

## **Costs Associated with Housing Quality Standard Inspections for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher Programs**

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Key to the Department's mission is to meet the need for safe quality affordable housing. To meet this need, the Department developed Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspection requirements for its housing choice voucher (HCV) and project-based voucher programs. These important requirements help ensure families live in homes that meet Departmental standards; but they can create challenges for public housing agencies (PHA), tenant-based voucher holders and landlords. MTW PHAs have implemented innovative activities to help them address various challenges associated with administrative resources associated with HQS regulations while maintaining safe quality units that meet Department standards. Examples of two requirements that could increase administrative costs, that MTW innovations can help address, are third-party inspections on units owned or managed by the PHA and requirements related to the timing of HQS inspections.

Third-party inspection regulations can require more staff time because the PHA must obtain and coordinate inspections with a HUD approved inspector. As for the timing of HQS inspections, the Department's requirements base inspection dates for privately owned units on the date of the housing assistance payment (HAP) contract. New units must be inspected prior to the initial term of a new lease and units with non-life-threatening insufficiencies must be re-inspected. Keeping track of these dates, coordinating with inspectors and re-inspecting units can be costly and time consuming for PHA staff. To address this, many MTW PHAs have policies that streamline HQS inspection protocols.

To reduce administrative costs and streamline the HQS inspection process, legacy MTW agencies have implemented activities that allow them to:

- perform HQS inspections on all units, or a percentage of units, annually, biennially, or triennially disregarding the HAP anniversary,
- eliminate the third-party inspection requirement on units owned or managed by the PHA, and
- allow owners to self-certify that minor, non-life-threatening HQS insufficiencies have been corrected which can expediate the leasing process.

HQS streamlining innovations can help agencies be more efficient and cost-effective and benefit families and owners participating in the HCV program. They also help owners and voucher holders enter into leases more quickly which could encourage owners, who find program requirements burdensome, to participate in low-income housing programs.

### Authorizations

MTW Agencies Operating under the MTW Operations Notice:

5.a – Pre-Qualifying Unit Inspections

5.c – Third-Party Requirement

5.d – Alternative Inspection Schedules

Legacy Agencies under Attachment C of the Standard Agreement

D.5 – Ability to Certify Housing Quality Standards