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The Boston Housing Authority Did Not Always Comply with HUD’s Requirements for Its Housing Choice Voucher Program Units

WASHINGTON DC— Today, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report examining the Boston Housing Authority’s compliance with HUD’s requirements for its Housing Choice Voucher Program units, focusing on housing quality standards and monitoring and data collection requirements for cases of children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLL).

The Authority did not always ensure that its HCV Program units met HUD’s housing quality standards and did not consistently stop payments to owners who failed to correct unit deficiencies. This occurred because the Authority’s inspectors did not thoroughly inspect housing units in a consistent manner and the Authority’s quality control process for housing quality standards inspections had weaknesses. Further, the Authority’s information system did not have controls in place to stop payments properly and the Authority did not consistently follow its own established procedures to take appropriate actions to address unit deficiencies.

Additionally, the Authority did not comply with HUD’s monitoring and data collection requirements of the Lead Safe Housing Rule for cases of children with EBLLs. Although the Authority was aware of HUD’s EBLL requirements, it was uncertain about its authority to require owners to comply with those requirements and chose to not coordinate with local health departments for EBLL cases involving children 6 and under because it would have been too challenging. As a result, families participating in the Authority’s HCV Program resided in housing units that were not always decent, safe, and sanitary.

“It is essential that assisted units are decent, safe, and sanitary and that public housing authorities entrusted with operating housing choice voucher programs are properly identifying deficiencies and holding owners accountable for fixing them. The Boston Housing Authority is making efforts to improve compliance with HUD health and safety regulations. Doing so is critical to better protect those living in Voucher program units,” said HUD Inspector General Rae Oliver Davis.

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