

## HOPWA Flexibilities Webinar\_ Virtual Inspections

Morgan: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you all for taking the time to be here. We're going to go ahead and get started with today's webinar on HOPWA Flexibilities and Virtual Inspections. Before we do, I wanted to just go over a couple of logistical points. The first is that this webinar will be recorded for your reference later. It will be posted on the HUD Exchange just as soon as we can get it up there, probably in a week or two. However, the webinar is currently available as a handout in your handout section of your go-to webinar panel. So, if you want to download that and follow along today or save that for your reference from the handout section [00:10:00] today you're welcome to do that.

Also in your handout section is a tool that's going to be referenced that you can also download and are welcome to save. However, if you don't want to save those today those will be posted alongside the webinar recording on the HUD Exchange. Today's presentation is also going to include a few video files as examples. Those will be available as well for reference and posted on the HUD Exchange after.

The second main point I wanted to go over was questions. You should all have joined in mute to just to keep feedback, background noise to a minimum so we can all hear. If you, for some reason are not in mute or if you're joining on phone and somehow your phone is not on mute, if you could please just remember to mute yourself that would be greatly appreciated. If [00:11:00] you have questions throughout, we encourage you to ask any questions you have either in the question box of your go-to webinar panel or the chat box, whichever you have and works for you.

There will be a time for answering questions at the end of today's webinar. If we don't get to everyone's question, which is highly likely, please don't panic. We'll be following up with unanswered questions offline. With that, I think we're going to dive in to do a few introductions. Today, joining us we do have some stuff from HUD's Office of HIV housing, who they're going to be available at the end of the presentation to help answer any questions or comments on what we go over. [00:12:00] Rita, Ben, Amy; did you guys want to say hello quickly? Okay, I'm not able to hear you. Rita, are you there?

Rita: Hi. This is Rita Harcrow, and thanks everybody for joining. We'll be here at the end for questions.

Morgan: Thank you so much. We appreciate you [00:13:00] all being here. For the presenters today, this is Morgan Stephenson from the Cloudburst Group.

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With me, from Cloudburst I have my colleague Steve Ellis and Heather Rhoda.

Heather: Hello, everybody.

Steve: Hi, everyone.

Morgan: Thank you, guys. With that, I will pass it over to them, and we'll dive into today's content. Thank you.

Heather: You can move to the next slide, Morgan. Thank you. Hi, everybody. Again, welcome. Thank you for joining today's webinar. As you may recall, there were two memoranda released on April 1<sup>st</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup> this year, which included the flexibility to utilize a waiver allowing for HOPWA Habitability Standard Inspections to be conducted virtually. Additional information [00:14:00] about how to access both memos is included in this presentation on Slide number 26. The waiver provides flexibilities for HOPWA grantees and project sponsors to visually inspect any unit using technology.

This technology can include live video streaming, prerecorded videos, and photographs to ensure that the unit meets HOPWA habitability standards. Today, we're going to cover some important topics regarding virtual inspections and also show some examples of various virtual inspection methods, all of the three I just previously mentioned. Also, during this webinar, you're going to learn what it means to conduct a virtual inspection, how to manage the different types of virtual inspections, as well as how to plan for and implement virtual inspections flexibilities. [00:15:00] Next slide, please?

What is included in the waivers about inspections? In summary, initial inspections for initial lease ops must continue, but the waiver, as previously mentioned, allows grantees and project sponsors flexibility in how the inspections are conducted. Grantees who have notified HUD of their intent to use this flexibility may conduct initial lease op inspections using technology; live streaming, prerecorded video, or photographs. HOPWA habitability procedures currently in place, though must be updated to include use of virtual inspection methods and also include a requirement to [00:16:00] conduct in-person, on-site inspections after special measures are no longer needed. Next slide?

Thank you. Are there any flexibilities for conducting annual inspections? The first slide I was talking about was focused on initial inspections, so yes there are flexibilities for conducting annual inspections though a waiver is not required for this. Annual, in-person, on-site inspections may be postponed or they may be conducted virtually. In either case, if you're going to postpone

them or conduct them virtually your current policies and procedures should be updated accordingly. During the annual recertification process, the process for which [00:17:00] you were gathering information about household income, assets, et cetera to determine continued eligibility, HUD does expect that program staff will, at minimum check-in with clients about the condition of their units, particularly if annual inspections are going to be postponed or delayed.

Part of that, as part of checking in with your clients during the annual re-inspection process, if you're going to be doing it, postponing it, or conducting virtually, you could ask your clients similar questions such as, is the smoke detector operating correctly? Are you having any issues with the refrigerator or stove? Do you have any broken or cracked windows? Basically, checking in with your clients to make sure that there aren't any issues going on with the unit so that you can work with them to [00:18:00] get those issues fixed.

You could include that as a list as part of your annual recertification process in your paperwork and just have a dialog and communication back and forth with your client in the assisted household about the condition of their unit. Next slide? This is where Steve is going to take over, and we're going to talk about, what does it mean to conduct a virtual or remote inspection?

Steve:

Right. As we start to dive in, go ahead and move to the next slide. When we talk about conducting virtual inspections, we're referring to conducting inspections via live streaming, prerecorded videos, or photographs. If you [00:19:00] do use photographs, it's usually in combination with some other methodology as you'll see through some examples later. To make sure that we're all on the same page for what we mean when we talk about these three methods, live streaming means that from a remote location HOPWA program staff is live with the landlord or a client or someone else in the unit during the inspection and walking them through an inspection basically as if they were conducting the inspection themselves.

Examples of software platforms for live streaming could include Zoom, Go to Meeting, Facetime, or anything similar like that as you've probably been using professionally and personally for the past few months. When we talk about prerecorded videos, we mean in most cases the landlord or a client or someone representing the landlord taking videos of all areas of the [00:20:00] building, inside and outside of the unit, and HOPWA program staff are then reviewing those videos as they would as if they were on-site.

Finally, photographs mean in most cases someone taking pictures of all areas of the building, inside and outside the unit, and HOPWA program staff would be reviewing those videos to make sure it meets whatever inspection requirements your program uses. It's pretty obvious that there are differences

between these virtual methods, but it's important to understand these differences because this is going to affect how you plan for, implement, and manage these inspections.

Before we dive into more specifics on these topics, we thought it would be a good idea to show you what it would look like. So, Cloudburst conducted a mock inspection on a vacant [00:21:00], two-bedroom unit in our area using all three of these virtual methods. We have a total of four videos, two sets as you'll see, and each set focuses on a particular area of a unit. We're not going to show an entire inspection video as that would be much longer probably than we have time for, but you'll see just some little clips and then we'll compare those clips.

The first set is taking place in a bathroom where we're going to look at the bathroom sink. The second set is looking at a living room window, and what you'll see is myself, Steve, acting as the HOPWA program staff and Heather acting as the landlord. A little more background as you watch these virtual inspections that we conducted; we just wanted to give you a little background on our mock family. [00:22:00] For this particular inspection we have a family that's using TBRA, that's moving to a new unit in a neighborhood that's pretty close to the client's workplace.

It's worth noting that the client has two children, both girls under the age of 6, and the building was constructed prior to 1978. We already know that the gross rent for the unit meets rent standards and rent reasonableness, so, therefore, the HOPWA program staff, Port Landing, scheduled an inspection with the landlord.

Before the inspection, we talked with the landlord, Heather about some things that she should be aware of, so she didn't go in blindly when she was doing these particularly when it came to these three different methods. Without further ado, let's look at live streaming of the bathroom sink.

Steve on video: Lights [00:23:00] both seem to be working. While you're at the sink, can you turn the sink on for me?

Heather on video: I know normally you might want to check the water temperature. That is something you could follow up with with the tenant, but I can tell you, touching it, it's warm.

Steve on Video: Yeah. I'll make sure to note that it is warm, and then what I'll do is once the tenant moves in I'll just confirm with them also for our files.

Heather on Video: I'll leave it running for a minute. You could see that everything is secure. There's no leaking. There hasn't been evidence of leaking. You could see

that the wall is solid. There's no stains. I can even feel in the piping here that the water is warm or cool on the side.

Steve on Video: Thank you for leaving the water running because it also shows that it doesn't seem like your pipes are backed up or clogged at all.

Heather on video: Yeah. [00:24:00] There's a trap, too that's in the sink that is working well up and down.

Steve on video: So, as you can see through our Zoom call for this inspection that was one example of looking at just one portion or one component of one room, in particular the bathroom sink, the sink itself, the water, and underneath. For comparison, now let's look at a prerecorded video that our landlord, Heather took of the exact same area.

Heather on video: Now, I'm going to turn on the sink. The water is warm, but again please confirm that with the tenant. [00:25:00] We'll leave it running a bit so we can see if there's any leaks or evidence of leaks. There's no staining on the wall behind where there might be water leaking or water dripping, and there's no staining coming down to the linoleum. We'll turn that off.

Steve: As you can tell, our landlord was pretty well prepared for what it is that she needed to show us for the bathroom sink.

Heather: Thankfully, to the lengthy conversation and planning that I was able to have with Port Landing Rental Assistance program staff.

Steve: And then, our last example before we compare the three are photographs of the [00:26:00] exact same component, the bathroom sink. There we go. There are pictures of the bathroom sink. As you can tell, as we've mentioned these three different virtual inspection methods are all radically different, and they're going to radically shape the work that you're going to need to do beforehand, during, and after. Particularly, as someone who is portraying the HOPWA program staff, I particularly when we were doing the live streaming I basically was instructing the landlord where to go, so that way I could see anything that I needed to see as I filled out my form. As you could see, I was also taking notes, not just for my own follow-up, but also for things that would be impossible for me to know [00:27:00] until the tenant gets there.

The one thing you'll hear us say a bit throughout these inspection webinar are that inspections are very interactive, with all of your senses – your sight, your smell, your touch – so, some of the things that I would definitely be following up with the client once they move in was the water temperature. I believe the landlord. I took the note that the hot water was hot and the cold water was cold, but I'll still follow up with the tenant just to make sure that

that's true because they'll be the judge to let me know if it meets what they think it needs to meet.

The videos, the prerecorded videos were clearly a little different. I did not have the ability to instruct in the moment, but as Heather had mentioned, Port Landing gave the landlord a lot of information. Some of those specifics we'll go over a little later how you prep for that, but the landlord was well aware of what I needed to see and how I needed to see it as well as going slow enough that [00:28:00] I could catch it. Then, later on after the landlord sent me this clips through some secure method, I was able to watch them and re-watch them and pause and fill out my inspection paperwork and same idea, take any notes that I needed to take.

Finally, as you can see here, the photographs for program staff not as telling. As we had mentioned, that's why usually these are done in conjunction either with some other method, like the live stream or prerecorded video, or there would be quite a number of pictures to make sure you can capture everything, including some intensive follow-up with the tenant. Heather, as the landlord, what were some lessons that you can share through these three methods in the bathroom?

Heather:

As far as the live streaming, it felt a lot more comfortable than we would catch everything [00:29:00] in the first round of the inspection because it felt like you were almost there in the unit doing the inspection with me. Being the landlord, I had some experience with other housing programs doing inspections, so I was a little bit familiar with how to go through a unit. The live streaming was definitely more comfortable because it felt like you were right there and I could ask questions. Like you said, you could direct me where to go and we could keep it organized and focused on exactly what we needed to do.

The recordings were good, too although I think that some of the recordings might have been a lot of recording because I wanted to make sure that as for rent staff you received enough information. Also, too if I did have a question while I [00:30:00] was recording you did know ahead of time the day that I was doing the inspection. You said that you would be available and that I could call you if I had a question or if I forgot something. The photographs, although here in this picture you could certainly see that there's no water damage, there's no evidence of leaking, so that supports that. Definitely, using the photograph in conjunction with either live streaming or a recording or as follow-up to something we might have missed does make a lot of sense.

Steve:

I think that idea of follow up, particularly using photographs, can be really key. If you've already done a live streaming or a series of prerecorded videos and maybe there was something that you needed follow-up on that doesn't

necessarily mean me, as the program have to ask the landlord to go back in and do [00:31:00] another live stream, but it could just be, here's a small component that the landlord needed to fix or the property needed to fix. When you get that completed, if you could take a photograph and send that because that photograph in conjunction with this other method is a really good follow-up without all of the additional work of scheduling something, make sure it's secure, someone emailing clips. It's a lot more smooth as the end of your inspection process.

Heather: Right. I also noticed, too that we had talked about these photographs that they're not like date stamped or time-stamped or noted on the photograph itself what sink this is that I'm inspecting. Generally, you're only going to have one bathroom, but there could be a half bathroom, so what sink is this and where is this? It would be a lot more intuitive and [00:32:00] you would hear that either in the prerecorded inspection or the live streaming inspection.

Steve: For those of you listening, also feel free if you have any questions or other things you've noticed about these three examples. Please throw it into the questions or chatbox. Particularly, a lot of you on the call, on this webinar are those who are doing these, so throw in some tips. What we're really trying to show you all is a framework, an idea of how you can do these. For those of you who also do this, particularly, throw in those tips.

This was one set, as I had mentioned because we're focusing on one component, the bathroom sink. For a whole other set to really drive home these comparisons we also want to compare a living room window, what that would look like with the three methods. Let's go ahead and view the live stream living room window [00:33:00].

Steve on video: Starting with that window that faces the road, can we check the windows to make sure that they work, that they're open, and that while you're there about any peeling paint, any dust, anything like that.

Heather on video: Here's the first window. It's like a big sort of picture window setup. It's currently locked, so what I'm going to do is go through and unlock all of them and leave them up so they all stay up.

Steve on video: Great.

Heather on video: Also, this is to the ground right here. You're seeing the front.

Steve on video: So, also still [00:34:00] at first-floor level.

Heather on video: Now, I'm going to shut them so you can see that they're all locked. There. This is the windowsill itself.

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- Steve on video: Looks solid. I don't see any peeling paint.
- Heather on video: This is a little bit of scratching, maybe like some heavy plants on here, but it's not peeling or chipping. It's certainly a very tiny area.
- Steve on video: Right, and as we had talked about before, you went in the unit, right where a certain amount of where they might be – it's clearly below and certainly level, but I did make a note so that you and your maintenance guy and particularly the tenant [00:35:00] will all keep an eye on it to make sure it doesn't get worse.
- Steve: As you can see from the live stream video, there was a lot more that was required when we were looking at something as simple as a window, so opening and closing, staying open. Particularly, as we mentioned our family has two minor children, and the unit was built before 1978, so we did have to worry about chipping, peeling, cracking paint in a visual assessment. We'll get into that in just a little bit, some things that we were able to walk the landlord through in that moment. So, in comparison let's look at the same living room window via a prerecorded video.
- Heather on video: I'm here at the unit for our new tenant, and I spoke to the [00:36:00] local rental assistance program staff, and I'm just about done doing a video inspection for them. Here, I'm just looking at the bay window set up here for the living room. It's looking out onto the street, and as you can see there are no chipping, cracked, broken window panes, and I'm just going to unlock each of them and open them so the inspectors can see.
- The inspectors can see that once they're opened they stay open. They [00:37:00] all stay open, and they shut easily. The locking mechanisms work. Also, another window sill; in the other video, I was looking for peeling, chipping, cracking paint, making sure that the paint is stable, no paint is separating and there's no wood separating. Nothing; this is all newly-painted property several years ago. There's no peeling.
- Steve: Great indeed, landlord. You can see we tried to get a similar method there, but it took a lot more prep work to get through that. For the final comparison [00:38:00], let's look at the same living room window via some photos. You'll see on this first slide we have three pictures of the windows showing them closed. We get a sense maybe of what might be chipping, peeling cracking, but at least we have an idea of the windows themselves. Next slide?
- There's some pictures of the windows being open. This was another example of us just looking at one component of one room as part of our inspection process. We focus on this component in particular because as you are doing a



lead-based paint visual assessment, looking for chipping, cracking, peeling paint inside [00:39:00] and outside of a unit, when applicable, which was for this mock family. We really wanted to focus in on a component that might be more likely to have issues, like a window. If that window didn't close all the way, if the window leaked, if there was a small crack there's a good chance that water had gotten in and those components, particularly the frame, might be a little soft. They might be a little mushy. It might be more likely to be chipping, peeling, and cracking if not now maybe in the future.

From a program side, you can see particularly the live stream video, being able to ask the landlord in particular what to show as I took notes. You can see there was that little dent that we were able to clarify, that it wasn't soft, it wasn't chipping, it wasn't peeling, but in that moment I was able to take a note that I could keep an eye on that in the future. Knowing that there's two children, both under the age of 6, there's a good possibility I'm going to have to worry about lead-based [00:40:00] paint for a number of years in this unit. I can also then notify the client to keep an eye on that particular section of the window.

The prerecorded video was also good. I was able to tell what I needed to tell, write off what I needed to write off. As I had mentioned before, as I was taking the notes and filling out a form I had to pause a few times, backtrack a few times, but at least it answered everything. You'll notice in the prerecorded video, the landlord didn't address the issue of that little divot that we know from the live stream video wasn't an issue, but it's something that I did notice through the video, so I would probably have to follow up with the landlord just to clarify what that is and make sure it was fine.

Finally, our windows, as you can tell, as I mentioned you can see three windows closed. It looks [00:41:00] like no issues with paint, but it's very hard to tell. And then, the landlord sent two pictures of open windows so that I will definitely have to follow up with the landlord and ask about the third window. Potentially, particularly for a lead-based paint visual assessment, use some other sort of virtual method so I can make sure that there's no issues around the window. As the landlord, Heather was there anything you wanted to add?

Heather:

I think just the same comments as before, when we were doing the live streaming. Program staff was able to direct me through exactly what they wanted to see, and I could open the windows, leave them open to show that they're going to stay open because that would be a safety issue for the children. You don't want windows that are going to open and [00:42:00] then fall down on little hands. I was also able to show in real-time that there weren't any broken, missing, cracked panes that the windows locked, and you could see that I couldn't open it up after it was locked.

The same with the prerecorded; you'll notice that the live stream and prerecorded are similar, especially if you put in some pre-planning for the inspection, except that the live stream it's almost like you're a landlord. Like I said before, you're the landlord in your unit, in the vacant unit, just as you would be with program staff doing the inspection. It's just the program staff is at a remote location and you're in the unit instead of the program staff being in the unit with you. So, they're similar.

The photos, again definitely [00:43:00] I could see program staff wanting to follow up because you can see that there aren't any cracked panes, but it would be hard to tell if they lock. It would also be hard to really, clearly see if there was any peeling, chipping, cracking paint. For folks that have been doing inspections for a while, that's an area which often tends to have chipped paint, peeling, or cracking from just putting plants on the window sill and just that windows get a lot of use. They get a lot of wear and tear opening up and down, up and down, so paint can get rubbed off.

That would be difficult to see with photographs, but with good planning, pre-planning, and closed planning you could use photographs along with remote methods [00:44:00] like a prerecorded video or even live streaming as a follow-up. It's definitely helpful to have program staff available during the inspection absolutely.

Steve:

Agreed. Before we move on, I just wanted to thank you both. I was looking at some of peoples' suggestions and comments for this, and you guys all have some really great suggestions and some keen set of eyes, so I'm feeling good about the inspectors right now out there. Thank you all for your hard work, and there's also some great questions that we will get to in a little bit. I wanted to thank people who are definitely – you have a good set of eyes, so thank you for that.

Now that we've looked at some examples, let's go bigger-picture again. If we can move on to the next slide? We had defined these three methods and we looked at [00:45:00] examples, so we're all 100% hopefully on the same page. When we break down live streaming, as you can tell it was highly interactive, in the moment. The landlord and I were able to go back and forth, and it was almost like I was doing in-person inspection. These clips were part of an hour-long inspection of this entire two-bedroom unit, starting from outside so I could see the address. I got to see the street. I got to see the outside of the building. We moved into common areas. We were able to follow a similar path along the unit, always sticking to our right in this particular instance, so it was easy for me to document.

It was very interactive, so by the end of this entire process I had a fairly good

sense and was fairly confident that this unit would pass inspection because I saw it, [00:46:00] I had the landlord touch things, I had taken some notes, so once the client moved in I could be 100% sure. It was interactive in that moment, but as Heather had mentioned, we did have to do some pre-work for this, so that live streaming in this particular example we happened to use Zoom because with Zoom we could have a password-protected room. That way, I was sure who was joining. The Zoom participant waited in the waiting room of the call until I could let them join, and then from my side, I was able to keep an eye to make sure no one else joined, that someone didn't hack into the room and was watching.

In this particular example, we used an empty unit because we're showing it to everyone and recording it, but not every unit is empty. That was the other thing to be mindful of in live streaming. It's a lot easier to control confidentiality [00:47:00] if you have a good conversation before. Next slide? Our prerecorded videos were also highly interactive, but it was more interactive before the recorded video, so in our planning process. When we were doing this mock inspection, we had walked through everything I would need to tell Heather for an entire unit. That included sharing some of the forms that I was going to have to fill out, so that she could see, and then going into some of the specific things that we had to focus on because of the particular family.

The landlord and I had to have a conversation about lead-based paint and a visual assessment and why it mattered and why it would continue to matter so that as the landlord recorded all of these videos of different rooms, including the sink [00:48:00] and including that living room window, she could really focus in on that. She could make sure that as she sent me those through some secure method that I could keep looking at them and make sure that it met not only my inspection requirements but that lead-based paint.

As you can tell, we weren't able to interact. Clearly, it's prerecorded, so there are some things I definitely needed to follow up on that I wasn't able to see or know during the inspection or things I had questions about. Next slide? Our last method, the virtual inspection's photographs were also interactive but really just in that planning phase.

As Heather and I were planning this mock inspection at this unit, this method took a lot more [00:49:00] time. I really had to explain what was needed and what things she had to focus in on so that I could even have a sense. For this particular method, we had talked about maybe this was the only methodology that this particular landlord could do. As you can tell, this landlord had a smartphone, so she could use her iPhone for all the methods.

Particularly, if there was a landlord who couldn't do anything but this, but it

was very hard and we could not interact at all during the inspection, so it required a lot of back-and-forth and follow-up on things such as that third window, whether or they locked. As I was looking at some of those photos trying to get close-ups and maybe even pictures with the flash on, so I could make sure there was no chipping, peeling, cracking paint, but as I had mentioned before, a lot of your inspections, as you all know, are interactive [00:50:00]. You use your senses. You have to be there in the moment to know some things.

One thing that we definitely could not do via photograph was testing the smoke detector. That was something that in that moment I had to ask the landlord to take a video of so that we could test the smoke detector to make sure it was working, that the sound was working, that it was working in each and every room, that there was a smoke detector needed not only for habitability requirements, but in the particular city where this unit was, they have more strict smoke detector requirements. It took a lot of videos to really get a sense of all those smoke detectors working and the same for the lead-based paint visual assessment.

It was tough to do with photographs, so it required some sort of follow up with video so that I could be confident when doing my visual assessment whether or not it met those requirements. Landlord [00:51:00], is there anything you wanted to add for these three methods?

Heather: There isn't, no. I think that there are nuances to each, as we'll get into when we start talking about how do you manage the different type of virtual inspection methods.

Steve: Next slide? Let's jump right into that. As Heather had talked about, how do we manage these? They can be a little difficult to think through, a little unruly once you do them, so let's go ahead and go to the next slide. These are just some key elements on the live streaming virtual inspections [00:52:00]. By no means does this cover everything. By no means would this cover everything in your particular program, so as always if you are a project sponsor and you have specific questions definitely check with your grantee about some of these. If you have particular requirements for your city, your state, definitely look into those and factor those in, but these are just some high-level elements.

We had mentioned this was highly interactive in the moment and that I was remotely present during the inspections. While I wasn't physically there, in a way I was there in the moment. Some management of this required me providing the landlord with information about the items and current information forms by checklist. That way, our preparation call didn't take too long, and our inspection wasn't super-long, which you'll see a little later on

this slide. Anything [00:53:00] that I could do beforehand I definitely wanted to do.

We also, for management purposes I had to have a conversation with the landlord how the live inspection would occur. We talked about what software we were able to use, I had talked about what they can expect by making sure that, for example, that the landlord's phone was fully charged. They had to download Zoom, they would be put into a waiting room once they joined; all of those things that they didn't think the inspection wasn't happening.

We also talked a little bit about confidentiality as part of that live inspection. On the live inspection, the full one, we only use initials. We never use the client's name. That way, just in case anyone was listening as they walked by the landlord we were keeping confidentiality. One thing that we also did was we practiced before we actually did this. Basically, I talked to another [00:54:00] staff person about this inspection just to make sure it made sense because this was the first live streaming inspection I had done. Talking with someone who also does in-person inspections can be really helpful to help you refine what you're doing virtually to make sure it matches up as well as it can to in-person.

You also need to be aware of the pace of the inspection. As we talked about, you don't want to go too fast or too slow. There were some moments, as part of this whole inspection we could go through a little quicker but still asking the landlord to take her time. There was a number of times I would ask the landlord to focus on something again because I had missed something. I was also very clear during the inspection that the landlord would take a sweeping view of the room as she entered it. We would dive into the room specifics and then take another sweeping look at the end because that was something that I had practiced [00:55:00] when I was doing in-person inspections. That way, I was recreating what I had already been doing. Next slide?

A few other elements for live streaming; I had mentioned this, about making sure I asked the landlord about the type and technology they might have because live streaming might not be feasible. They may not have the hardware, they may not have the software. You will see references on this slide and throughout some of our other materials making sure that if we were going to use Wi-Fi that it was password-protected. If the landlord was going to use their data plan that it was also safe and secure, that no one could hack in, and also then talking about if they didn't have the hardware or software was it something that our agency, our program had decided to fund? How would we work that out?

As [00:56:00] always, be mindful of confidentiality. This live inspection was clearly live, and so the landlord was on video and so on speakerphone and

voices travel. This particular building has three units, and so the common area has to other doors. Particularly as we were outside and as we walked through the common areas, making sure that I, as the staff wasn't saying anything I shouldn't say that could break confidentiality and that we also weren't disrupting anyone else living in the unit during that moment as we were doing our back-and-forth.

Heather: We also have to be mindful, Steve if I could just jump in; as you're live streaming, but this was also photographs or when I was taking video there were some instances where other units were occupied. As the landlord, you would know who's [00:57:00] in the unit, but me pretending to be the landlord or program staff you need to be careful about any other people in the background and try to cut that from the photo or the live streaming or the video. There were a couple of times, Steve, if you remember where we stopped. There were people coming back to the unit, the common porch and stairs. We had to stop a couple of times and start again because we wanted to make sure we kept other individuals out of the recordings and the photos.

Steve: Right. Ideally in that situation, too the real landlord of that building had prepped the other tenants to know that someone was coming so they just didn't see someone wandering around with their iPhone, gloves, and mask taking a picture. So, that's another thing to let a landlord [00:58:00] know. They should let other tenants know what will be going on.

Speaking of background and surroundings, you'll see I was very mindful that there was nothing behind me or in my workspace that tipped the landlord off to the actual organization or program I was working for. At our offices, we have different things up, different agency names up, and particularly HOPWA-identifying posters or signs. Please be mindful of that if you're doing a live stream.

Heather: Not only that, your organization name or your agency name itself could identify someone being HIV positive or having an AIDS diagnosis because that could be the only population that your organization or your agency serves. So, it's really good as it's included here to have for your program, for the [00:59:00] HOPWA program and the rental assistance to have some kind of pseudonym name that really spells out and explains what the program is without saying the word HOPWA or without including your organization or agency name.

Steve: Next slide, and then Heather, do you want to talk about what are some management elements for videos?

Heather: Sure. Regarding the prerecorded videos, again highly interactive. During the planning phase, before you're actually conducting the inspection, and then of

course afterward; program staff, HOPWA program staff who were doing the inspection they're not remotely present during the time that the landlord or the landlord representative is recording the inspection. So, like with live streaming, it's a good idea to provide the landlord [01:00:00] with any inspection forms or checklists, and also with that schedule a call with the landlord to review the forms and checklists and answer any questions.

It's important, too you'll notice in some of the recordings I narrated what it was that I was doing. Part of that was to help the program and the program staff understand where I was in the unit and what I was inspecting. I would identify the windows in the living room or the sink in the bathroom on the first floor. Also, for program staff ask the landlord to notify you, the grantee, or the project sponsor, the day when they'll be conducting the inspection because that way you could make yourself available around that [01:01:00] time block. If the landlord did have any questions or you forgot something or were stuck on something, the landlord could give you a call and cover that right there in the moment instead of having to follow up on it after the fact. Next slide?

Regarding photographs, again interactive; during the inspection planning phase again similar to recording program staff are not remotely present. Some of the points here are similar to the other two slides. Provide the landlord with the current inspection form or checklist, schedule a call to review the form in checklist with the landlord, discuss with the landlord how to and what inspection [01:02:00] item should be photographed. Prep the landlord that there will be a considerable amount of photographs taken. Explain to the landlord that smoke detector testing and lead-based paint visual assessment will need to be accompanied with recorded videos. You need to hear the smoke detector going off. You need to see which room it is and if it's following your inspection protocol.

Also, with lead-based paint visual assessments, yes you could probably see some peeling and chipping from a photograph, but the recorded video gives you a multi-dimensional view of that surface area that might be affected versus just a photograph. Photographs should include a date and time stamp or also be identified, what room you're in, what window [01:03:00] is it, what bathroom is it, what bedroom, et cetera. Again, go ahead and ask the landlord to notify you when they'll be conducting the inspection because you could again make yourself available as the landlord is taking pictures and the landlord could call and make sure that they're covering all the inspection areas that they need to.

Steve:

Thank you. Next slide? How do you plan for an implement some virtual inspections in these different methods? Next slide? First, as you know particularly for initial inspections and some of the waivers that have gone out,

make sure to notify HUD of your intent to use these, the property standard waivers. You will also need to make sure that your [01:04:00] policies and procedures are updated for these virtual inspections.

As you can tell, and I can tell from a lot of the questions that people have been asking, there are a lot of details that you need to figure out. You're going to want to make sure that your program has a policy that outlines what it is you're going to do and the procedure that goes through a step-by-step of what different methods you're going to allow, of what you're going to do with videos, what you're going to do with pictures, what you're going to do with the live streaming video, how you're going to document, how you're going to follow up when you can do in-person. There's a lot of details.

To help you with that, you will see in our handouts a section of the go-to webinar. There's a guide to plan for implement HOPWA habitability, housing quality standards, virtual inspections. This particular tool will list a series of questions to help you come up with policies [01:05:00] and procedures updates for your program and how to write those out. It will also give you some handy tips for when doing a virtual inspection; what you do beforehand, what you do during, and what you do after. All of that can help drive your process for planning and implementing.

You might have to review and update your inspection informational materials, write some things that you give tenants, things that you give landlords, and even your inspection from might need to be updated. Keep that in mind. The inspection is part of a whole inspection process. You need to look at it all. Next slide?

You also need to train HOPWA program staff on these different virtual and remote inspections. You definitely want to train the inspectors, or you probably also want to inspect [01:06:00] those who might need to fill in or even case managers or other staff that clients might have questions when it comes to this. The more that are aware of this topic the better. For example, you could use this video once posted, this PowerPoint, or the accompanying guide as a jumping-off point for your training. Also, if you're a project sponsor check-in with your grant team to see if they have anything in particular that they would want to add or any training policies or procedures.

Make sure to assess the type of technology that you have on hand and identify if any upgrades to technology, either hardware or software, are needed to do any of these virtual inspections. Some of you know from previous webinars HOPWA funding may be used to support some of these costs. Finally, as you make these changes, as you implement virtual inspections, and write your policies and procedures, please make sure to be preemptive and [01:07:00] communicate these changes to clients, to



landlords, to case managers, to your community partners. As I mentioned, the more people that are aware the easier this is going to be.

This could also really be key if you are inspector for your program and maybe there's a team of you that do inspections or you're part of any groups, professional groups that all do inspections that you can share of these methods, some of your policies and procedures, and get some tips from others in the field as well. That way, everyone is aware and everyone's doing the best they can to make sure units pass habitability and families are safe.

Heather:

Also, too another point just going back to training HOPWA program staff, and this did work. Steve and I did this, although it has been a while since we have done [01:08:00] inspections. We have done inspections for years and years and have done inspections in many different types of units, but we knew that was going to be different. It's very different going in with your clipboard or your tablet, however you're doing your inspection. When you're meeting a landlord there and you're physically walking through the unit and you can see items, you can touch the hot water, you can see the neighborhood, so it's very different to then be on the other side of that directing someone else about where they need to go and what they need to look at.

It's a good idea to practice talking another person through conducting a virtual or remote inspection, particularly if you have some newer landlords that don't have a lot of experience with rental assistance [01:09:00] or subsidy programs because an inspection will be new to them. Other landlords who have been participating, for example with COC Rental, Continuum of Care Rental Assistance, Housing Choice voucher inspections, all those inspections are different. Still, they have a rough idea of what somebody will going into the unit and looking for in the unit itself and the building as a whole.

One last point about communicating policy changes; if you're part of an HIV planning council, if you work in a local planning group like the Continuum of Care or similar, make sure you're communicating any policy changes because other programs have similar [01:10:00] changes, not the same as HOPWA, but it's good to make sure that you're letting your partners know how inspections will be completed going forward and any changes that affect housing clients.

The last few slides – I don't know if we want to take a break and go through some questions – the last few slides are really reminders and information. We want to skip to the next slide. Slides 26 through to the end are just additional information and links and resources and things for you to be aware of, but what we could do [01:11:00] is take a break, go through some questions, and

then come back to this to make sure you guys get to see everything remaining in the rest of the presentation.

Steve: Sure.

Heather: Let me see. Let's go up here. I can shout them out. Can the methods be combined as a requirement? I'm assuming that means the virtual method, live streaming, recorded videos, and photographs.

Steve: Do you want to go ahead and answer that, Heather?

Heather: Sure. [01:12:00] You could combine the methods, absolutely. I think Steve touched on that. What you need to be aware of is to make sure that you are articulating what your policy is going to be in the addendum that you're going to include in your inspection policies and procedures. For consistency, it would definitely be good to use one method more than another, but I totally understand thinking about geography and where grantees are located, where their project sponsors are located, and especially in rural areas where internet may be spotty at best. You could certainly combine the various methods as long as they show and support that the unit and the surrounding building did meet HOPWA [01:13:00] habitability.

Steve: Great. Here's a quick question for OHH staff. I'll give you a moment to prep yourself, so if you need to un-mute. People want to know about, as a reminder, how do they request these waivers, and then how long the waivers are good for.

Amy: This is Amy. It's actually not a request process. It is a notification process for the waivers, so to use the waiver flexibility around inspections that was provided in the memorandum. The grantee must notify HUD through email that they're going to use the waiver, and there are email addresses [01:14:00] set up for each CP director, for each CPD field office. You can just send an email to them notifying them that you will be taking advantage of this waiver, and you just need to do that no less than two days before you anticipate using the waiver. I would just recommend consulting the memorandum that we put out just for more specific information on that.

For the timing, there were two different waivers that we put out. The first one was specifically for inspections for tenant-based rental assistance, and the second one expanded it, and that's for all housing. Assisted under HOPWA, that requires inspections and so the waiver is in effect for [01:15:00] one year beginning on the date of the memorandums. It's available for grantees and project sponsors that are able to visually inspect the unit using technology and have written policies and procedures to re-inspect the unit after health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are

no longer necessary.

The second waiver that expanded it to everyone, that was published on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, so it's in effect for a year from that. The first waiver memorandum was published on March 31<sup>st</sup>, [01:16:00] and that one was just for TBR.

Steve: Heather, do you have a question that you want to cover?

Heather: Yes. There are various questions. Do you have to save recordings of live stream videos, recorded videos, or photos, or can programs just complete their regular inspection forms and checklists and note on that checklist it was completed in whatever method it was completed in due to [01:17:00] COVID-19 safety concerns? Do you want to take that one, or would OHH like to take that one?

Steve: OHH, is there anything you want to add to that?

Amy: No, I think what you said is right. The documentation is important, but having the normal type of documentation that you're describing and explaining how the process was visualized through whatever methodology is important. I don't think it's critical to keep everything that's been put that way. Just have it so it's documented and the methodology was documented.

Heather: That should answer some [01:18:00] other questions, too where people are asking do we need to save photos? If we save them, how long do we need to save them? Really, the short answer is no you don't need to save them because some of the files will be quite large depending on the methodology that you're using, but complete your regular checklist and your form. You'd have information, too about the waiver, but you notified HUD about the waiver to conduct virtual inspections and note it on the form and how it was completed due to COVID-19. I think that answers a few of those questions.

Amy: And then, as you mentioned you may also want to remember and maybe keep a note of the fact that an inspection will be [01:19:00] required later.

Heather: Yes, absolutely and that's a good reminder, too. We talked about that at the beginning. If you're using the waiver for initial lease-up inspections, you will after safety measures have been lifted, you will need to go back and do on-site, in-person inspections for those units. Just be mindful of that.

Steve: It's probably worth documenting in the client file when you did your virtual method why you did that so making a quick note at the top of any inspection form write why you did that. We implemented the waiver, so this is the virtual method to meet the waiver requirement until those safety precautions are lifted. That way, it's clear to anyone coming in, whether that's a grantee

or HUD to monitor you, what you did, why you did it, and it triggers them to make sure that you had updated [01:20:00] policies for all of this that you actually put in the waiver. That little note in your documentation can really be key to showing that you're following what you should be following.

Heather: I want to make just a comment. Somebody submitted a comment that I thought was great. They wanted to point out that they found virtual inspections to be efficient and helpful to overall workflow and landlords they've worked with have also agreed. I just wanted to point that out, so thank you.

Steve: So, Heather I think a question that's on there that I think a lot of people are thinking about; our particular example, we had a vacant unit, so could you use these same methods for an occupied unit?

Heather: Do [01:21:00] you mean for if somebody was going to lease op in place?

Steve: Or, if you decided to use it for an annual inspection.

Heather: Yes, you could although remember you're not required. You can delay or postpone your annual inspection, but as part of your recertification process definitely make sure that you have a list, sort of a punch list of items that you're going to check in with the household about regarding the condition of their unit. Certainly, if public health directives, if it's allowable and you can do an inspection you could use any one of the virtual methods.

Steve: Right. Particularly, if you're going to use a virtual method for an occupied unit, [01:22:00] just make sure that it's very clear, particularly on some topics such as confidentiality. In our particular example, we were mindful of other people in the building. If it's occupied, you want to make sure that whomever is doing the inspection has already talked to the client about who else is going to be in the unit. Are they aware of your status? You could definitely do these, but you might want to tweak your methodology and your policies and your mindset just a little bit because of what could be in the background or whom else might be in the unit.

Heather: I wanted to clarify initial inspections. An initial inspection is an inspection that's occurring for the first time on a unit that's being newly leased [01:23:00] up. You could issue rental assistance to someone that's in a unit that doesn't have rental assistance yet through HOPWA and wants to lease op in place. So, you would be conducting an initial inspection on that unit, or you could have someone who was newly issued HOPWA TDRA and they're moving from their current unit to a new unit. You would do an initial inspection on that unit, or someone that has TDRA in their current unit and

moving to a new unit. An initial is always related to a new unit that someone is moving into because that unit hasn't had an initial inspection yet.

Steve: As well for that initial inspection, it doesn't necessarily have to be with the landlord. It should be [01:24:00] with someone who has access to everything that you're going to need to see. If there's a basement that they have access to, or all of those little things that maybe a landlord or property manager or a representative of the landlord might have a key to that a client or tenant might not. That should be part of your planning process about who are you going to do a virtual inspection with, do they have access to everything that you're going to do what you need to do?

Heather: Somebody asked where they could find the waivers, and I just wanted to – you could find those on the HUD exchange, but also too in the webinar, in the little box you have here where you're submitting questions or raising your hand [01:25:00] there's a box that says handouts. If you click on that, you can download a PDF of this webinar as well as the guide and links to both of those memos are included in the presentation itself.

Steve: We apologize if we didn't get to everyone's questions. We want to be mindful of time. As Morgan had said at the beginning, we will definitely make sure that people get answers to their questions offline.

Heather: Also, note that the clips will be available as well as a recording, and this presentation will also be available. I want to get back to, if we can, the presentation [01:26:00] so we can review some of the remaining slides. On Slide 26, like I said, there is more information about the waiver details, and both of the links included are live links. Thank you, Morgan. Next slide?

This is just stay informed, so you can make sure that you have all the information you need to know about HOPWA and HOPWA's response to COVID-19. You can sign up for the mailing list. There are directions here on this slide and additional information. All the links are also live. Next slide includes several resources. We encourage you to [01:27:00] select each of these and read through. The next one, HOPWA Ask a Question; if you have a question about the HOPWA program, a notice, waiver, implementing COVID-19 activities, we'd really love to hear from you, seriously. We love getting HOPWA AAQ's, so please go ahead and submit your question to the HOPWA Ask a Question portal. That link is live and there are directions on how to submit a question. Next slide?

Also, technical assistance is available, so HOPWA grantees can submit a request for individualized TA related to, responding to COVID-19 or regular HOPWA program administration. There are directions on this slide about how to submit a TA request. [01:28:00] Next slide? Coming Attractions;

please stay tuned. We have more webinars coming for all of you. Also, in August there's going to be a webinar about short-term rent, mortgage, and utility payments, otherwise known as STRMIU.

Also in August, we're going to be doing a webinar titled "HOPWA Program Intake, Initial and Annual Recertification" using remote and virtual methods, which will be laid out similarly to what we did here today during this webinar. Near the end of August, there will also be a webinar about supportive services. We hope you can all join. Stay tuned because there will definitely be information going out about how to register for each of those webinars. Next slide?

Some [01:29:00] reminders; make sure you're applying HUD guidance to the proper program. Remember, some of you might be, some grantees might be administering more than just HOPWA, so waivers and program guidance issued for other programs such as COC, Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant, otherwise ESG, in most cases don't apply to HOPWA. Grantees are responsible for notifying HUD of their intention to use waiver flexibilities and develop new policies and procedures associated with using those waivers. Grantee project sponsors are reminded to follow those plans and then update their own policies as outlined by their grantees.

Lastly, guidance related to funding, implementation of COVID-19 activities; there are things that are new [01:30:00] and changing every day, evolving, new information, different requirements emerging or occurring, so again make sure you're signed up and you stay tuned to the HOPWA listserv as well as the HOPWA COVID-19 page on the HUD exchange. There are a couple of links here about HOPWA COVID-19 guidance as well as HUD's community planning and development HOPWA COVID-19 link.

Lastly, we'll make sure to address all the outstanding questions that we were not able to answer during this presentation. In the meantime, if you have any questions about any of the material or any of the comments or examples that were shown to you today, please [01:31:00] feel free to submit a question to the HOPWA AAQ.

Morgan: Okay, that is everything. I just wanted to thank everyone again for joining today and stay tuned for all of these future webinars as discussed and answers to your questions that weren't answered today, and look for this webinar recording and all of its associated videos and materials to be posted on the HUD exchange shortly, no more than a few weeks. Thank you again for your time today. Have a great rest of your afternoon.

Heather: Thank you very much, everybody. As one last reminder, don't forget in the handout section there is a guide which you can use. It will help you plan for

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and implement [01:32:00] HOPWA virtual inspections. Walking yourself through that guide you could pretty much use that guide to create an addendum to your policies and also include some other quick tips and hints for conducting virtual inspections as well as the PDF version of this presentation today. It's also included in the handouts. Take care. Thank you.

Steve:

Be well, everyone. Thank you for all your hard work.