



## OFFICE OF PUBLIC & INDIAN HOUSING

March 26, 2020

Dear Executive Director,

PIH's primary goal during the federal response to the COVID-19 emergency declaration is to support PHAs and tribes in keeping residents safe and remaining operational so you can continue to deliver critical services to our most vulnerable citizens. I want to thank you for your incredible efforts to date and I want you to know that, at the highest levels of the Department, we are constantly monitoring the situation on the ground and doing our best to minimize non-essential program requirements so you can concentrate on what matters most, helping low-income families.

With that in mind, I am writing to provide you with the status of the Inventory Management System-Public Housing Information Center (IMS/PIC) system. In my February 24, 2020 letter, I indicated the Department was planning to put an upgrade in place on March 13, 2020 to comply with security standards being implemented by mainstream web browsers. I also requested that public housing agencies (PHAs) refrain from using the IMS/PIC system from March 13 through March 23, 2020 in order to facilitate testing of the upgraded code.

PIH has completed the upgrade and testing. All users can now resume their regular activities in the system to the maximum extent practicable given your individual operational challenges. I am pleased to report that the vast majority of frequently used functions in IMS/PIC continue to work normally; however, there are some exceptions that I will outline below. Please know that we will work closely with you in addressing individual PHA challenges and we understand that it is not business as usual at this time.

The primary business process that is impacted by the upgrade is the processing of applications to remove public housing building and units from the IMS/PIC inventory module. PIH has successfully tested an alternate process; however, PHAs should note that this alternate process will require intervention by PIH field office staff and will likely add

processing time for inventory removal applications. In addition, important but less used functionality to manage changes to some tenant information (i.e., the Tenant ID Management submodule) will require HUD intervention. Again, HUD has developed an alternate process to handle the impaired functionality but it will potentially add time for processing these type of changes.

I want to thank everyone for their patience while we have gone through this period of testing. As I noted in my earlier letter, HUD continues to work with software vendors and industry partners on the eventual modernization of IMS/PIC (called PIC-NG) and will keep you apprised of our progress later this year.

One last thing I want to bring to your attention is that in some instances the system is generating errors that do not actually prevent a user from completing an action. It just forces the user to log completely out of the system and log back in to resume their work. PIH believes these log out errors primarily impact less used portions of the IMS/PIC. Please see the appendix to this letter for a more detailed explanation of the three errors.

PIH will provide more detailed information about the IMS/PIC issues at: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/reac/support/tac](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/reac/support/tac). PIH has also prepared the HUD REAC Technical Assistance Center (TAC) to be able to assist PHAs encountering problems with the system. If you have questions, or need assistance, please contact the TAC by phone: 1-888-245-4860, fax: 202-485-0280, or email: [REAC\\_TAC@hud.gov](mailto:REAC_TAC@hud.gov). Please note that because of precautionary measures related to COVID-19, the TAC is moving the location of its operations; therefore, there may be a delay in responding to inquiries while the TAC adapts to the change.

Thank you again for your patience as we deployed and tested this important upgrade to maintain the security of the vital data in the IMS/PIC system this past week.



David A. Vargas  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Real Estate Assessment Center

## Appendix: Description of IMS/PIC Issues

### Issue 1

**Description:** PHAs will not be able to process applications to remove public housing building and units from IMS/PIC. In addition, PHAs will not be able to submit inventory removal applications through the front end of IMS/PIC. PIH has tested an alternate process that will allow both processes to continue.

**Expected Occurrence:** PHAs submit approximately 18 inventory removal applications per week.

**Previous Process:** PHA fills out and submits inventory removal application in IMS/PIC System without HUD intervention.

**Alternate Process:** PHAs can input the vast majority of the information required to submit an inventory removal application and can upload attachments, but unfortunately will encounter an error when filling out a portion of the form (i.e., parts of Section 5 other than adding/subtracting buildings). PHAs will need to contact the TAC since it will require HUD staff to execute a database update outside of the system which could add one to two weeks to the time required to process an inventory removal application.

### Issue 2

**Description:** In some instances, the Tenant ID Management submodule will not work, and a PHA will not be able to obtain an alternate ID. HUD has developed and tested an alternate procedure that will allow us to issue an alternate ID.

**Expected Occurrence:** 5 to 10 of these adjustments per week.

**Previous Process:** PHA fills out and submits action to change tenant ID information in IMS/PIC System and the system processes the change.

**Alternate Process:** HUD staff will execute a database update outside of the system which could add one to two weeks to the time required to process the adjustment. PHAs must contact the TAC to request an alternate ID.

### Issue 3

**Description:** Our testing has confirmed a number of instances where users (both PHA users and PIH users) will attempt to perform an action where the system will display an error. In

most of these instances, our testing indicates that the system has actually performed the requested action even if the system displays an error message.

**Expected Occurrence:** Infrequent

**Previous Process:** PHA enters Alt ID request into IMS/PIC and the system functions without generating an error.

**Alternate Process:** The solution is to log completely out of the system and then return to the step that was interrupted and confirm that the system recorded the step and then proceed to the next step.

