



## HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program Celebrates 50 Years



On October 16, 2024, HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

Speakers included researchers, current and former HUD officials, housing practitioners and program participants who helped highlight how the HCV program has evolved to help millions of low-income families, people with disabilities, and older adults access safe, decent and affordable housing in the private market. A recording of the events is available [here](#).

Learn more about the evolution and impact of the HCV Program in [PD&R's Cityscape, "Fifty Years of Tenant-Based Rental Assistance."](#) This special edition commemorates this milestone with research-based articles spanning fifty years of tenant-based rental assistance.

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## HUD Launches \*New\* HCV Landlord Resources Website

Landlords play a key role in the success of the Housing Choice Voucher program and HUD has launched a [new website](#) dedicated to supporting our landlord partners. The new website includes an HCV program overview, information on how to become an HCV landlord, required unit inspections, the leasing process, and Landlord testimonials. You will also be able to find your local public housing agency (PHA), sign-up for the bi-annual HCV Landlord Newsletter and access many other valuable resources. We're also available to answer your HCV-related questions, if you [email us](#) directly.



### 2024 Newsletter

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## Call for Landlords!



*Are you an HCV Landlord that has had a positive experience working with your PHA? Would you like to share your experience about which aspects of the program and partnership have worked well? We'd like to hear from you!*

Email us at [HCVLandlordSupport@HUD.gov](mailto:HCVLandlordSupport@HUD.gov)

## NSPIRE for Vouchers Updates

Inspections are a critical tool for helping HUD and landlords ensure that they provide safe and sanitary housing for assisted housing tenants. HUD published revised [Notice PIH 2024-26, REV-1](#) on August 9, 2024, which finalizes the administrative procedures of the National Standard for the Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) for the HCV and PBV programs. Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) administering the HCV program have until October 1, 2025, to implement NSPIRE but have the option of transitioning to NSPIRE earlier if they choose to do so. PHAs must communicate their plan to adopt NSPIRE to all participating landlords and families, this includes explanation of the NSPIRE standards and the date when these changes will take effect for their inspections.

To support a smooth transition to NSPIRE implementation, HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) has been working closely with PHAs and has begun developing helpful resources, some of which are highlighted below.



[NSPIRE for Vouchers Office Hours](#)

[Webinars and webcasts](#)

[NSPIRE Landlord Resources](#)

[NSPIRE Standards](#)

[NSPIRE Standards – How to Inspect](#)

[NSPIRE Checklist](#)

In addition, HUD will be hosting an NSPIRE webinar specifically for landlords on **February 26, 2025**. Information about the session will be posted on the [Housing Choice Vouchers Program Trainings and Resources page](#). Advance registration is not required. Sessions are recorded and posted afterwards with the presentation materials on the [Past Trainings and Webinar page](#).

Read more about [NSPIRE](#), find helpful resources and the latest updates.

## Be in the Know!

*Stay ahead* of the most common inspection issues. Below are **Common Inspection Deficiencies** that require additional attention and can prolong the inspection process. Utilize NSPIRE resources now, learn how to pass inspections and keep your units safe.

1. Electrical and Fire Safety Hazards
2. Window Conditions
3. Ceiling & Floor Conditions
4. Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors
5. Water and Sewage System Leaks

## New Smoke Alarm Requirements

To help PHAs and landlords comply with mandates from Congress, HUD will issue guidance addressing new requirements for smoke alarms. The **new requirements go into effect December 29, 2024**, and require all smoke alarms be either hardwired or 10-year sealed battery devices.

For voucher-assisted units built or substantially rehabilitated after December 29, 2022, smoke alarms must be hardwired (no sealed battery option).

All smoke alarms must provide notification for persons with hearing loss.

These new requirements will apply to all smoke alarms in the locations required of HUD Housing. NFPA 72 (National Fire Protection Association standard) requires smoke alarms installed on each level of the property, and inside and outside each bedroom in any dwelling unit. The NSPIRE smoke alarm standard is being updated to reflect these new requirements and will be published on the [NSPIRE Standards](#) webpage.

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## Fannie Mae's Expanded Housing Choice Initiative

On October 15th, Fannie Mae [announced](#) a nationwide expansion of their Expanded Housing Choice (EHC) initiative. This initiative is available nationwide in jurisdictions where there is no source of income protections in place for HCV participants. EHC offers a pricing incentive for multifamily property owners who accept Housing Choice Vouchers. Interested multifamily property owners can use the [eligibility checklist](#) to help determine if their property

is eligible for Fannie Mae's HCV pricing incentive. Visit the [Expanded Housing Choice website](#) for more resources, lender and borrower best practices, toolkits, and FAQs.

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## HUD Provides Guidance: How to Apply the Fair Housing Act to Screening of Rental Applicants

On April 29, 2024, HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity released [Guidance on Application of the Fair Housing Act to the Screening of Applicants for Rental Housing](#). This guidance explains how the Fair Housing Act ("Act") protects certain rights of rental applicants, and how housing providers can screen rental applicants in a nondiscriminatory way.

The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities. Learn more about rights and obligations under Fair Housing [here](#).

While some landlords may screen rental applicants themselves, others may choose to use a third-party tenant screening company. The Act applies to both approaches. Here are some best practices that landlords can implement to help their chosen approach to rental applicant screening align with the Act:

- **Choose Relevant Screening Criteria:** Screening criteria should be relevant to the likelihood that an applicant will comply with their tenancy obligations. Consider all types of relevant information; this may include expanded sources of income or other financial resources like Housing Choice Vouchers.
- **Use Only Accurate Records:** Ensure record accuracy. Results pulled from private databases are often incomplete. Common or similar names, missing key personal identifiers, and infrequent updates can result in inaccurate data.
- **Follow the Applicable Screening Policy:** Consider records within the scope of a housing provider's stated screening policy.
- **Be Transparent with Applicants:** Screening policies should be in writing, made public, and available to potential applicants. Share your screening criteria with applicants so they can make an informed decision whether to proceed, potentially saving everyone time and money. Once the application process is complete, inform any applicants of the reason for denial.
- **Allow Applicants to Challenge Negative Information:** Tenant screening companies commonly rely on records pulled from private databases they've built. The quality of these records varies. Give applicants an opportunity to dispute the accuracy or completeness of any negative information.

Landlords can screen HCV tenants in the same way they can screen market-rate tenants. Developing a non-discriminatory screening policy that aligns with the Fair Housing Act will help protect you and your prospective tenants.

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## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The last edition of the HCV Landlord Newsletter included information on what determines the rent price and how to submit comparable rental units with leasing paperwork. Find this newsletter and all prior HCV Landlord Newsletters on the HUD [HCV Landlord Resources Website](#).

**JOIN THE HCV LANDLORD MAILING LIST**

