

## **Best Practice – Request for Inspection**

**Date:** Revised January 4, 2017

**Subject:** Request for Inspection “RFI”

**Problem or Question:** Is there a way to improve final inspection efficiency? Considerable time is often lost explaining to contractors why they must go back to a house to address a quality issue. Coordination must again be made with the resident. Then the correction, once accomplished, must also be inspected.

### **Discussion:**

- A proven method to reduce the wasted effort associated with final inspections and “go backs” is to conduct the final inspection before the contractor leaves the property.
- When the contractor is nearing completion on a home, he/she submits a “request for inspection” and signs up for an inspector to come out to the site at a predetermined date and time. This often means that the crews are on-site or not far off and the contractor is present for the inspection. In most cases this “face-to-face” inspection results in small quality issues or omissions being resolved on the spot. Large issues are understood immediately by both parties.
- Contractors generally like this RFI system because they have a chance to correct any issues “on the spot” and thus have to pay for less “go backs” or other re-work. This means less gas, less vehicle costs, less travel time paid, and less set-up time required.
- Subrecipients always like this system once they are adjusted to it. Final inspections become one less thing to manage and the contractors themselves become the impetus to accomplish the final inspections. You don’t have to chase them down to correct a discrepancy. There is virtually no wasted effort in this process and the hand-off is clean and free of frustration.
- Some Subrecipients have used a website to keep the final inspector’s schedules. In this case, the contractor logs on to the website and signs up for an open spot on the inspector’s schedule. This is usually done the day before. Do an internet search for “online scheduling and appoint services” and you will find a few good candidates for low cost. Other agencies have had success having an office manager keep the schedules of each final inspector. The office manager receives calls from contractors ready for final inspections, makes coordination, and schedules appointments for the final inspectors using scheduling tools such as Microsoft Outlook.
- Most Subrecipients that use this technique break their county, city, or territory into several zones to help schedulers determine which inspector is responsible for what area and when they will be operating in that zone.
- It is important to note that in most cases contractor participation in this system must be voluntary unless this system or mandatory “face-to-face” inspections are noted as required in the contract.
- Another effective technique is to ask the contractor to work up a draft invoice for this RFI face-to-face meeting. This will enable the final inspector to confirm the value of the work is consistent with the work-order based expectations for weatherization efforts and anticipated costs. Recommend that both contractor representative and final inspector initial and date the draft invoice.

**Recommendation Summary:** Use the RFI best practice technique to arrange face-to-face final inspections before the contractors depart the weatherized home. The coordination required is worth it. RFI saves all involved time and money.