



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0001

April 23, 2021

Dear PHA Executive Directors, Multifamily Housing Owners and Property Managers:

It has been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic began and it is my sincere hope that this letter finds you in good health.

As fellow stewards of federal housing assistance resources for low-income Americans, all of you share an understanding of the critical role that stable housing plays as a foundation for health, well-being, and economic success. I think you would agree that the last year has shown just how important housing is to health. As our Nation faced a global health threat, our homes suddenly took on many new roles and functions. Home has become where we work, where our children learn, and how we can stay safe from a contagious and deadly virus.

In our immediate response to COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took many steps to protect HUD-assisted households and the people who provide that assistance from exposure to COVID-19. Among those steps was the suspension of most in-person housing inspections by our Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) along with waivers that enabled PHAs and Multifamily housing owners and managers to reduce activities that could contribute to COVID-19 transmission. Our actions were informed by trusted public health guidance and reflected our deep commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of the households we serve and people who work hard every day to assist them. These steps were also taken at a time when physical distancing, along with cleaning and face coverings, were some of the few forms of protection available against the pandemic.

More than a year since the arrival of COVID-19 to the United States, we now have more information about this virus and resources to protect against it. Thanks to President Biden's mobilization of a federal response, more and more Americans are being vaccinated every day. At the time of this writing, more than a quarter of adults have now been vaccinated against COVID-19. President Biden has announced that, as of April 19, all adults are now eligible for the vaccine. And while we must continue to do our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19 as vaccination rates increase, we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. At this moment, we must take the steps needed to ensure the whole health and well-being of the households we serve.

It is with utmost concern for the overall health and well-being of HUD-assisted households that I am announcing that HUD will substantially increase housing inspections by our Real Estate Assessment Center, beginning on June 1, 2021. Within a few days, HUD will formally notify properties to begin scheduling inspections. REAC will conduct inspections using protocols informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) guidance that will help ensure safety and minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission among residents, inspectors, and property staff alike. In addition, we will provide properties with additional advance notice to give PHAs, owners, and property managers adequate time to prepare. For the Housing Choice Voucher program, HUD will extend current alternative requirements (<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PIH2020-33.pdf>) around housing quality standards inspections for properties and units under this program that balance our goal of helping households obtain housing quickly while ensuring that units meet quality standards.

Our approach will include facilitating COVID-19 vaccine access to inspectors and PHA staff as well as to residents. Safety protocols informed by the CDC's most recent guidance, and continued monitoring of the COVID-19 situation in partnership with CDC will be in place to protect residents, inspectors and PHA staff.

Thank you for the efforts you have taken over the last year to protect HUD-assisted households and your staff from COVID-19. I look forward to our continued partnership and cooperation to provide safe and quality housing for low-income Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcia L. Fudge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcia L. Fudge