

September 22, 2023

Dear Executive Director,

Last week, HUD [awarded $10 million in funding to 56 PHAs through the Emergency Safety and Security Grant (ESSG)](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3Lmh1ZC5nb3YvcHJlc3MvcHJlc3NfcmVsZWFzZXNfbWVkaWFfYWR2aXNvcmllcy9IVURfTm9fMjNfMTk3P3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA5MjIuODI5OTczNzEifQ.uPcRwXrHNAGdEkHG0SJvpgbTKYlmhb-GpseGKfsl61s/s/1435622016/br/226664315349-l) to address immediate threats to the health and safety of public housing residents.

PHAs often use this funding to purchase surveillance equipment meant to improve resident safety. As surveillance technology evolves, though, I am asking all PHAs to find the right balance between addressing security concerns and respecting residents’ right to privacy. Additionally, I want to ensure these funds are being used to keep people safe, not to support overly punitive actions against residents.

While most PHAs do this well, developing safety plans in concert with residents, there have been verified instances where agencies have used surveillance to over-monitor residents and engage in punitive actions against them.

The Department’s position is that surveillance should only be used to identify activities that pose a threat to residents’ safety. Furthermore, discontinuation of tenancy should only be pursued when there has been serious violent behavior identified or multiple and serious violations of PHA leases, not more minor offenses that pose no threat to neighbors.

Our residents’ quality of life is our top priority. We thank you for all your work to keep your residents and communities safe.

Thank you,

Richard J. Monocchio signature

Richard J. Monocchio  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of Public and Indian Housing