

CENTERNEWS

H I G H I N T E N S I T Y D R U G T R A F F I C K I N G A R E A

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THE FINANCIAL USERS GROUP (FUG)

NO, THE FUG IS NOT A HIP-HOP 90'S BAND OR SOME OBSCENE ACRONYM. FUG STANDS FOR FINANCIAL USERS GROUP AND WAS CREATED TO REVIEW THE CURRENT EVEREST FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS SYSTEM.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FUG?

The FUG represents the 28 HIDTA regions to make sure that the Financial Management System (FMS) meets the diverse needs of all the HDTAs. The Group has been expanded to serve as an advisory board to the HIDTA Directors on issues that have an impact on financial and administrative support.

Ann Jakits, Senior Technical Writer for the South Florida HIDTA comments on the purpose of the Financial Users Group, "The FUG strengthens the belief that a product can be designed for its users. The FUG gives meaning to product ownership and the input they've provided has given them confidence to represent the FMS user community."

The FUG was formed shortly after the first release of the Everest product. Recommendations include technical and policy improvements that enhance the functionality and practices associated with the system.

WHO BELONGS TO THE FUG?

The FUG members are active users from the HDTAs and ONDCP, and represent a cross section of designated roles. The FUG's primary group includes Financial Managers (FMs) who represent five designated geographical regions. The FMs collectively represent the 28 HDTAs. Responsibilities include obtaining workflow requirements and user preferences.

The ONDCP has three representatives. Each of the FUG members has an FMS role, including law enforcement fiduciaries, FMs, HIDTA Directors, and the National HIDTA Director, Bill Martin who facilitates the comments and assignment of action items. Other supporting personnel include the FMS developers, a curriculum developer, and a writer to help turn the FUG's wish list into reality.

HOW IS INFORMATION FROM THE FUG COMMUNICATED TO THE REST OF THE HIDTA COMMUNITY?

NHAC Director, Bill Martin reports to the Directors at their meetings. For example, at the recent Financial Managers' meeting in Las Vegas an



update was given on the FUG's mission and progress.

The HDTAs have been divided into 5 regions and as issues arise, leaders email or phone financial managers within their region for input and feedback.

Midwest HIDTA Finance Manager, Nancy Lauer comments on the importance of feedback to the overall system, "The impact of the FMS on policy will be included in the discussions and recommendations made in our reports."

The FUG deals with issues in a variety of categories including Administrative, Modifications, Policy, Report, Training, and Version. There are currently 120 items on the FUG's requirements list. Some of these items will be resolved in the program's next release and others will require FMS customization.

Administrative information on the wish list include the developer's database administration tasks such as bugs or the reinforcement of accurate nomenclature. The largest category is Modifications, which

some user groups might refer to as "enhancements." For example, these could be recommendations from committee members who want to streamline data entry tasks by creating macros, and standardizing each of the forms with buttons on each of the worksheets.

The FUG wish list is published on a regular basis on the FMS desktop. Comments from Non-FUG individuals recently streamed in to debate a policy item. The dialog was extensive and representative of the voice of HIDTA Directors around the country. Director Bill Martin included these concerns in the weekly conference call and added them to the FUG wish list.

DOES EVERYONE HAVE ACCESS TO THE FUG?

The FUG should be viewed as a dynamic process that all FMS users can impact. It is a powerful tool for everyone and a one that is completely shaped by users of the program. FMS users have access to designated Financial Managers within each HIDTA region to voice their concerns, and request or suggest enhancements. All Financial Managers may contact their FUG representative at any time with questions or issues. See adjacent list of FUG contacts to locate your representative.

FUG LEADERS

VANESSA GREER

NE Region

Appalachia
New England
New York / New Jersey
Philadelphia/Camden
Michigan
Washington/Baltimore

NHAC/MARK HIRT

SE Region

Atlanta
Central Florida
Gulf Coast
North Florida
Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands
South Florida

NANCY LAUER

Central Region

Chicago
Houston
Lake County
Midwest
Milwaukee
Ohio

KIM COBB

SW Border Region

SWB Arizona
SWB New Mexico
SWB Director
SWB South Texas
SWB West Texas
Rocky Mountain
North Texas

RON PAPANIA

West Region

SWB California
Los Angeles
Hawaii
Central Valley
Northern California
Oregon
Northwest
Nevada

DAN GRAYSON, ONDCP

Meet the Contractors!

The National HIDTA Assistance Center is fortunate to have access to contractors who bring a variety of expertise, experience, and access to services from outside the HIDTA realm. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to two contractors whose unique talents have made a lasting contribution to our organization.

CANDICE HARP is an instructional designer who has worked as an independent contractor with HIDTA for three years. She began her career in the mainframe world of computers, switched to corporate finance and ultimately focused her career on the world of training and development. She has an undergraduate degree in accounting, a master's degree in finance, and a doctorate in information systems with a second concentration in adult education where she learned the principles of instructional design.

Candice developed the following five HIDTA courses in the Management series:

- *Financial Manager of HIDTA Funds*
- *Managing a HIDTA Intelligence Center*
- *HIDTA Management*
- *Financial Management System (FMS)*
- *Performance Management Process*

Candice describes what she likes best about working with the National HIDTA Assistance Center: "The best part of contracting with NHAC is working with a variety of people who are so very knowledgeable about drug law enforcement – and working among team members who are truly committed to their work. It is a pleasure to contribute to a team where every member shares the same vision with the same desire to achieve the program's mission. It almost doesn't seem like work at all – many times it seems like we are all playing a team sport and we just take turns carrying the ball down the field, passing it to others and depending on one another for success. None of us could make it happen without the others."

Some of Candice's other clients include Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (15 years), NASA (3 projects), EPA (3 projects), IRS (2 projects), Coca-Cola Enterprises (6 years), HIDTA (3 years), and others.

TED RICKEL is a procurement specialist who negotiates national pricing agreements for use by the various HIDTAs. Ted is able to draw upon his vast knowledge of these products such as the general LEXUS-NEXUS program as well as the law enforcement version, Accurint LE, Choice Point's, Autotrack, Analyst Notebook, and MasterFile for processing telephone toll records and map drawing software licenses. He obtains the most optimal pricing available based on volume and national usage and is an expert at negotiating the best deal.

Ted has worked for NHAC since September 2005 and has 30 years of contract negotiation experience with corporate America as well as city, county, state, federal, task forces, law enforcement and the military.

By negotiating pricing agreements with the contractors selling the various intelligence programs, Ted is able to blend, balance or match a product or a solution to the unique needs of the HIDTA community. His method includes researching a product or a solution, analyzing its applicability as a solution to a HIDTA need, writing a report and making a recommendation whether or not to go forward with obtaining the product. Since each HIDTA is individually funded, Ted is able to negotiate a pricing agreement based on each HIDTA's usage of a particular product and is often able to obtain a much lower cost based on a national contract as opposed to having each individual HIDTA purchase its own individual license.

Ted reflects on his relationship with HIDTA: "They do a wonderful job and are a great organization. I remember when Congress mandated and originally formed the first five HIDTAs. I feel it is an honor and a distinct privilege to work with such a dedicated group of professionals."

NHAC Director, Bill Martin comments on the use of contractors: "Using contractors instead of hiring employees allows the NHAC to pick the most compatible and qualified person for each specific task. This flexibility provides optimum support to the HIDTA Program and keeps our Fiduciary happy."

Ted Rickel can be reached at (786) 218-2000 or twrickel@nhac.org.

The Center appreciates your letters and comments

CENTERNEWS

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE NATIONAL HIDTA ASSISTANCE CENTER

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