

## **2015 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Data Collection Process Updates:**

While this year's data collection process will be mostly the same as 2014, the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) and the contractor commissioned to lead the BAH data collection efforts, Robert D. Niehaus (RDN), have made a few changes aimed to further streamline data collection and communication between stakeholders. The complete 2015 BAH Collection Process Guide can be found below. MHOs should already be familiar with this document. As a reminder, BAH computation no longer includes Renter's Insurance; the remaining two components are rental rates and utilities.



2015 BAH Data  
Collection Process Gu

### Process changes:

1. MHOs now have the ability to add alternate POCs to the MHO Portal.
2. In response to MHO feedback, the interactive map features on the MHO Portal are improved, allowing users the option to print maps directly from the portal. This better enables the user to study census tracts and MHA boundaries.
3. Based on MHO feedback, MHOs will have a week to finish reviewing RDN listings after RDN ends their collection efforts. RDN's subsequent final review of all rental data will include their decisions to uphold or overturn MHO flags.
4. In previous years, RDN allowed MHOs to upload rental data via a formatted Excel file called the Rental Data Template, which proved to be inefficient and error prone. As a result, there will be no external upload this year; MHOs must enter all data through the MHO Portal.
5. For a simpler data verification process, RDN has assigned one Contact for all Multiple Listing Services (MLS) per MHA where a MLS is present. This change results in one single source Contact rather than several.

### The 2015 BAH Data Collection 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 5 May 2015.
2. Real Estate Professional (REP) contact information is collected and entered into the 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 quality Contacts by 5 May 2015.
3. RDN enters rental data and contact information in early start MHAs into the MHO Portal. MHOs in these areas may also add available units now.

**1 Apr 2015:** Official start of regular rental data collection period.

1. MHOs begin adding properties into the MHO Portal.
2. Rental data collected by RDN will be available for review in the MHO Portal. MHOs should monitor, accept or flag the rental listings collected by RDN on an ongoing basis through 21 Aug 2015.
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 the MHO Portal.

**5 May 2015:** 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.

**6 May - 24 Jul 2015:**

1. Second MHO Progress Review Milestone is 12 Jun 2015. Collection and verification process continues.
2. Third MHO Progress Milestone is 24 Jul 2015. Collection and verification process continues. Deadline for MHOs to add new unit data is 24 Jul 2015.
3. 25 Jul - 14 Aug 2015:
  - (a) RDN (only) will continue to collect data.
  - (b) MHOs may continue to review RDN collected data through 21 Aug 2015.
  - (c) RDN will end its final quality assurance review on 28 Aug 2015.

#### 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 into 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. Three Regional Training Sessions remain at these locations – Jacksonville, FL (12 Mar 2015), Kansas City, MO (24 Mar 2015) and Norfolk, VA (31 Mar 2015). 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 2015 or 7 Apr 2015.
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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