

WHAT TO  
CONSIDER



## DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND WORK ORDER BACKLOG



### Delayed Maintenance and Work Order Backlogs

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and caused PHAs to modify operations to minimize face-to-face interactions. Included in this modification of operations was a reduction and/or pause in non-emergency inspections, routine maintenance, and completion of work orders. Due to this reduced access to units during the COVID-19 pandemic, many PHAs are now faced with a backlog of routine maintenance, inspections, and work orders.

This informational handout focuses on challenges and concerns that tenants may need to overcome and strategies that PHAs can deploy to work with residents for gaining access to units for inspection and maintenance and to prepare for resuming annual inspections. Included are approaches for assessing deferred maintenance and backlog of work orders and maintaining safety for maintenance staff and residents while complying with health and safety guidelines.

### Challenges to Overcome from the Resident Perspective

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- The resident may be apprehensive to permit PHA staff into the unit due to fear of contracting COVID-19.
- The resident may not have a clear understanding of PHA's COVID-19 safety protocols.
- There may be hesitancy to report issues due to the resident not wanting maintenance to enter the unit, creating the potential for large issues if repairs are not completed in a timely fashion.

### Strategies for PHAs to Gain Access to Units

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- Communicate the importance of inspections for health and safety reasons so that mold and other hazards (including pest infestations) are addressed.
- Communicate inspection procedures well in advance and re-iterate them to ensure residents' comfort.
- Engage with the Resident Advisory Council when establishing plans to resume inspection services.

- Post information about the PHA's safety protocols on the PHA website, community boards, etc.
- Practice flexibility in scheduling to accommodate larger families with children remote learning.
- Use text notifications or other social media.
- Hold small group information sessions for questions and answers.

## Assessing Deferred Maintenance and Work Order Backlog

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- Determine which annual inspections, if any, were completed during the pandemic.
- Capture data on length of time since last inspection.
- Properly document inspections and ensure that staff is familiar with NSPIRE standards and have taken the HUD Visual Assessment CBT training.
- Begin to prioritize the work activity based on most "past due."
- Create a schedule for completing inspections.
- Schedule repairs according to severity.
- Consider the amount of time to be allotted for the maintenance team to address emergencies and backlog of work orders.
- Prepare for increased demand of supplies and materials.
- Know your current market, including availability of contractors.
- Prepare for the ongoing need of safety materials like gloves, goggles, masks, sanitizers, work overalls, and other protective gear.
- Consider third-party or temporary staffing or overtime pay

## Summary

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Please refer to the HUD Exchange website <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/pha-best-practices-during-covid-19-webinar-series/> for past recorded training sessions, informational briefs, and case studies.