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The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Did Not Adequately Manage Lead-Based Paint in Its Public Housing

WASHINGTON DC— Today, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Inspector General issued a report examining the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles' (Authority) oversight of lead-based paint and associated hazards in its public housing program.

California established the Authority in 1938, and it is one of first established public housing authorities (PHA) in the country. It is also one of the largest PHAs with approximately 6,300 public housing units in 14 public housing developments, the majority of which were constructed before the U.S. Consumer Products and Safety Commission banned lead-based paint in 1978 to reduce the risk of lead poisoning in children. To address lead-based paint concerns, HUD published its Lead Safe Housing Rule (LSHR) that established specific actions or procedures that PHAs are required to perform for lead-based paint hazards.

HUD OIG found that the Authority did not adequately manage lead-based paint and lead-based paint hazards in its public housing, including failing to perform timely lead-based paint visual inspections in an estimated 4,762 units. The Authority misapplied HUD's timing standards for annual physical inspections instead of applying the correct, more stringent standard for visual assessments for deteriorating lead-based paint. The number of days the visual assessments were late ranged from 31 to more than 500 days.

The Authority also did not conduct required risk assessments prior to starting lead-based paint stabilization projects at 5 of the 10 developments we examined. This included projects to stabilize flaking and peeling lead-based paint in approximately 200 buildings and failing to perform reevaluations after it conducted stabilization work to ensure that the interim control methods to address lead-based paint hazards were effective. As a result of the Authority's inadequate management of lead-based paint in its units, households that participated in its public housing program were at an increased risk of being exposed to lead-based paint hazards, particularly families with children under 6 years of age.

"Federal environmental safety requirements for public housing authorities are designed so that families living in housing with lead and lead-based paint hazards are protected," said Inspector General Rae Oliver Davis. "HUD and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles should take immediate steps to improve the Housing Authority's control and management of lead-based paint hazards."

HUD OIG made several key recommendations the Authority must take to improve its oversight of lead-based paint to ensure timeliness of its of visual assessments for lead-based paint, obtain Authority's staff training and technical assistance, and ensure thorough and complete risk assessments and reevaluations of lead-based paint hazards.

Anyone with information about environmental hazards and unsafe unit conditions in HUD housing or fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, or mismanagement related to HUD programs should contact the HUD OIG Hotline at 1-800-347-3735 or reporting online at <https://www.hudoig.gov/hotline>.

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