



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

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

January 27, 2016

Board of Commissioners  
c/o Mr. Andy Clark, Chair  
600 Elmwood Place  
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Re: Results of On-Site Physical Inspection and Assessment Review

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is to convey the Results of the On-Site Physical Inspection and Assessment Review of the Alexander County Housing Authority (ACHA) conducted by HUD between January 20-21, 2016 and to advise you of the next steps to be taken by HUD.

During the On-Site Physical Inspections and Assessment, HUD reviewed documents, conducted interviews with staff and inspected a number of vacant, as well as occupied units. We would like to thank your staff for the assistance provided by the agency during our assessment.

The following is a list of assessments made during the On-Site Physical Inspections:

- All vacant units inspected still had garbage, debris, personal effects, food, furniture and clothing from previous tenants. This observation is important because HUD informed you during our PHARS Site Visit in September 2015, that all necessary steps should be taken to clean out vacant units as soon as possible.
- You have hired several (2) tenants under a Section 3 Plan, however they have been ineffective in the task of cleaning units, because most of the units identified in September 2015 are still not cleaned out. Also the two tenants hired are considerably overpaid, based on the Davis-Bacon Wage Act for your geographic area. Your staff was asked why the ACHA was paying \$14.00 per hour for part-time staff to clean out units, and the response was the union contract required this rate;
- In September 2015, the ACHA was given an opportunity to acquire a new pest control company to abate the problems with rats, roaches and bedbugs, however during the On-Site Inspection conducted January 20-21, 2016 tenants were still complaining about roaches in their units. More importantly, the State of Illinois set aside a special grant appropriation to pay for pest control services, and ACHA has failed to submit the necessary procurement documentation to receive the funds;
- During the On-Site inspection, it appeared as though the maintenance staff is

incapable of performing basic plumbing and electrical work; therefore outside vendors are required to be hired to perform these routine tasks, which is unacceptable because maintenance personnel at a housing authority should be capable of performing general tasks related to plumbing and electrical work;

- Your management and maintenance staff does not perform move-in inspections when new tenants are placed in units, which explains why the few new tenants being housed, are complaining about the condition of units they move into. HUD regulations requires that all newly occupied units undergo a move in inspection with the property manager and head of household moving into the unit;
- The ACHA does not openly advertise for your public housing units; instead applications are taken from individuals who come into the administrative offices and apply. There is never a published notice of opportunities to apply for housing at the ACHA. This practice by the ACHA is a violation of HUD regulations;
- Despite repeated attempts over the past 4 months by the Field Office, the ACHA have failed to provide a leasing plan for the vacant units at your developments.
- The ACHA Board of Commissioners is not providing the required level of oversight of the ACHA as demonstrated by the current default status of the Recovery Agreement, Action Plan and Voluntary Compliance Agreement;
- The ACHA has hired an executive director without the authorization required by the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, as required in the Voluntary Compliance Agreement signed by the Board of Commissioners in September 2015.
- The newly hired executive director is working at the ACHA, without a signed contract, which places the ACHA in a vulnerable legal position should anyone file a claim against the ACHA regarding his actions.

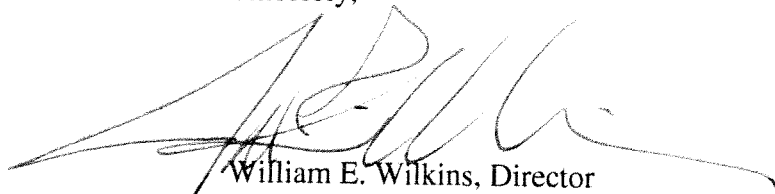
Additionally, the Field Office is providing you with a complaint filed by The Cairo Public Housing Advocacy Group for Change, and received on January 11, 2016. You are being provided with this complaint because of our ongoing concerns about the health and welfare of the residents living in your developments. More importantly, the accusations mirror many of the concerns we have stated to you and your staff over the past. Please note that a major reason for our On-Site Inspection and Assessment is to determine the validity of statements in the complaint.

There will be another On-Site Inspection and Assessment Review during the week of February 1, 2016 and the inspection will be focused on 72 occupied units. A letter is forthcoming from the Field Office specifying which units should be sent notices of inspections. Once you have notified the tenants occupying units to be inspected, we are requiring a copy of each notice sent and how it was delivered. This information should be provided to the Field Office by no later than Close of Business, Friday, January 29, 2016.

Finally, we will expect a response to the assessments identified in this letter by no later than Friday, February 19, 2016.

If you have any questions, please contact me by email at [William.E.wilkins@hud.gov](mailto:William.E.wilkins@hud.gov) or by phone at (312) 913-8300. Thank you for your ongoing assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Wilkins', written over a horizontal line.

William E. Wilkins, Director  
Illinois State Office of Public Housing  
Region V

Enclosure

cc:

Chalem Tatum, Chair  
Alexander County Board Chair  
2000 Washington Avenue  
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Judson Childs, Commissioner  
Alexander County Housing Authority  
433 – 38th Street  
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Irene McBride, Commissioner  
Alexander County Housing Authority  
600 Elmwood Place  
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Mr. Sydney Miller, Commissioner  
Alexander County Housing Authority  
600 Elmwood Place  
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Ms. Monica Smith, Commissioner  
600 Elmwood Place  
Cairo, Illinois 62914

Joanne Pink, Interim Executive Director  
Alexander County Housing Authority  
130 Richland Terrace  
Mounds, IL 62964

Jason Ashmore, Appointed Executive Director  
Alexander County Housing Authority  
600 Elmwood Place  
Cairo, Illinois 62914