal now.
2. Verify census tract exclusions now.
3. Submit contact information for Real Estate Professionals (REP) now.
4. Provide regular progress reports and a final brief to command cadre.
5. Register for training as soon as possible. Two Regional Training Sessions remain at these locations – Boston, MA (13 Mar 2014) and St. Louis, MO (27 Mar 2014). These training sessions must be funded locally. If unable to attend on-site training, plan to participate in one of the 2-hour Webinars on 19 Mar 2014 or 1 Apr 2014.
6. Seek assistance from your AHO and PSC-PSD-fs as needed. A regular dialogue will ensure process success in your MHA.

Additional information regarding BAH, including FAQs, rates, and a BAH Educational Primer can be found at: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm>

For questions or information regarding execution of this process within your MHA, contact your supporting AHO.

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