U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

Special Attention of:
Public Housing Agencies
Public Housing Directors
Regional Public Housing Directors
Property Owners Participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program

Notice PIH 2026-18

Issued: July 15, 2026

Expires: This notice remains in effect until amended, superseded, or rescinded.

Supersedes: Notices PIH 2023-28 and 2024-26

Cross References: 24 CFR parts 5, 35, 882, 982, and 983; Notices PIH 2013-17, 2016-05, 2017-20, 2020-31, 2022-01, 2023-16, and 2024-19

Subject: Implementation of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate Administrative Procedures for Voucher Programs

I. PURPOSE

This notice revises, updates, and finalizes the administrative procedures of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Programs, and, by use of Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for their inspections, the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation (Mod Rehab)[1] Programs (collectively known hereafter as "voucher programs").

This notice applies to all public housing agencies (PHAs) administering voucher programs, including Moving to Work (MTW) PHAs.

II. BACKGROUND

On May 11, 2023, HUD published the *Economic Growth Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act: Implementation of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE)* final rule ("NSPIRE final rule") in the Federal Register (88 FR 30442). NSPIRE establishes a new approach to defining and assessing housing quality, strengthens HUD's physical condition standards, and improves HUD oversight by aligning and consolidating the inspection regulations across multiple programs used to evaluate "HUD housing," as defined in 24 CFR 5.701(c). Implementation of the NSPIRE final rule ensures that residents of HUD housing live in safe, habitable dwellings. It also ensures the items and components located both inside

[1] 24 CFR part 882

and outside and within the units of HUD housing are functionally adequate, operable, and free of health and safety hazards. The rule also states that HUD will publish NSPIRE standards through a Federal Register notice at least once every 3 years to respond to the public and assisted housing portfolio's evolving needs and to research findings.

During the first phases of implementation of the NSPIRE final rule, HUD commenced inspections for public housing and multifamily housing properties in July and October 2023. More information can be found on HUD's NSPIRE Official Notices and Proposed Rules webpage.

With the NSPIRE final rule, NSPIRE for voucher programs became effective October 1, 2023, and redefined HQS for these programs. On September 28, 2023, HUD announced the first extension of the compliance date to October 1, 2024.[2] On July 5, 2024, HUD extended the compliance date to October 1, 2025.[3] On September 30, 2025, HUD further extended the compliance date to February 1, 2027.[4] This latest extension will provide PHAs with additional time to train their staff, communicate with landlords and access additional technical assistance from HUD to support their transition to NSPIRE. HUD issued the first administrative procedures notice for the voucher programs with Notice PIH 2023-28, later revised by Notice PIH 2024-26. This notice supersedes both PIH notices.

III. DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS

Prior to the implementation of NSPIRE, inspections under the voucher programs were conducted in accordance with HQS at 24 CFR 982.401 as it existed on the publication date of the NSPIRE final rule (hereafter referred to as "HQS as previously defined"). This notice informs PHAs that administer voucher programs of the allowable extension for the implementation of NSPIRE, reviews information about the NSPIRE standards, instructs PHAs to update their inspection standards by the compliance date of February 1, 2027, and explains other changes to voucher program inspections.

This notice implements the following key changes and updates:

- Extends the compliance date for implementation of NSPIRE for voucher programs to February 1, 2027, and references the current Federal Register notice.
- Clarifies which NSPIRE provisions are excluded from the compliance date extension.
- Updates notification requirements for PHAs.
- Provides additional guidance to submit requests for variations and alternative inspection methods.
- Notifies PHAs of additional training added to HUD Exchange.

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[2] *Economic Growth Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act: Implementation of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE); Extension of NSPIRE Compliance Date for HCV Programs*, 88 FR 66882

[3] *Economic Growth Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act: Implementation of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE); Extension of NSPIRE Compliance Date for HCV, PBV and Section 8 Moderate Rehab and CPD Programs*, 89 FR 55645

[4] *Economic Growth Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act: Implementation of National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE); Extension of NSPIRE Compliance Date for Housing Choice Voucher, Project-Based Voucher, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Programs*, 90 FR 46911

- Informs PHAs that HUD is no longer developing an application or software for voucher programs.

IV. NSPIRE COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR VOUCHER PROGRAMS

A. Compliance Date

PHAs may continue using HQS as previously defined or other HUD-approved inspection methods as their inspection standards until February 1, 2027. This notice provides guidance for PHAs with voucher programs that continue to delay implementation of certain provisions of the NSPIRE final rule and NSPIRE standards into their HQS inspections until the extended compliance date of February 1, 2027.

While compliance with NSPIRE is not required before that date, HUD encourages PHAs to implement NSPIRE standards at their earliest convenience.

B. Applicable Provisions

This notice also clarifies the intent of the extension. The extension of the compliance dates only covers certain provisions in the NSPIRE final rule. Reference to the "Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) voucher final rule,"[5] further implemented by Notice PIH 2024-19, is due to its subsequent amendments to many NSPIRE final rule provisions and definitions since its publication.

PHAs with voucher programs subject to 24 CFR parts 882, 982, and 983 ***are not required*** to comply with the following NSPIRE changes until February 1, 2027, including the subsequent changes made by the HOTMA voucher final rule:

- 24 CFR 982.4, definition of "Housing Quality Standards (HQS)"
- 24 CFR 982.401
- HQS provisions of 24 CFR part 982, subpart M:[6] 24 CFR 982.605(a), 982.609(a), 982.614(a) and (b)(1), 982.618(b) and (c), 982.621, and 982.628(a)(4).
- 24 CFR 983.3, definition of "Housing Quality Standards (HQS)"
- 24 CFR 983.101(a)-(b)

However, PHAs subject to 24 CFR parts 882, 982, and 983 ***are required*** to comply with all other changes to these parts implemented by the NSPIRE final rule, including the subsequent changes made by the HOTMA voucher final rule:

- 24 CFR 982.352(b)(1)(v)(A)(3) (previously at 24 CFR 982.352(b)(1)(iv)(A)(3)), which, in the case of PHA-owned housing, requires a PHA to obtain the services of an independent entity to perform HQS inspections and communicate the inspection results to the family and PHA

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[5] *Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016—Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project-Based Voucher Implementation; Additional Streamlining Changes*, 89 FR 38224 (May 7, 2024)

[6] Subpart M as it existed on the publication date of the NSPIRE final rule can be found at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2023-title24-vol4/pdf/CFR-2023-title24-vol4-part982-subpartM.pdf.

- 24 CFR 982.405(a)-(b) (previously at 24 CFR 982.405(a)(1)-(2)), which allows for periodic inspections on a biennial basis for HCV units and a triennial basis for HCV units at small, rural PHAs
- 24 CFR 983.103(e)(1) (previously at 24 CFR 983.103(d)(4)), which allows for random sampling of periodic inspections on a biennial basis for PBV contract units and a triennial basis for PBV contract units at small, rural PHAs

C. Inspections During Transition

Units and owners are subject to the requirements in effect at the time the unit was inspected until final resolution of the inspection process, even if the PHA implements NSPIRE before the inspection process is complete.

For example, a PHA implemented NSPIRE on June 1, 2026, but still has one failed inspection with uncorrected deficiencies. The inspection was conducted on May 6, 2025, using HQS as previously defined. That unit must be reinspected, or the corrections must be verified, using the PHA's HQS standards in effect on May 6, 2025, not the NSPIRE standards implemented on June 1, 2026.

D. Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarm Requirements

PHAs are reminded that regardless of whether they have implemented NSPIRE or continue to use HQS as previously defined, they must comply with all requirements for carbon monoxide and smoke alarms.

1. *Carbon Monoxide Requirements*

The carbon monoxide requirement took effect and became an inspectable item on December 27, 2022. PHAs are already required to comply with Notice PIH 2022-01 under HQS and to establish protocols to implement the carbon monoxide standard into their inspections.

PHAs continuing to use HQS as previously defined may continue to follow their established protocols during inspections, as long as they are in full compliance with Notice PIH 2022-01, or they may choose to use the Carbon Monoxide Alarm NSPIRE standard when conducting inspections.

2. *Smoke Alarm Requirements*

PHAs are already required to comply with the Federal Fire Safety Act of 1992 and keep their smoke alarm standards current with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, currently NFPA 72 (the successor to NFPA 74). Additional changes took effect on December 29, 2024,[7] requiring smoke alarms be either hardwired or sealed, 10-year battery devices. NSPIRE reflects NFPA 72 and will be updated with the additional mandates soon.

PHAs continuing to use HQS as previously defined may continue to follow their established protocols during inspections, as long as they are in full compliance with all smoke alarm requirements, or they may choose to use the Smoke Alarm

[7] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328)

NSPIRE standard, adding in the new requirements for hardwired or sealed, 10-year battery devices when conducting inspections.

PHAs continuing to use HQS as previously defined may still use other previous HQS definitions and guidance, including forms HUD-52580 and HUD-52580-A, provided they are in compliance with the above requirements. Neither forms HUD-52580 nor HUD-52580-A include the current requirements for carbon monoxide or smoke alarms listed above, so it is important for PHAs to implement these requirements into their inspections when continuing to use HQS as previously defined.

V. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Notification to HUD

PHAs that implemented NSPIRE and notified HUD are not required to provide further notification. HUD sent confirmation emails to PHAs in accordance with section 4 of Notices PIH 2023-28 and 2024-26.

PHAs that implemented NSPIRE but have not notified HUD must notify HUD of the date they transitioned to NSPIRE. This requirement applies regardless of the date of implementation. After a PHA notifies HUD, they will receive a confirmation email.

PHAs that previously notified HUD that they were delaying implementation of NSPIRE and plan to further delay implementation due to the additional extension, must notify HUD of their new transition date (which can be no later than February 1, 2027). These PHAs also need to keep HUD informed of changes and notify HUD when implementation occurs. After a PHA notifies HUD, they will receive a confirmation email.

PHAs that have not yet implemented NSPIRE and have not notified HUD of their intent, must notify HUD that they have continued with HQS as previously defined and provide the date they plan to transition to NSPIRE (which can be no later than February 1, 2027). These PHAs also need to keep HUD informed of changes and notify HUD when implementation occurs. After a PHA notifies HUD, they will receive a confirmation email.

To notify HUD, PHAs should email NSPIREV_AlternateInspection@hud.gov, copying the field office representative, with the subject: “Notification of Implementation of NSPIRE [PHA Code].” The body of the email should include the PHA name, PHA code, and the date the PHA implemented NSPIRE or, if the PHA has not yet implemented NSPIRE, the date the PHA plans to implement NSPIRE (which may be no later than February 1, 2027). This email should be sent by September 30, 2026, though HUD will continue to accept updates, changes, and implementation confirmations after this date.

B. Notification to Owners and Families

PHAs implementing inspections using NSPIRE must be in communication with their owners and families regarding the changes to the inspection standards. All participating owners and families must be notified of NSPIRE, what the NSPIRE standards are, and when these changes will take effect for their inspections. PHAs must also ensure that inspectors are trained on NSPIRE and any new software or tools they will be required to use.

VI. INSPECTABLE AREAS

The NSPIRE final rule defines the inspectable areas for the inspection as unit, inside, and outside of HUD housing at 24 CFR 5.703:

- **Unit**. A unit (or "dwelling unit") of HUD housing refers to the interior components of an individual unit. Examples of components included in the interior of a unit may include the balcony, bathroom, call-for-aid (if applicable), carbon monoxide devices, ceiling, doors, electrical systems, enclosed patio, floors, HVAC (where individual units are provided), kitchen, lighting, outlets, smoke detectors, stairs, switches, walls, water heater, and windows.

- **Inside**. Inside of HUD housing (or "inside areas") refers to the common areas and building systems that can be generally found within the building interior and are not inside a unit. Examples of "inside" common areas may include basements, interior or attached garages, enclosed carports, restrooms, closets, utility rooms, mechanical rooms, community rooms, daycare rooms, halls, corridors, stairs, shared kitchens, laundry rooms, offices, enclosed porches, enclosed patios, enclosed balconies, and trash collection areas. Examples of building systems include those components that provide domestic water such as pipes, electricity, elevators, emergency power, fire protection, HVAC, and sanitary services.

- **Outside**. Outside of HUD housing (or "outside areas") refers to the building site, building exterior components, and any building systems located outside of the building or unit. Examples of "outside" components may include fencing, retaining walls, grounds, lighting, mailboxes, project signs, parking lots, detached garage or carport, driveways, play areas and equipment, refuse disposal, roads, storm drainage, non-dwelling buildings, and walkways. Components found on the exterior of the building are also considered outside areas, and examples may include doors, attached porches, attached patios, balconies, carports, fire escapes, foundations, lighting, roofs, walls, and windows.

While the above definitions include areas and components covered by the regulation, they are not all required to be included in a voucher program inspection. The inspectable areas for voucher programs are defined at 24 CFR 5.705(a)(2):

> The inspection requirement for the tenant-based HCV program and the unit inspection for the PBV and Moderate Rehabilitation programs only applies to units occupied or to be occupied by HCV, PBV, and Moderate Rehabilitation participants,

and common areas and exterior areas which either service or are associated with such units.

This contrasts with other housing programs (e.g., Public Housing) in which all units (through sampling) and all areas may be subject to inspection.

VII. NSPIRE STANDARDS

While many previously defined HQS items are encompassed in the NSPIRE standards, the focus of NSPIRE is on the condition of dwelling units and prioritizing the health and safety of residents. A significant change between NSPIRE and HQS as previously defined is the removal of the "Site and Neighborhood" requirement for unit inspections.[8] NSPIRE standards also remove subjective opinions about general health and safety, housekeeping, and cosmetics/aesthetics of a unit and property.

A. Where to Find the NSPIRE Standards

The current standards can be found on HUD's NSPIRE Standards webpage. You can also find a list of NSPIRE standards linked under section VI. of 88 FR 40832.[9] HUD also created the NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist[10] (also in fillable .pdf and spreadsheet formats) on the NSPIRE webpage. The standards are subject to change as HUD makes updates triennially.

B. Affirmative Habitability Requirements

NSPIRE provides for minimum, or affirmative, habitability requirements for each "area" (i.e., unit, inside, outside). The areas must meet these requirements for habitability. These affirmative habitability requirements are noted specifically in the standards and can be found in 24 CFR 5.703(b)-(d).

C. Life-Threatening List

HUD published a list of life-threatening (LT) conditions (the "LT List") in the *Housing Through Modernization Act of 2016: Implementation of Various Section 8 Voucher Provisions* rule at 82 FR 5458. Per Notice PIH 2017-20, this list was only required of PHAs that implemented certain initial inspection provisions of HOTMA at the time. HUD included the LT List in the NSPIRE inspection standards publication, which requires all PHAs adopt the LT List at the time they implement NSPIRE. The LT List was published at 88 FR 40832 and can also be found in Table 65 of the list of NSPIRE standards.

PHAs can add items to their list of LT conditions with HUD approval. Any requests for variations the PHA would like to identify as LT must be acknowledged in the variation request. If a PHA wishes to increase the health & safety (H&S) severity level of current non-LT NSPIRE deficiencies, this request must also be submitted to HUD (see section VIII. and follow the same instructions for H&S severity increase

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[8] Requirements for site and neighborhood standards remain applicable for purposes of PBV site selection (see 24 CFR 983.55).
[9] *National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate: Inspection Standards*, 88 FR 40832 (June 22, 2023)
[10] This checklist does not include any special program considerations or requirements for special housing types (24 CFR part 982, subpart M) or Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Mod Rehab units (24 CFR part 882, subpart E and subpart H).

requests (PHAs can only request to *add* LT deficiencies)). If approved, any additions to the PHA's list of LT conditions (through variation or severity increase approvals), must be identified in the PHA's Administrative Plan.

D. Timelines to Correct Deficiencies

LT deficiencies ***must*** be corrected within 24 hours after notification of the inspection results has been provided to the owner. All non-life-threatening (NLT) deficiencies, known as *severe* and *moderate*, must be corrected within 30 days (or a PHA-approved extension consistent with existing policy) after notification of the inspection results has been provided to the owner. Some deficiencies are considered *low* and even if present will result in a passed inspection and only be noted by the inspector for information purposes. If a deficiency (LT, severe, or moderate) is not corrected within the required timeframe, the PHA must initiate Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract enforcement, which can include withholding or abatement of assistance payments, terminations, or relocations. In accordance with HOTMA, certain remedies are mandatory for contracts entered or extended after June 6, 2024.[11]

E. Scoring

The NSPIRE scoring Federal Register notice[12] does not apply to programs covered in this notice. Voucher program inspections are not numerically scored, and NSPIRE retains pass/fail indicators. Passed inspections require no further action by the PHA, family, or owner. Failed inspections require follow-up, reinspections, or verification to confirm correction of the deficiency.[13] Each NSPIRE standard indicates whether a deficiency would result in a pass or fail of the inspection under voucher programs. Any scoring or non-scoring of the NSPIRE affirmatives also does not apply to these programs (i.e., Notice PIH 2025-27 does not apply to voucher programs).

F. Self-Inspections

24 CFR 5.707 exempts owners participating in HCV, PBV, and Section 8 Mod Rehab programs from any self-inspection requirements. HUD encourages owners to conduct any routine inspections on their units and properties already scheduled to take place in accordance with business and industry practices.

G. Notes on Lead-Based Paint Hazards, Mold and Moisture, and Pest Infestations

As discussed in Notice PIH 2023-16/H 2023-07, the NSPIRE Administrative Procedures Notice, which is specifically applicable to Public Housing and Multifamily Housing Programs, HUD allows some flexibility for what is considered an appropriate correction for certain deficiencies requiring a 24-hour repair. These noted conditions, lead-based paint, mold and moisture, and pest infestation may take a significant amount of time to permanently control. PHAs may consider the flexibilities provided by Notice PIH 2023-16/H 2023-07, or successor notices, when

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[11] 24 CFR 982.404, 982.405, 982.406, 983.103, or 983.208

[12] *NSPIRE and Associated Protocols, Scoring Notice*, 88 FR 43371 (July 7, 2023)

[13] Some verification methods can include photos (Notice PIH 2013-17, *Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program – Review of Existing HQS Requirements and the Use of Photos to Improve HQS oversight*) or remote video (Notice PIH 2020-31, *Remote Video Inspections for Housing Choice Voucher Program*) in accordance with PHA policy. See 24 CFR 982.405(i) and 983.103(h) for additional requirements.

allowing for certain, temporary corrections made by owners of voucher-assisted properties. Except for instances of immediate and temporary relocation or other removal of the family from the hazard, all corrections for potential or known lead-based paint hazards must be made in compliance with 24 CFR part 35, subparts H, M, and R.

For PHAs implementing NSPIRE standards, any deteriorated paint or other lead-based paint hazard(s) identified through a visual assessment during an HQS inspection may be considered a violation of the Potential Lead-Based Paint Hazards NSPIRE standard. For the HCV Program (a tenant-based assistance program), any housing constructed prior to 1978, with assisted units where a child under age 6 resides or is expected to reside, common areas that service that unit, and exterior painted surfaces associated with that unit or common areas is subject to visual assessment for potential lead-based paint hazards. For the PBV Program (a project-based assistance program), any housing constructed prior to 1978, with assisted units, regardless of whether a child under age 6 resides or is expected to reside in the unit, common areas that service that unit, and exterior painted surfaces associated with that unit or common areas is subject to visual assessment for potential lead-based paint hazards.

The Potential Lead-Based Paint Hazards-Visual Assessment NSPIRE standard does not replace the responsibility of PHAs and owners to comply with the requirements and timelines of the Lead Safe Housing Rule (LSHR) in accordance with 24 CFR part 35, subpart M - Tenant-Based Rental Assistance; subpart H - Project-Based Assistance, as applicable to the assistance provided to the housing; and subpart R - Methods and Standards for Lead Paint Hazard Evaluation and Hazard Reduction Activities.

VIII. VARIATIONS

NSPIRE does not alter the existing flexibilities that allow PHAs to propose, for HUD approval, acceptability criteria variations. 24 CFR 5.705(a)(3) (previously at 24 CFR 982.401(a)(4)) states that HUD may approve variant inspection standards for the HCV and PBV Programs.

PHAs must determine if any previously approved variation they wish to continue is now a variation of the NSPIRE standards just as they did under HQS acceptability criteria. If the PHA determines the need for a variation still exists, a request must be submitted to HUD as described below.

NSPIRE does not allow for the use of unvented, fuel-burning space heaters because of the risk of carbon monoxide exposure. Any variations previously approved by HUD that allowed the use of unvented, fuel-burning space heaters, had this approval rescinded effective January 1, 2024. This applied to all PHAs regardless of which inspection standard was being used. For any voucher program inspection occurring on or after January 1, 2024, the presence of an unvented, fuel-burning space heater is an LT deficiency and failed item under HQS (using NSPIRE standards or HQS as previously

defined) that the owner must correct in 24 hours. If the owner does not correct the deficiency within the required timeframe, the PHA must enforce the owner obligations in accordance with program requirements.

PHAs that wish to apply for approval of variant inspection standards from the NSPIRE standards must email HUD at NSPIREV_AlternateInspection@hud.gov, copying the field office representative, with the subject: "Variation Request, [PHA Code]." Requests for variations ***must*** include the following:

1. Name and PHA code of the PHA requesting the variation;
2. The variation requested or the current NSPIRE standard requested to be modified;
3. Purpose of the request. HUD will only consider variations for the following purposes:
   a. The local housing code that supports the request,[14] **or**
   b. The unique climatic or geographical condition that supports the request; and
4. Justification for approval:
   a. Whether the variation meets or exceeds the performance requirements under NSPIRE, **or**
   b. How the variation will significantly expand housing opportunities for families.

HUD will not approve any inspection criteria variation if HUD believes it will likely adversely affect the health and safety of the families or restrict housing choice. The variation process is not meant to be an opportunity for PHAs to revert standards to any of the previous definitions of HQS and is not a chance for PHAs to increase the burden on the inspectors, owners, or tenants. PHAs must be sure all requirements for purpose and justifications are met prior to submission to HUD.

This variation process is not intended to include any individual determinations of reasonable accommodation.[15] PHAs maintain their responsibility to review all reasonable accommodation requests made by an individual with a disability. These requests are made on a case-by-case basis and do not involve overall changes or variations to a PHA's inspection standards. Therefore, these determinations are made by the PHA and would not involve HUD approval under this variation process.

PHAs continuing to use HQS as previously defined with previously approved variations should continue business as usual while HUD makes these determinations. However, PHAs implementing NSPIRE that have not received approval of a requested variation should not assume approval. The adoption and use of variations is not allowed until HUD approval is received. Any approved variations must be adopted by the PHA in accordance with the HUD approval and added to the PHA's Administrative Plan. If the PHA is denied the use of a variation, the PHA must revise its inspection standards, if necessary, and implement NSPIRE standards by February 1, 2027.

[14] Local housing codes may have been imposed by a court or administrative order or by a voluntary legal agreement.
[15] In accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Fair Housing Act.

IX. NSPIRE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

Other than the addition of "small rural PHAs" and the triennial inspection requirements, the NSPIRE final rule did not change any requirements of the program already implemented by HOTMA, or any other voucher program regulations on inspection timing or protocols.

A. Different Types of Inspections

PHAs are required to conduct different types of inspections in accordance with HCV Program requirements: initial, periodic (at least biennially, or at least triennially for small rural PHAs), supervisory quality control inspections, and interim inspections. NSPIRE makes no changes to this for the HCV programs. See 24 CFR 982.405 for complete requirements for HCV.

Units under a PBV HAP contract[16] continue to be subject to all turnover inspections for new families moving in and a random sampling of at least 20 percent of the contract units in each building for periodic inspections. Like HCV, the random sample must be done at least biennially, or at least triennially for small rural PHAs. PBV units are also subject to other inspections (interim, follow-up, and supervisory quality control inspections). See 24 CFR 983.103 for complete requirements for PBV.

Mod Rehab units under contract are still subject to inspection at least annually in accordance with 24 CFR 882.516.

B. Entity Conducting Inspections

NSPIRE aligns the inspection standards of different HUD programs but does not change the entity responsible for conducting the inspections. PHAs, any approved alternative inspection method entity per 24 CFR 982.406 (further discussed in section XI) or, in the case of PHA-owned units, an independent entity (either the unit of general local government or HUD-approved entity),[17] will continue to inspect voucher program units.

C. HQS NSPIRE Enforcement

The PHA may continue to take actions to enforce owner and family obligations. This may include withholding or abatement of assistance payments to the owner, termination of the HAP contract, or potential termination of assistance to the family (in cases of tenant-caused damages). In accordance with HOTMA, certain remedies are now mandatory for contracts entered or extended after June 6, 2024.[18]

D. PHA Policy

PHA policy on matters for which it has discretion to set policies must be stated in its Administrative Plan. PHAs should also note that, in accordance with 24 CFR 982.54 and 983.10, all inspection performance standards and procedures for conducting inspections must be included in the Administrative Plan. If changes to the

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[16] See 24 CFR 983.103(a)-(c) for information on inspections prior to executing a PBV HAP contract.
[17] 24 CFR 982.4(b) definition of *Independent Entity*, 982.352(b)(1)(v)(A)(3), and 983.103(g).
[18] 24 CFR 982.404, 982.405, 982.406, 983.103, or 983.208.

Administrative Plan meet the PHA's definition of a Significant Amendment to the PHA Plan, the PHA will also need to amend the PHA Plan in accordance with 24 CFR 903.21.

X. SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES

NSPIRE makes no substantive changes to 24 CFR part 982, subpart M - Special Housing Types other than to update the definition of HQS. Housing that meets NSPIRE's affirmative habitability standards (24 CFR 5.703(d)) can be considered eligible for HUD assistance. Unless specifically modified by subpart M, NSPIRE standards will apply to these special housing types (i.e., Single Room Occupancy, Congregate Housing, Group Homes, Shared Housing, Manufactured Homes, Homeownership units). Beyond NSPIRE, all specific requirements found at subpart M still apply to these special housing types.

XI. ALTERNATIVE INSPECTION METHODS

NSPIRE did not alter existing flexibilities for PHAs to rely on alternative inspection methods. In accordance with 24 CFR 982.406, PHAs may utilize inspections of housing assisted under the HOME Program, housing financed using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), inspections conducted by HUD, or alternative methods otherwise approved by HUD[19] to comply with inspection requirements. Any alternative inspection method that is not HOME, LIHTC, or otherwise conducted by HUD, will need HUD review and approval.

After a PHA's implementation of NSPIRE, previous alternative inspection methods approved by HUD must be re-analyzed by the PHA against NSPIRE standards and resubmitted to HUD for review and approval.

PHAs that would like to rely on an alternative inspection method which requires HUD approval (i.e., not one of the pre-approved methods above) must submit a request to HUD via email at NSPIREV_AlternateInspection@hud.gov, copying the field office representative, with the subject: "Alternative Inspection Method, [PHA Code]." Requests for alternative inspection methods ***must*** include the following:

1. Name and code of the PHA requesting the alternative method;
2. A complete copy of the inspection method the PHA wishes to use; and
3. The PHA's analysis of the proposed inspection method showing how it "provides the same or greater protection to occupants of dwelling units" as HUD's current required standards (i.e., how the method will meet or exceed NSPIRE).

Any approved alternative inspection methods, including those already approved by regulation, must be identified in the PHA's Administrative Plan.[20] If HUD denies the use of alternative inspection methods, the PHA must revise its inspection protocol to meet the NSPIRE standards before February 1, 2027.

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[19] See 24 CFR 982.406, 24 CFR 5.703(g), and Notice PIH 2016-05.
[20] See 24 CFR 982.406.

XII. UPDATED INSPECTION FORM AND GUIDANCE

PHAs continuing to use HQS as previously defined may use forms HUD-52580 and 52580-A until they implement NSPIRE or until February 1, 2027, whichever is sooner. PHAs continuing to use these forms are reminded that they must implement all carbon monoxide and smoke alarm requirements into their inspections as stated in section IV.D.

Once a PHA implements NSPIRE, forms HUD-52580 and 52580-A, or any variation of these forms, are no longer applicable and must not be used. Upon implementation of NSPIRE, PHAs may use the NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist provided on HUD's NSPIRE webpage. HUD continues to accept feedback on the NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist. Any comments or suggestions on this checklist can be sent to NSPIREVQuestions@hud.gov (please use the subject "NSPIRE Tool Feedback").

For inspections conducted on or after the PHA's implementation of NSPIRE, this notice replaces all HQS guidance previously issued by HUD, including the *Housing Inspection Manual for the Section 8 Existing Housing Program,*[21] form HUD-593 (*A Good Place to Live*),[22] *Chapter 10: Housing Quality Standards* of the 2001 Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook,[23] and forms HUD-52580 (*Inspection Checklist HCV Program*) and 52580-A (*Inspection Form HCV Program*).[24] HUD will issue updates to guidance materials for HQS and NSPIRE at a later date.

XIII. USE OF SOFTWARE OR NSPIRE INSPECTION TOOL

HUD's NSPIRE-V Demonstration application has been decommissioned and is no longer available for any PHA.

HUD is no longer creating an application for PHAs to use and has paused any development of a software program of its own. PHAs that were planning to use an inspection application provided by HUD will need to prepare for another option. PHAs may utilize the NSPIRE standards available online, use an application provided by a commercial vendor that is based on NSPIRE standards, or the NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist located on HUD's website.

PHAs can choose to use HUD's checklist or any tool, software, or application that works best for them and their program as long as they comply with the latest version of the NSPIRE standards (currently 3.0). HUD notes that the use of a tool or application by a third party may not ensure full compliance with the NSPIRE regulations and standards and it is the PHA's responsibility to comply with current standards.

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[21] This manual is no longer in effect, but HUD recognizes that it may still be in use by some PHAs.
[22] *A Good Place to Live* is outdated and does not include all HQS as previously defined requirements, but HUD recognizes that because this form is still available on HUDClips, it may still be in use by some PHAs.
[23] This version of the HCV Guidebook is no longer in effect, but HUD recognizes that because this particular chapter has not been updated or superseded, it may still be in use by some PHAs.
[24] Forms HUD-52580 and 52580-A are outdated and do not include all HQS as previously defined requirements, but HUD recognizes that because these forms are still available on HUDClips, they may still be in use by some PHAs.

XIV. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HUD developed training that includes a combination of presentations, instructional videos, and webinars posted on HUD Exchange.[25] As the required compliance date approaches, additional training will be made available. HUD will also update the NSPIRE webpage with frequently asked questions, resources, updates to NSPIRE, and training for PHAs.

XV. CONTACT

For questions about this notice, contact Dana Kitchen, Office of Public Housing and Voucher Programs, at NSPIREVQuestions@hud.gov.

Benjamin Hobbs
Assistant Secretary
for Public and Indian Housing

[25] NSPIRE Online Inspector Training - HUD Exchange and NSPIRE Standards: How to Inspect - HUD Exchange