On March 20, The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) hosted a conference call, “COVID-19 Information For Public Housing Authorities.” PIH Assistant Secretary Hunter Kurtz, along with Deputy Assistant Secretaries of PIH and leaders from PHADA, NAHRO, and CLPHA provided updates on behalf of their members regarding the COVID-19 situation. Following the updates, PIH took live questions via online chat from thousand housing authorities across the US. Below is a summary of the conference call prepared by PHADA staff.

HUD acknowledged the situation, thanked everyone for their work, and highlighted the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on their web site. They then addressed some of the questions they received, and others that came up during the call. Other questions were deferred, and HUD indicated they would be addressed in the FAQ which will be updated soon. It also should be noted that an additional supplemental appropriation and other legislation is likely in the coming days and weeks, so answers could change over time. Below are some notes on initial items.

**VMS Submission Requirements**
Because VMS is used to determine monthly funding, agencies were urged to submit VMS if at all possible. If a delay was necessary, they referenced Notice PIH 2015-16, and directed agencies to notify their financial representative.

**Addition funding for Planning**
As of the time of the call, no additional funding had been authorized.

**Relief on various requirements?**
There will be some relief, but some items such as Annual Plan deadlines and Annual Recertification are statutory and need congressional action. (PHADA is working with Congress to waive these and other requirements). They are setting up a new, extra-expedited waiver process, which should be out ‘soon’. (PHADA continues to push for issuance of blanket waivers). If a waiver is needed, contact your field office and you can send an email to: PIH_disaster_relief@hud.gov.

Voucher Extensions and Lease Up timeline changes do not require a waiver.

**Relief on Annual Inspections**
HUD continues to reference shifting to biennial inspections as permitted under Notice PIH 2016-15; and to also review other HQS flexibilities under Notice PIH 2017-20. Again, PHADA continues to advocate for blanket waiver of Annual Inspection Requirement without mandating housing authorities change their policies.

**Contacting HUD**
Use phone and email.

**Capital Eligible Expenditures**
HUD highlighted that many items are eligible including IT equipment upgrades (such as purchase of laptops to allow remote work, for example), air filtration systems and filters and upgrades, sanitation equipment, etc. They also highlighted the 20 percent of Capital Fund allocations can be used for operating costs; or 100 percent for small (fewer than 250) PHAs.
Suspending SEMAP Scoring
HUD is not waiving scoring at this time but is accepting waivers requesting to use the prior year score. They encouraged agencies to wait until the revised expedited waiver process notice is released in the coming weeks prior to submitting. We assume a similar position relating to PHAS.

Timeframe for Completing Interims
HUD noted that the current regulation says the interims must be completed in a ‘reasonable’ time frame and acknowledged that what is reasonable changes based on circumstances. They also noted that in-person meetings were not required and encouraged agencies to prioritize interims based on loss of income.

Income Verifications
HUD indicated that yes, you can use an income verification that is more than 60 days old if you are unable to secure more recent information. All were reminded to follow and document the hierarchy. It was noted, but PHADA would highlight, that documenting to the file the reason why you are unable to get third party verification is acceptable under the regulations, so a short memo to the file that 3rd party documentation could not be obtained due to restrictions imposed by state or local government due to COVID-19 should be adequate.

Other Issues
On most other matters, HUD’s response was to contact your field office, use your best judgment, follow the directives of local health and other officials and the CDC, and that more information will be forthcoming.

PHADA continues to advocate for broader blanket waivers of most requirements and will keep members updated on developments through our COVID-19 webpage (www.phada.org/COVID19) and member alerts. You can also follow us on Twitter @PHADA_USA.

If possible, PHADA suggests tracking all added costs resulting from COVID-19 as that information may be needed should future appropriations authorize reimbursements of costs; It could also be useful information for use in advocating with congress for such an appropriation.