



# Get **NSPIRE**Ed

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## NSPIRE RESOURCES FROM HUD

*Always useful, always reliable.*



[NSPIRE Resources page on HUD.gov](#)

## Remote Video Inspections Move Forward



On November 12, 2020, HUD issued guidance on the use of Remote Video Inspection (RVI) technology by Public Housing Authorities that participate in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. The public notice outlines considerations and best practices for conducting an RVI, an option HUD is also evaluating for other HUD programs. Under certain circumstances, PHAs may now choose to employ RVI technology as a part of their protocols for voucher inspections.

“During this unprecedented time in our nation’s history, my PHA was searching for answers on how to comply with the inspection requirements of the Housing Choice Voucher Program while keeping employees, property owners/landlords, and participants safe,” said Edwin Tharp, Executive Director of the Mansfield Metropolitan Housing Authority. “In considering options, one solution that seemed to make a lot of sense was to offer remote video inspections. The idea gained momentum by other PHAs looking for similar options; then HUD got on board looking for ways to overcome the COVID obstacle. By performing inspections remotely and conference calls, I believe a tool was created that benefits PHAs. I see a place for this tool long after the

pandemic concludes as PHAs work to increase efficiency and implement technology.”

The use of video and voice streaming technologies offers many benefits, especially at a time when COVID-19 still presents significant risk to residents and PHA staff alike. Video inspections should not be considered a lesser alternative to on-site inspections; instead, this technology, when coupled with effective protocols, offers great confidence in inspections and their results. RVIs will enable HUD and PHAs to conduct physical inspections while minimizing the potential spread of disease, both of which will help to protect resident health and safety. Less exposure to others and social distancing are not the only advantages, however, as RVIs can also:

- ✓ Improve PHA productivity and efficiency as travel time may be reduced or eliminated
- ✓ Reduce exposure by minimizing travel time and distance
- ✓ Save taxpayer dollars by reducing or eliminating travel costs
- ✓ Decrease potential disruptions in the inspected home
- ✓ Improve both owner and resident satisfaction by reducing concerns over exposure while providing assurances that health and safety in resident units are still important

Early-adopter PHAs have already witnessed RVI’s practicability. “As a result of working with the REAC team and other Housing Authorities, we were able to get the inspection time down to under 30 minutes, find good practices that allow tenants, care givers, and landlords to serve as the unit-base inspector under direction of our HQS certified inspector,” stated Nathan Blatchley, Executive Director of a small PHA, Hocking Metropolitan Housing Authority. “RVIs now being used in roughly 40% of our new unit and annual inspections with a fail rate that is similar to the in person inspections conducted during the same period (in person inspections are still used for empty units in the initial lease up). We also compared the data to our historic fail rate and there isn’t any significant difference in the fail rate using RVI versus pre-COVID-19 in person inspections.”

The notice details recommended conditions and procedures for performing RVIs, including:

- ✓ How best to prepare for, and schedule, an RVI
- ✓ Who should be present during inspection
- ✓ Any necessary equipment
- ✓ Requirements for the smart phone or tablet to be used
- ✓ Completion of HUD’s Lead based Paint Visual Assessment Training Course
- ✓ How to conduct the inspection
- ✓ Requirements for protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
- ✓ How to document items that do not pass inspection

For more details, please see [PIH Notice 2020-31](#)

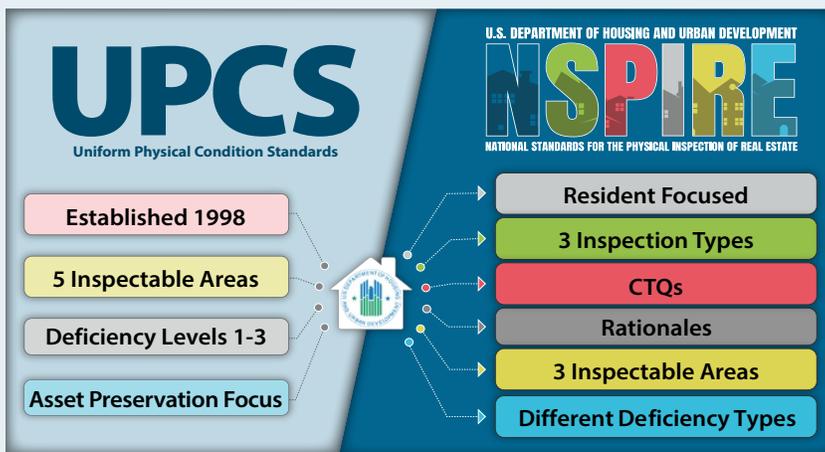
## Upcoming Webinar: Remote Video Inspections for Housing Choice Voucher Program

REAC is excited to discuss this innovative method for conducting Housing Choice Voucher inspections in our December 3, 2020, webinar, “Remote Video Inspections for Housing Choice Voucher program.” This webinar will provide an opportunity for HUD to review the major provisions of the Notice, illustrate how technology can be incorporated into voucher inspections, and make available several PHAs that have incorporated RVIs into their operations for lessons learned.

Please email [RVI@HUD.gov](mailto:RVI@HUD.gov) if you’re interested in attending the Remote Video Inspections for Housing Choice Voucher program webinar on December 3rd, 2020, at 2:00 PM Eastern Time.

## Comparing UPCS and NSPIRE

“What’s the difference between UPCS and NSPIRE?”



As HUD develops the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE), stakeholders have asked this question more than any other.

NSPIRE is the result of a wholesale review of HUD’s inspection programs, and represents significant change in standards, processes, and procedures, including scoring. Furthermore, NSPIRE is built around a customer-

focused design and begins with resident health and safety in mind. As we compare UPCS and NSPIRE, here are some of the most notable differences between them.

| UPCS   | NSPIRE   |
|--|--|
| <p>HUD first implemented Uniform Physical Condition Standards in 1998. UPCS focused on asset preservation within HUD’s extensive public housing portfolio.</p>   | <p>NSPIRE is purposefully designed to focus on resident health and safety while addressing the changes in HUD’s portfolio, including the increase in the number of Multifamily properties and tenant and project-based vouchers.</p> |
| <p>Prior to NSPIRE, HUD relied primarily on two sets of standards – UPCS and the Housing Quality Standards. Over time, this created complexities and inefficiencies within the inspection process.</p> | <p>NSPIRE is one standard for all programs. It streamlines inspections, increases efficiency, and creates a single expectation of housing quality across programs.</p>   |

## UPCS

Under UPCS, the appearance of the property and certain inspectable items could have substantial impact on the inspection score.

## NSPIRE

Under NSPIRE, inspections focus on the most important thing: resident health and safety. Furthermore, properties with poor unit conditions will not be able to pass inspection.

### Preparing for NSPIRE

NSPIRE represents a fundamental shift in HUD's approach to inspection protocols. This makes an apples-to-apples comparison difficult. HUD has prepared many resources to help property owners prepare for the change, however. These include:

- ✓ [NSPIRE Overview Webcast](#): an introduction to NSPIRE.
- ✓ [NSPIRE Standards](#): a full list of the NSPIRE standards. Each downloadable PDF details citable deficiencies, correction times, and other pertinent information.
- ✓ [NSPIRE Concept](#): what NSPIRE is and what are its goals

For a full list of available resources, visit the [NSPIRE Resources page on HUD.gov](#).

### Round One of NSPIRE Virtual Workshops Completed

HUD has completed round one of its NSPIRE virtual workshops! Between June and October of this year, HUD conducted 21 virtual workshops. During these events, HUD was able to work with over 440 participants to get their input and opinions on the various elements of NSPIRE, including the NSPIRE standards. The participants represented a wide array of stakeholders, including residents, resident groups, property owners and managers, and PHAs.



HUD conducted NSPIRE virtual workshops on:

- ✓ June 23
- ✓ July 29
- ✓ August 11, 18, and 25
- ✓ September 1, 15, 22, and 29
- ✓ October 8, 13, and 27

While some workshops covered topics like the [NSPIRE Demonstration](#), voucher programs, self-inspections, and resident concerns, most focused on the [NSPIRE standards](#). Workshop attendees reviewed NSPIRE standards in detail, covering specific deficiencies, protocols, tools, and more. HUD will use the feedback to help achieve its goal of having physical inspection standards that are objective, defensible, and repeatable.

HUD received many positive comments from attendees about the workshops, including these notable quotes:

*“The most positive aspect to NSPIRE is its desire to improve quality of life for residents and address unit needs in a meaningful way. If it helps to generate additional revenues to tackle those improvements, it will be a win for residents.”* — Wanda Johnson, Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR)

*“I thought it was overall a great workshop. We were able to voice our concerns and comments.”* — Dawn Vance, Regional Property Manager, Michaels Management

*“I thought this is a good format to get feedback, so thank you for all you are doing to make the best inspection protocol possible.”* — Bonnie McPhillips, Executive Director, Columbus Housing Authority/Heritage House

*“This really went very well for me. I don’t see anything that could improve it. It was well thought out.”* — Alan Zais, Winnebago County Housing Authority

HUD is planning more workshops and feedback events in the coming year to solicit additional input from residents and other stakeholders. HUD will announce the upcoming workshop schedule as soon as possible. In the meantime, HUD has made materials from previous workshops [available](#) on the [HUD.gov](http://HUD.gov) website.

## Get NSPIRE Updates in Your Mailbox

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Subscribing is an easy way to stay involved and informed on the latest NSPIRE news and events. You will receive periodic email messages that include essential information about NSPIRE, such as the newsletter, upcoming events, and NSPIRE updates. You are free to subscribe or unsubscribe at any time, and we never share your personal information with anyone outside of HUD.

**Advisory:** HUD is aware of misleading information circulating about NSPIRE. HUD encourages stakeholders to verify the information they receive from outside sources by consulting official sources such as HUD’s [NSPIRE website](#) or the [Federal Register](#).

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