

# The Modernization Mandate: Why PHAs Are Trading Paper for Performance in 2026

*The themes of 2026 from PHAs are clear: they want to retain their best people, maximize limited resources, & leverage technology where it makes sense.*

MCLEAN, VA, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the multifamily housing industry navigates the “Big Reset” of 2026, [Public Housing Authorities](#) (PHAs) find themselves at a critical crossroads. After years of fragmented pilots and legacy workflows, the mandate from both federal oversight and internal operations is clear: modernization is no longer a luxury; it is a survival strategy.



The Modernization Mandate: Why PHAs Are Trading Paper for Performance in 2026

MB&A's recent conversations with over 20 housing authorities across the United States reveal a consistent push toward digital transformation. While the goals are diverse, they all point toward a single outcome: [Building a more resilient, efficient, and data-driven operational model.](#)

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*Inspections & Maintenance Scheduler*

1. The Talent War: Modernization as a Retention Lever  
In 2026, the labor market remains the #1 challenge for housing leaders. Modernizing business processes isn't just about efficiency; it's a primary strategy for employee

attraction and retention.

The Experience Gap: “Our new employees have wondered why we are still using paper and don't know what a carbon copy is,” noted one anonymous Housing Authority leader.

The Executive Impact: In an era of “Human + AI” workflows, top-tier talent expects tools that

eliminate “busy work.” Agencies still tethered to filing cabinets are losing the battle for the next generation of asset managers and inspectors.

## 2. Cost Discipline: Doing More with Less

With funding cycles remaining tight and portfolios expanding, PHAs are under pressure to increase throughput without increasing headcount.

**Operational Efficiency:** Technology that automates work-order prioritization and digitalizes inspections allows staff to handle larger portfolios more effectively.

**The Value Play:** “Our housing portfolios are not getting smaller,” a PHA representative shared. The goal for 2026 is “silent efficiency”—using background technology to free up staff for high-value resident interactions.

## 3. Eliminating “The Fort”: The War on Paperwork

Paper-heavy processes are the primary source of operational friction. Beyond being slow, they create massive compliance risks and physical bottlenecks.

**Field Insight:** “I have been on over 10 housing authority calls, and every time I have seen a desk with multiple boxes, sometimes stacked 2 or 3 tall. One person looked like they had a fort behind them.”

By moving to mobile workflows and online tenant portals, agencies see faster turnaround times and a drastic reduction in lost documentation, factors that directly impact audit readiness and HUD scores.

## 4. Data Trust: The Foundation of Future Planning

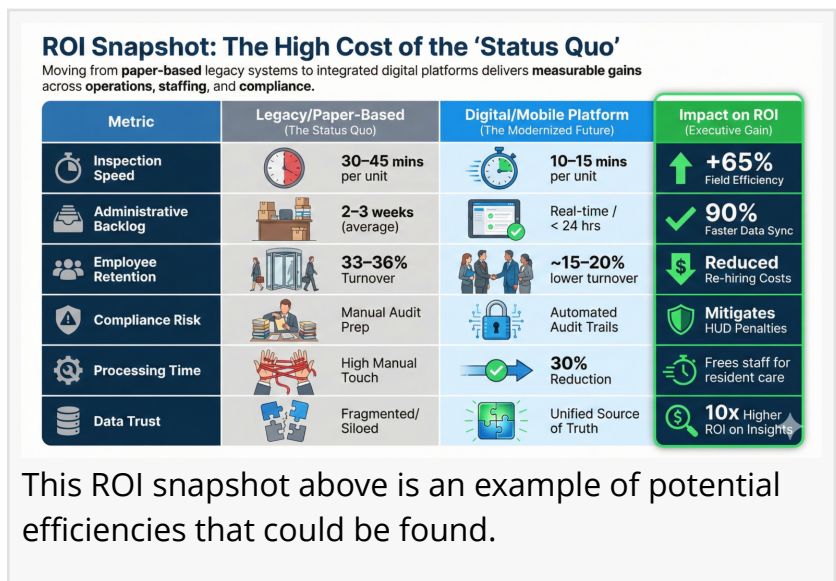
In a flat-growth environment, data is the most valuable asset. When information is fragmented, leadership cannot underwrite future projects or defend budget requests with confidence.

**Standardized Governance:** Modern platforms consolidate data, allowing for real-time reporting that used to take weeks of manual spreadsheet merging.

**Audit Readiness:** With compliance standards evolving, the ability to trust data is the difference between a passing grade and a federal oversight intervention.

## Reason for Change: The NSPIRE Countdown

These internal goals are now being accelerated by external pressure. The U.S. House Financial



Services Committee has recently flagged “deficient” technology and data planning at major PHAs as a primary risk to capital performance. In addition, the changing compliance deadlines have caused a lot of PHAs to reevaluate their technology approach.

The 2026 Compliance Deadline:

HUD has officially extended the compliance date for NSPIRE-V (Voucher Inspections) in which the mandatory compliance date for NSPIRE for Vouchers (HCV/PBV) was extended to February 1, 2027 and the NSPIRE (National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate) scoring to October 1, 2026. This gives PHAs a critical window to:

Transition from legacy UPCS checklists to digital NSPIRE standards.

Integrate mobile inspection tools that feed directly into reporting systems.

Correct deficiencies in real-time to protect property scores before the 2026 “go-live” for affirmative requirements.

From Reaction to Pro-action

The themes emerging from today’s PHAs are clear: they want to retain their best people, maximize limited resources, and rely on bulletproof data. Whether it’s through agentic AI in leasing or mobile inspections in the field, the move toward a paperless, centralized tech stack is the defining trend for affordable housing in 2026.

The bottom line:

The authorities that modernize today are the ones that will be positioned for growth when the next capital cycle begins. Join our upcoming webinar to experience how ExAM PM is lowering the bar to modernization by helping housing authorities save time and money.

[https://mbaoutcome.wistia.com/live/events/2zn0nu6b6a?utm\\_campaign=PressRelease&utm\\_source=EIN](https://mbaoutcome.wistia.com/live/events/2zn0nu6b6a?utm_campaign=PressRelease&utm_source=EIN)

[Visit our webpage](#) to explore how we are transforming how PHAs tackle inspections and HUD compliance on a secure, easy-to-manage, and flexible platform.

Referenced Resources

Big Reset: <https://www.multifamilyexecutive.com/business-finance/2026-multifamily-outlook-big-reset#:~:text=For%20multifamily%20owners%20and%20investors,deployed%2C%20withheld%2C%20or%20structured>.

U.S. House Financial Services Committee (Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee). Press release: “Experts Testify on Troubling Findings of Poor Management and Oversight at Public Housing Authorities.” Document ID: 411025.

<https://financialservices.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=411025>

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