Background

Building and construction codes and remodeling guidance should incorporate measures to prevent and reduce indoor air pollutants and ensure adequate ventilation to reduce asthma triggers.

Establish policy within the HUD to require new construction, rehabilitation, repair and remodeling in federally-funded public housing to follow guidelines for healthier indoor air quality.

- Some support is underway to authorize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop recommendations for such guidelines. The Safe and Healthy Housing Act (H.R. 3891) introduced in the House calls for HUD to “promote the incorporation of healthy housing principles into ongoing practices and systems, including rehabilitation specifications and maintenance plans throughout HUD-assisted housing, other federally assisted housing...” (Section 201). This point is also included in the Safe and Healthy Homes Act of 2010 draft bill.

- The Green Initiative for Section 8 Mark to Market (M2M) Program administered by the Office of Affordable Housing Preservation (OAHP) in HUD addresses sustainability, energy efficiency, recycling, indoor air quality, and incorporates the “Healthy Housing” approach.

- The Seattle Housing Authority has built 60 Breathe Easy Homes in West Seattle designed to reduce asthma triggers. This was part of HUD’s HOPE VI programs (predecessor to HUD’s Choice Neighborhoods).

- HUD issued a notice on July 17, 2009, “Non-Smoking Policies in Public Housing,” (PIH-2009-21) in which they address indoor air quality. The notice urges Public Housing Authorities, during construction or renovation, to “consider” actions such as “installing direct vent combustion equipment and fireplaces; providing for optimal, controlled, filtered ventilation and air sealing between living areas and garage or mechanical areas, and the use of paints and other material that emit no or low levels of volatile chemicals.” This notice expires July 31, 2010.