



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

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

February 10, 2016

Board of Commissioners
C/o Mr. Andy Clarke, Chair
Alexander County Housing Authority
1101 Ohio Street
Cairo, IL 62914

Dear Mr. Clarke:

This letter is to convey the results of an On-Site Physical Inspection and Assessment Review of the Alexander County Housing Authority's (Housing Authority) dwelling units, conducted by HUD between February 2-3, 2016 and to advise you of the next steps required by the ACHA.

The HUD inspection staff included: Erik Sandstedt, Mike Siry and Edmond Allard, all from the Office of Public Housing. During the On-Site-Physical Inspection and Assessment, 72 occupied dwelling units were inspected, and a number of tenants were interviewed. We would like to thank your staff and tenants for their assistance during our visit.

The following list of assessments was made during the On-Site Interior Inspection of the 72 occupied units:

- Live roaches were seen, and there was also evidence of roaches in 30 units inspected. These pests were in all 3 AMPS, but AMPS 1 & 3 had most of the infestation. Housing Authority Staff informed HUD that the new Pest Control (McCloud Pest Control) contractor that had only provided service to the Housing Authority on one occasion (January 13-15, 2016) will no longer provide abatement services. The reason for McCloud Pest Control discontinuing services, as stated by staff was a concern for the security of their personnel. As a result of this action, the Housing Authority no longer has a pest control company under contract. Therefore, the Housing Authority must immediately solicit and properly procure bids for a pest control company to service all Housing Authority properties. The Housing Authority may use multiple vendors if it not feasible to procure a single contractor capable of servicing all properties.
- Exterior Locks – HUD staff were informed that a pass key held by a previous employee has not been accounted for, and tenants have complained to the Housing Authority about their units being entered with a key; as you know this presents a tremendous security risk for all of your tenants. For this reason the Housing Authority shall replace the master cylinder for all exterior locks and provide a

schedule for complete replacement of all exterior locks. Furthermore, the Housing Authority shall develop policies and procedures for recordkeeping related to properly securing the master keys, which shall include how master keys will be retained at the Housing Authority, upon termination of any employee leaving the Housing Authority. Moreover, this policy must indicate where and how the keys will be secured at the Housing Authority, and the process that will be used for on-call personnel.

- Inspections by HUD found a significant number of windows that were inoperable, or could not be unlocked. This presents a serious health and safety issue for the tenants, and the Housing Authority shall either repair or replace these windows. In order to ensure this safety issue is addressed properly, the Housing Authority must develop a plan for the immediate inspection of all 494 units, and either the repair or replacement of all damaged windows.
- During the interviews, bedbugs, mice and rats were reported by some residents. As such, the scope of services for the pest control shall include inspections, as well as treatments for bedbugs, roaches, mice and rats.
- HUD inspections also indented 29 dwelling units with electrical deficiencies, such as inoperable GFI outlets in the kitchens and bathrooms. Also, there were light fixtures missing bulbs, globes or had open sockets. Residents reported that some wall outlets were inoperable and damaged. Residents also reported that operation of microwave appliances or clothes dryers caused the circuit breakers to trip. One tenant reported being shocked when plugging into an outlet. This is clearly a health and safety hazard and should be addressed by the Housing Authority immediately. Some of the fuse boxes did not latch closed and at least one was not securely anchored to the wall. The Housing Authority shall inspect all outlets and fixtures and replace inoperable GFI outlets as well as inoperable wall outlets. The Housing Authority must immediately procure a qualified vendor to and have the electrical systems evaluated and provide a determination of electrical capacity limits for each unit. Additionally, efforts must be made by the Housing Authority to notify tenants of these issues to ensure they are not overloading the circuit breakers and causing possible fire hazards.
- Plumbing deficiencies were found in 29 units. These deficiencies include leaking faucets which are emergency repairs and must be addressed by the Housing Authority immediately. It should be noted that leaking faucets have damaged bathtubs coatings, and some bathtubs are in need of replacement. Upon receipt of this letter, a plan must be prepared by the Housing Authority indicating how units with plumbing problems will be repaired.
- Paint deficiencies were found in 28 units, primarily in AMP 1. Severe flaking of ceilings was occurring on the second floor ceilings and stairwell walls. The Housing Authority shall immediately procure the services of a vendor to evaluate whether or not the flaking paint is lead based. If a determination is made that lead based paint exists, the Housing Authority shall develop a plan to encapsulate and abate the lead based paint. The Housing Authority shall provide notices to tenants about the

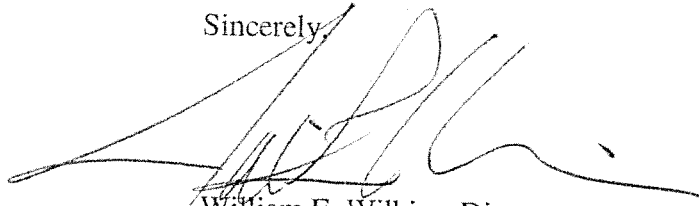
possibility of lead based paint and signed acknowledgements will be forwarded to the Chicago Field Office.

- Stove burners in a number of the units were found to be inoperable or unsafe due to the buildup of grease on the burner surfaces. The Housing Authority shall repair all stoves to ensure that range burners/elements are functional. Range hoods fans and lights are in some cases inoperable. These repairs must be made immediately upon receipt of this letter. The range hoods and filters should be changed or inspected for grease build up.
- A number of interior doors had hardware and surface damages, as well as some doors were also missing. The Housing Authority must inspect all 494 units and determine which interior doors for damages and either repair, replace or remove the doors based upon an assessment of whether the door is necessary.
- The Housing Authority shall provide HUD with their “charge policy” and all records for charges to residents for damages they assessed to tenants between calendar years 2015-2016. If tenants are not being charged for damage to units, the Housing Authority must adopt policies and procedures to cover these extra costs and shall inform the tenants of such in a formal notice.
- Smoke detectors are being removed or made inoperable by tenants. Tenants reported that the smoke detectors routinely were activated by cooking vapors. The Housing Authority shall immediately ensure that existing smoke detectors are connected and safely operating in all 494 units.
- Some units had CO detectors but were not found in all units. HUD mandates that all units are required to have CO detectors installed; as such the Housing Authority must immediately begin the process of installing these CO detectors and provide HUD with documentation to verify this requirement has been completed.
- Inspections are not being completed by the Housing Authority for maintenance or housekeeping issues. Some dwelling units have blocked emergency access conditions in front of bedroom windows. The Housing Authority shall schedule inspections of all 494 units for an assessment of conditions and identification of required maintenance.
- A number of units had coaxial cable run up the stairs and across the floor which is a tripping hazard and improper installation issues. This condition is a serious health and safety issue, and the Housing Authority shall submit a schedule for inspection of all (494) units in their inventory and either repair or remove the tripping hazard in all of the units.
- The Housing Authority must provide HUD with copies of all current elevator certifications from the certifying entity (State, County or City) responsible for inspecting elevators and authorizing continued use based on safety factors.

- Other issues found included: damaged or inoperable kitchen cabinets and drawers, floor tile missing or damaged, damaged counter tops, knobs and hardware damaged in units.

Finally, we will expect a response to the assessments and recommendations stated in this letter by no later than Friday, February 29, 2016. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (312) 913-8300.

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