

CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY SPEEDS INVOICING PROCESS AND CENTRALIZES REPORTING WITH PROLOG MANAGER AND PROLOG EXCHANGE

As the third-largest public housing organization in the United States, The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) maintains 40,000 residences on 8,500 sites across Chicago, Ill. In 2000, along with the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, CHA committed to renovating or demolishing two-thirds of its family developments and senior housing units to make way for more modern and more livable mixed-income housing. CHA's \$1.6 billion renovation program, named The Plan For Transformation, will encompass 10 years of planning, procurement, construction and continued operations.

"Prolog Manager and Exchange allow us to control our volume of work, automating collaboration with general contractors and their subcontractors, as well as improving our tracking capabilities,"

***- Cor Ousley
Manager of information
Technology Services
Chicago Housing Authority -
Capital Construction Division.***

To meet the challenge of rebuilding and modernizing 25,000 residential units—the majority of Chicago's public housing—Chicago Housing Authority needed better control of communication and cost and document management.

CHA implemented Meridian Project Systems® Prolog® Application Suite to automate submittals, and make approvals and collaboration more efficient and manageable.

"Transforming our properties called for a major change in the way we manage the rehabilitation of our properties," said Cor Ousley, manager of information technology services for CHA's Capital Construction Division.



"Before adopting The Plan For Transformation, we used a mixture of methods for project controls: various spreadsheets and a few standalone software applications used at individual job sites."

CHA began using Prolog Manager—part of the Prolog Application Suite—in 1998. As the industry's most powerful desktop application, Prolog Application Suite is an integrated solution for project management. Prolog Manager provides complete project control by managing all aspects of the construction lifecycle, from project design to close out.

Prolog WebSite complements Prolog Manager as a web-based collaboration application designed for the extended project team, ensuring all

participants—including the project owner, architect, construction manager, general contractors, subcontractors and suppliers—are well-coordinated throughout construction.

First implemented as a standalone solution for the rehabilitation of a single senior living facility, Prolog Manager replaced countless individual spreadsheets and demonstrated that its project management functionality could handle extensive requirements on multiple projects.

When CHA began The Plan For Transformation in late 1999, Ousley recommended Prolog Application Suite be used on the demolition and rehabilitation projects for the entire plan.

"Implementing The Plan for Transformation wouldn't have been possible without HUD and mayor Daley, but increased federal and city oversight call for more careful tracking and a greater need to complete individual projects on time," assessed Ousley.

"With more than 200 projects happening simultaneously and so much at stake for the city, we wanted to ensure that we could handle the volume of work and track progress accurately," commented Ousley.

CHA used Prolog Manager and Prolog WebSite for the first three years of The Plan For Transformation. Prolog provided a customized solution that fit CHA's need as property owner for oversight of construction manager cost procedures and other activities.

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CHA used Prolog Manager's Cost Control module to capture cost data and then produce custom reports across the program of projects, enabling analysis of expenditures to find cost overruns or other trends.

Prolog Manager's custom reports have been helpful to CHA's board of directors in decision-making and budget allocation. Prolog Manager's Meeting Minutes feature has helped to capture the board's decisions, creating easily accessible logs for follow-up and risk management.

Prolog WebSite allows the 13 engineering firms, more than 30 general contractors, and 10 construction management firms acting as owner's representatives to interface with the system and access job specifications to better execute their portions of The Plan for Transformation and ease some of CHA's program management responsibility.



Customized features in Prolog Manager also have eased program management. Originally designed to document material deliveries and any associated inventory, the Prolog Manager Materials module was modified to enable CHA to track units that have completed transformation and more accurately report their progress to the board as well as Chicago's residents dependent on public housing.

Having gained better control over the management of the rehabilitation plan, CHA looked for speedier document processing and adopted Prolog Exchange when Meridian launched the application in 2003.

"Prolog Manager and Exchange allow us to control the volume of work, automating collaboration with general contractors and their subcontractors, as well as improving our tracking capabilities," said Ousley.

Prolog Exchange allows project collaborators to enter RFIs directly into Prolog Manager with pre-defined workflows for action (read, edit, delete

or approve) according to document status. Collaborators may send RFIs to CHA through fax and email. Those RFIs are automatically converted to potential change orders and submitted to appropriate CHA staff with permission rights to approve.

All financial document forms are standardized and made a part of this process. All records are electronically collected; therefore, eliminating excess paper and making it easier for storage and retrieval purposes.

The collaboration function of Prolog WebSite, process automation capabilities of Prolog Exchange and oversight functions of Prolog Manager afford timelier decision-making and contract modifications, reduce redundant data entry, and ensure more standard and more complete data collection.

CHA's success with the email and fax features of Prolog Exchange have prompted the organization to evaluate the Internet feature of the application with expected utilization by late 2004.

"With the 60-some-odd construction companies and the volume of projects, bringing everyone into the system was not a simple or straightforward undertaking.

"But the effort has improved the way we manage the rehabilitation of our properties. Prolog Application Suite provides centralized reporting and more careful monitoring of the invoicing process."

Meridian Project Systems, Inc.

Meridian Project Systems provides leading-edge enterprise software solutions for the real estate, construction and facility lifecycle that improve financial performance and reduce risk. More than 8,500 of today's leading business enterprises, government agencies, and engineering and construction firms rely on Meridian solutions to improve top line revenue growth while controlling costs on capital-intensive infrastructure initiatives.

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 **Meridian**
SYSTEMS
1720 Prairie City Road, Suite 120
Folsom, CA 95630

(916) 294-2000
(916) 294-2001 fax
www.meridiansystems.com

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