

Submitted via www.regulations.gov

**_ Office of General Counsel, Rules Docket Clerk
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW, Room 10276
Washington, DC 20410-0500**

**Re: HUD Docket No. FR-6524-P-01, RIN 2501-AE16
Comments in Response to Proposed Rulemaking
Housing and Community Development Act of 1980: Verification of Eligible Status**

Dear Office of General Counsel:

The Fall River Joint Tenant Council is writing to express our strong opposition to the changes regarding "verification of eligible status," published in the Federal Register on February 20, 2026 (RIN 2501-AE16; HUD Docket No. FR-6524-P-01, hereafter referred to as "proposed rule").

Diversity is a strength of Public Housing.

Fall River has long been home to a Portuguese community. Now there are Haitians, Cambodians, Cape Verdeans, Spanish speakers from all over the Americas, Asians, and more. The bonds between kids of different cultures helps adults learn to challenge their own biases. Having the opportunity to live with people you are unfamiliar with forces you to realize that we're all the same. There is great pride in these communities, in our community events and in each other as neighbors. Low income does not equate with low IQ or low integrity. As such, public housing developments are communities that *strengthen* the social fabric of this country. Disrupting the immigrant population in public housing will create division, reiterate old biases, and increase fear and lack of trust.

Stable families means stable communities.

Mixed status families will not split up when you ask one parent to leave. The whole family will leave. Fall River already has a homeless encampment near the waterfront. Homelessness will increase. Crime will increase. People will be afraid, divided and will no longer take pride in the communities. The communities themselves will deteriorate, and public housing as a whole will suffer.

These people are not illegal.

This proposal hurts thousands more citizens and eligible non-citizens than it does the people who are targeted – ineligible non-citizens. And these people are not illegal. They are not "fraudsters." They are not even receiving housing assistance! They are living with family members who are, but the whole family's assistance is prorated. These people have been allowed to live with their families for decades, contributing to the stability of low-income citizen communities. Destabilization benefits no one.

Requiring documentation burdens everyone.

Providing documentation can be a significant burden for any tenant, especially those on fixed incomes. Some elders have not had to provide documentation in a long time and may not have (them on hand?) immediate access to what they need. Obtaining copies of specific documents can mean money and time and even transportation that some tenants just don't have. This ruling would affect every public housing resident in the state, not just immigrants.

Huge and immediate financial loss to already struggling housing authorities.

Millions will go to administrative costs to check everyone's documentation, and hundreds of millions will be lost immediately in rent when these families leave. Mixed status families pay more rent than fully subsidized families. So all funds generated through rent, even if all the vacated apts are filled, will be substantially less than what was generated before. So how does this help public housing? The money won't be there to rehab and refill the vacated apts, so they will stay empty. Capital plans will be unfunded and halted. Buildings that are already in disrepair will further deteriorate. This will bring crime as well, and the families living in that housing will be blamed. Housing authorities will have to build partnerships with private developers who don't care, and the family atmosphere will erode. It will no longer be a place where you are known, respected, and listened to, and where your needs are honored.

Fall River Joint Tenant Council is committed to every tenant.

Mixed status families are our neighbors and an important part of our community. They bring income and additional stability to their families, and so to our public housing developments. With no plan to replace the funds that will be lost due to this proposal and no justification for displacing these families, Fall River Joint Tenant Council opposes this proposal.

Respectfully,

The Fall River Joint Tenant Council
Fall River, MA