



TESTIMONY

Presented by

Ryan A. Murray
Executive Deputy Commissioner

on

Oversight: Older Adult Centers at NYCHA Facilities

before the

New York City Council
Committee on Aging

on

Tuesday, January 28, 2025
At 1:00 p.m.

Good afternoon, Chair Hudson, Chair Banks and members of the New York City Council Committee on Aging and Committee on Public Housing. I am Ryan A. Murray, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging (NYC Aging). I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today about Older Adults Centers (OACs) in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) facilities. Throughout the NYC Aging portfolio of programs, there are 106 OACs located in NYCHA owned buildings across the five boroughs. These represent a range of OAC types including some of our largest and smallest centers. As we have discussed in past hearings, OACs are a critical component of the many services and programs offered to older New Yorkers as part of the Community Care Plan. In addition to the important work of providing more than 6 million meals at OACs which Council has been a partner with us over the years, older adults also need to be connected to other critical programs which address their needs. These include workforce programs, mental health services, or elder justice and elder abuse services. What is clear to us, is that these centers serve nearly one-third of all the older adults served by an NYC Aging OAC. Because of that fact, we are constantly working to ensure that the services in these centers are well run and meet the needs of older adult communities who live in NYCHA facilities. As with NYCHA facilities themselves, we understand the unique challenges of repairs and maintenance in these buildings and work with our partners at NYCHA to address complaints when they are filed and rectify any pressing concerns which may arise.

I am joined here today by Ukah Busgith, Executive Vice President for Community Engagement and Partnerships at NYCHA, who we work closely with at NYC Aging to address repair and facility needs at the many OACs within NYCHA complexes. The NYC Aging Bureau of Community Service (BCS) oversees the 300+ OAC and NORC programs in the five boroughs, and they work closely with NYCHA and EVP Busgith's team to ensure that OACs are functional, and problems or repairs are addressed quickly. That working relationship is pivotal to the success of NYCHA OAC locations and how we ensure that we deliver the best services for older New Yorkers possible. Thanks to Council's leadership, the New York City Cabinet for Older New Yorkers—created by Mayor Adams in 2022—was codified into law with a permanent slate of cabinet member agencies. NYCHA has been part of the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers since the inaugural meeting in September 2022, and their partnership has led to a number of improvements in programming at these spaces such as intergenerational initiatives, public safety, and transportation related enhancements. Like many partner agencies in government, NYCHA and NYC Aging work every day to better serve New Yorkers over 60 in our OACs, but also in ways beyond serving meals and programming at centers.

NYCHA & NYC's Older Adult Population

NYC Aging has managed OACs located at NYCHA facilities since the founding of our agency and the establishment of centers through the Older Americans Act. In fact, the nation's first OAC, William Hodson Older Adult Center in the Bronx, is located at Daniel Webster Houses and serves the older adult population in that complex as well as the surrounding community. Throughout New York City, 42,684 older adults attend OACs located in NYCHA complexes, and 12,686 older New Yorkers receive services from NYC Aging and are NYCHA residents. Historically, NYCHA did run a number of OACs, then known as "senior centers," in their facilities, though as I mentioned before it was not the totality of centers located in NYCHA developments within the NYC Aging portfolio.

While NYC Aging always had some OACs in NYCHA sites, newly added OACs came from NYCHA to NYC Aging in two distinct tranches. First, during the Bloomberg Administration, NYC Aging took on a number of centers which NYCHA was no longer able to run independently and folded those into our current network based on a range of factors including size, space, and capacity, as well as budgetary needs for our agency. Then in 2018-2019, NYC Aging assumed oversight over all remaining older adult centers still managed by NYCHA. A similar situation occurred with other NYCHA social programs for children, where the Department of Youth

and Community Development (DYCD) took on new programs as well. During these transitions from NYCHA to NYC Aging, not one center was closed.

Facility Issues & Complaint Process

NYC Aging and NYCHA agree that facility management and funding are large concerns to running these centers effectively. Just as repairs and maintenance are concerns with NYCHA apartments, the state of facilities are also a concern and an area where we frequently interface with NYCHA. In order to provide older adults at OACs a safe experience, we have a system in place with our partners at NYCHA to report and address issues or complaints when they arise. First, the center itself should report an issue to either the property manager or to NYCHA, whether that be in person or over the phone. NYCHA located OACs maintain the relationship with property managers for facility repairs like any center would with any other landlord. NYCHA then issues a ticket number to the individual who reported the problem, and the issue is either addressed or potentially referred out based on complexity.

As you can imagine, some issues are fixed immediately but as NYCHA must prioritize repairs throughout their portfolio, some issues may be addressed later when they do not impede the safe functioning of the center such as re-painting needs or light replacements. Major issues such as roof and ceiling leaks or flooded spaces will still receive a ticket number, but will be triaged differently based on the severity and impact to the space, OAC, or older adults themselves. In all cases, NYC Aging prioritizes service continuity, and we do everything we can to ensure that centers remain open. In order to better monitor these repairs and determine which need to be escalated, the NYCHA liaison at NYC Aging regularly reviews reports of open tickets and needs at individual centers. Our goal is to create constant communication and open dialogue between our agencies to ensure that repairs do not languish and needs are addressed quickly. During repairs, if a center is closed, for whatever reason, older adults at those locations will clearly know what other options they have for meals and programming at nearby centers, or any other alternatives that best meet their needs. When a repair ticket goes unaddressed, a second complaint to NYCHA is opened, or visit to the property manager takes place, to escalate that complaint. NYC Aging is then notified of a repeat issue and has the option to raise the issue to the NYCHA Escalation Team where we bring these issues up during regular meetings with NYCHA facilities staff and work toward a quick resolution for that center.

Because we are in NYCHA's space, while NYC Aging may wish to fix an issue ourselves, we are not always able to do so, and must rely on NYCHA to escalate the matter further in order to remedy the situation. We do much of that escalation through the NYCHA liaison at NYC Aging who manages the process for meeting with NYCHA and ensuring that we appropriately escalate matters in order to avoid center closures or alterations to programming. It is imperative that we monitor and respond quickly to repair issues so that there is no disruption to services for older adults. Recently, NYC Aging has been working to address issues with NYCHA located OAC kitchens which prevent a center from cooking on-site because of a range of code compliances and safety issues. Currently, 7 OACs in NYCHA sites have issues with kitchens which need to be legalized and brought up to code. This includes whether the kitchen is on the Certificate of Occupancy for the space itself, if the rangehood is code compliant for FDNY, or if there are just gas related issues in the space or building which prevent the Department of Buildings (DOB) from legalizing or allowing the kitchen to operate in the space. Additionally, there are some NYCHA located OACs where gas line issues also prevent the center from cooking on-site, however, these can be larger concerns for the NYCHA facility. We are also thankful for Council's leadership when the second tranche of NYCHA centers was transferred to NYC Aging and allocated \$4 million for OAC facility repair and upgrades to be used for Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) repairs.

NYCHA & NYC Aging Relationship

As I know Council is aware, overarching throughout the discussion today, is the need for capital investment in NYCHA facilities. We believe that Council can continue to be a strong partner—as you have in past fiscal years—to improve these facilities which serve older adults. New York’s older adult population continues to grow, and as I have said before in today’s testimony, roughly one-third of our overall OAC portfolio is located in a NYCHA facility. As NYCHA has pursued the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) through their Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) programs, NYC Aging has needed to work more closely with NYCHA as the relationship with our centers has evolved or changed with these programs. When a NYCHA development converts through their program, OACs remain at those locations and have not signed leases with the new landlord once NYCHA has relinquished control of the site, but does maintain a licensing agreement that allows them to provide services there. This agreement also outlines the space needs for that location and the interaction between the provider and landlord. As the PACT program continues to develop through NYCHA, more OACs are being involved in those changes and approach these transitions on a site-by-site basis.

Additionally, we take seriously NYCHA’s relationship with the Tenant Association Presidents at NYCHA and their commitment to their developments and the community of residents who utilize common areas and shared spaces like OACs. As you may remember, NYC Aging OACs are required to maintain advisory councils of older adult participants who host regular meetings and hear complaints or suggestions regarding how these centers are run and managed. In NYCHA facilities there can be some inevitable overlap between the TA Presidents, resident councils, and the advisory councils serving older adults in those locations. Similar to our work and partnerships with NYCHA, we also view the TA Presidents as important stakeholders in the operation of our centers and look to their support when navigating issues in buildings and advocating for older adults and services in these centers. As I stated before, as NYCHA is a member of the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers, their collaboration with NYC Aging goes beyond the administrative and facility needs for OACs located in NYCHA sites. We have deepened relationships with multiple agencies through Cabinet Initiatives and that includes our work with NYCHA.

Beyond working to serve older adult needs in centers, NYC Aging has partnered with NYCHA as a member of the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers to develop intergenerational programming in these communities through the OACs. A Cabinet initiative focused on MyNYStory, where 100 participants across 13 co-located NYCHA sites that house a NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Cornerstone program and an NYC Aging OAC, used storytelling to build community connections across generations. This is just one example of many ways that NYCHA OACs are fundamental to the network of providers and are highly innovative in how they address the needs of older adults.

Conclusion

At NYC Aging we are pleased to provide services to the 150,000 older adults served in FY 2024 through our OACs, including those within NYCHA developments, and look forward to continuing these efforts to address the needs of growing population in New York City. NYC Aging and NYCHA have a strong relationship, and we look forward to continuing to build this relationship through our work in the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers and our daily interactions on facility needs and improvements to the overall network of older adult services. We are currently looking forward to the third year of Talent is Timeless, NYC Aging’s citywide talent competition for older New Yorkers. NYCHA OACs participate in Talent is Timeless and host local and regional competitions as part of their participation. I am grateful to Chair Hudson and Chair Banks of the Aging and Public Housing committees for your advocacy and continued partnership to support our older New Yorkers. Thank you.

**Testimony from NYCHA’s Executive Vice President for Resident Services,
Partnerships, and Initiatives Ukah Busgith
Older Adult Centers at NYCHA Facilities
Committee on Public Housing with the Committee on Aging
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 – 1 p.m.
250 Broadway Committee Room, 16th Floor**

Chairs Chris Banks and Crystal Hudson, members of the Committee on Public Housing and Committee on Aging, other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of the public: good afternoon. I am Ukah Busgith, NYCHA’s Executive Vice President for Resident Services, Partnerships, and Initiatives, and I am pleased to be joined by Dylan Baker-Rice, Deputy Chief Asset and Capital Management Officer, as well as my colleagues from NYC Aging. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Authority’s efforts to support older adults as they age with grace and dignity in their homes at NYCHA.

Older adults are an integral part of the NYCHA community. Every day, we strive to support older adults in our communities through connections to beneficial programs, services, and other resources from a range of quality providers.

We believe strongly in the power of partnerships to serve populations like older adults. Our collaboration with NYC Aging is one fundamental example, as they operate a variety of programs for older adults right at our developments. And we are an active participant in the City’s Cabinet for Older New Yorkers, which brings together over two dozen City agencies to help address the needs of aging adults. One especially helpful initiative that resulted from our participation in the Cabinet is a program where liaisons from the NYPD connect with NYCHA seniors to provide assistance and raise awareness on issues like domestic violence.

The HUD-funded Elderly Safe-At-Home program is another key initiative. Through the program, NYCHA staff offer on-site assistance at several NYCHA developments, supporting older adults as they age in place safely and independently through home visits and connections to services, workshops on crime prevention and other topics, and “floor captains” (residents who volunteer to support their neighbors).

These are just a few examples of the initiatives that are serving NYCHA seniors. I am proud of our efforts to support older adults in the community, and I am happy to answer any of your

questions on this topic. I also want to thank members of the Council for your support – partnership is key to our success, and we are eager to continue our very impactful collaborations with you and other stakeholders. Thank you.



**New York City Council
Committees on Aging & Public Housing
Oversight Hearing: Oversight - Older Adult Centers at NYCHA Facilities
January 28, 2025**

Thank you, Chairs Hudson and Banks and members of the Committees on Aging and Public Housing for the opportunity to testify on JASA's experience serving older New Yorkers living in, and participating in Older Adult Centers and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in NYCHA facilities.

JASA is a not-for-profit agency that honors older New Yorkers as vital members of society, providing services that support aging with purpose and partnering to build strong communities. For over 50 years, JASA has served as one of New York's largest and most trusted agencies serving older adults in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. JASA has a comprehensive, integrated network of services that promotes independence, safety, wellness, community participation, and an enhanced quality of life for New York City's older adults. These programs reach over 40,000 clients of diverse backgrounds and include home care, case management services, older adult centers, NORC supportive services, home-delivered meals, caregiver support, continuing education, licensed mental health, senior housing, advocacy, legal services, adult protective services, and guardianship services. JASA also has an extensive history of providing information and referral services and benefits and entitlements assistance to ensure older New Yorkers are aware of and take advantage of the vast array of services available.

JASA is committed to sustaining and enriching the lives of older adults in the New York metropolitan area, ensuring they remain in their communities with dignity and autonomy. We work closely with the City to foster an age-friendly environment where older adults are valued, engaged, and supported. Our Older Adult Centers serve over 13,000 members, offering opportunities for socialization, arts and cultural programs, exercise, technology training, and health screenings. We provide daily kosher and non-kosher meals in a communal setting, along with grab-and-go options. Recognizing the growing need for mental health services, several centers participate in the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) initiative, integrating on-site clinicians for screenings, counseling, and

referrals. In the Bronx, these services are provided by JASA's mental health clinic, while in Brooklyn and Queens, partner agencies deliver care.

Aging in NYCHA

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) plays a vital role in providing affordable housing to older New Yorkers, yet it faces persistent challenges, including repair backlogs, communication gaps, and security concerns. JASA has four Older Adult Centers and two NORC programs based in NYCHA buildings. Infrastructure repairs, water damage and other issues have impacted the ability to safely deliver services at times, with a key barrier being insufficient funding for critical improvements. The Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program, part of the federal Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) initiative, is helping modernize NYCHA developments and JASA is already seeing improvements in PACT sites where our programs operate, particularly in relation to communication and responses to concerns and complaints.

According to NYCHA, nearly 25% of the NYCHA population is 62 or older, representing about 78,000 residents. PACT presents a valuable opportunity to enhance accessibility, expand supportive services, and invest in age-friendly infrastructure to help older adults age in place. An age-friendly NYCHA requires a coordinated strategy that integrates housing stability with social and supportive services. JASA is hopeful that the inter-agency cabinet will serve as a catalyst for strengthening collaboration between NYCHA, DFTA, and service providers, sustaining and enriching the lives of older residents so they can remain in their homes with dignity.

NYCHA has a unique opportunity with RAD, which will hopefully continue without interruption, to create a long-term vision for aging in place—one that prioritizes accessibility, social services, and infrastructure designed for older adults. By embracing an age-friendly framework and fostering strong partnerships, NYCHA can transform its developments into thriving communities where older adults are not only able to remain in their homes but flourish as valued members of society.

JASA in NYCHA

JASA operates four Older Adult Centers within NYCHA developments including Bay Eden Older Adult Center (PACT site), Sue Ginsburg Older Adult Center, Throggs Neck Older Adult Center (Facility at Randall-Balcom has been closed since August 2022), and Williamsburg Older Adult Center (PACT site). These centers serve as trusted hubs for older adults in NYCHA developments, fostering community engagement, socialization, and access to essential services. While JASA remains committed to serving older adults in NYCHA properties, significant challenges must be addressed to

ensure the long-term sustainability of OACs. Many of these challenges were outlined in the Committee on Aging's January 28, 2025, report.

As highlighted in the Aging Committee Report, OACs in NYCHA buildings face persistent infrastructure issues, including mold, water damage, heating failures, and a lack of ADA compliance. For example, JASA's Throggs Neck Older Adult Center has experienced a significant disruption in service for the past few years as a result of roof damage and the resulting remediation and repairs necessary. The building has been closed since August 2022, requiring JASA to identify on-going solutions without additional budget to do so. These conditions jeopardize the health and well-being of older adults and create barriers to service delivery and the impact on the center community is significant. Repairs of this nature require critical capital investments. JASA urges increased capital investment to address long-standing maintenance concerns and ensure that NYCHA-based OACs remain safe, accessible, and fully operational. JASA, therefore, strongly supports the Committee's recommendation to increase capital funding for OACs. Without long-term investment, these centers will struggle to meet the needs of New York's aging population. In addition, JASA strongly supports finalizing an updated MOU to improve coordination, set clear accountability measures, and streamline the repair process for OAC providers and older residents.

Thank you for hosting today's hearing on older adult services in NYCHA and for your continued partnership in addressing the needs of older New Yorkers.

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LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

**Testimony at the Committee on Aging & Committee on Public
Housing Oversight Hearing
Tuesday, January 28, 2025**

Council Member Hudson and Members of the Committee on Aging and the Committee on Public Housing, my name is Jasmine McFarlane, and I am the Deputy Chief Program Officer at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House. Thank you for holding this important oversight hearing. Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is a 131-year-old settlement house that provides an extensive range of social services that improve the lives of over 15,000 New Yorkers in need each year, ages 3 to 103.

Today, I will be speaking on behalf of my colleagues, our clients and community served by Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and from my unique perspective as a licensed Social Worker, who spent most of my career working with the older adult population in various settings, including older adult centers.

The Neighborhood House serves 5,000 members in our NYC Aging funded network of older adult centers, one of which is located in a NYCHA building on the Upper East Side that is designated for older adults. Our center at this location provides three nutritious farm-to-table congregate meals 7 days a week, a remarkable daily calendar of classes, services and programming, and comprehensive on-site social services – mental health supports, access to benefits and healthcare, case assistance, advocacy, referrals, transportation assistance, and linkage to other vital providers and services. Being an on-site older adult center in a NYCHA building that houses aging adults has proven to be a lifeline for low-income individuals, who are often isolated and on a limited income. Residents have been able to take advantage of our services, which have contributed to their overall wellbeing and have the lowest barrier to entry given the direct proximity of the center and the NYCHA apartments for older adults.

Our presence within a NYCHA building has proven invaluable to both our clients and the surrounding community. However, like many of our peers who operate older adult centers in NYCHA buildings, we have encountered various infrastructure challenges that directly impact our programs and services. These include recurring repair issues, such as flooding from apartments above the center, unexpected water shutdowns that disrupt programming, and the need for sudden closures due to prolonged leaks or water shut-offs resulting in unusable facilities. The infrastructure challenges posed by NYCHA's capital and maintenance constraints make it challenging to operate seamlessly out of the space and often translate to frequent last-minute closures and service disruptions.

While we maintain a positive working relationship with NYCHA staff and handle as much of the maintenance and repairs as we can on our own, a full review of the NYCHA Older Adult Center system's expense and capital needs is required for substantial and sustained improvements. Our Older Adults across the network who access essential services and resources at Older Adult Centers housed within NYCHA buildings deserve a much higher quality of investment and support, and City and State financial support are vital.

Given that the majority of NYCHA buildings across New York City are over 80 years old, the need for repairs and capital improvements is substantial. The overall budget for aging programs already poses challenges to operators, but even more to those at sites with major capital needs. New funding

which demonstrates a prioritization of NYCHA Older Adult Centers and accompanying investment in capital improvements would be welcome. This is essential to ensuring that Older Adult Centers like ours can continue to thrive in these communities and provide critical services to vulnerable individuals who depend on them in a safe, accessible and welcoming space.

In closing, older adult centers are a safe haven for numerous vulnerable older adults, including residents in the NYCHA building above our site. Ensuring that we provide and maintain a space that fosters a place of safety and wellbeing for the community with nutritious meals, social support, and comprehensive programming, is vital. As we face fiscal uncertainty in Washington, we urge local stakeholders to prioritize investments in these vital centers to ensure they remain a cornerstone of support for our city's aging population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

Testimony from SAGE:
Hearing on T-2025-3001 Oversight of Older Adult Centers at NYCHA Facilities
Committee on Aging & Committee on Public Housing

Thank you for holding a hearing on the Oversight of Older Adult Centers that are operating inside the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) facilities. SAGE is the nation's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ older adults. As you well know, SAGE operates a network of of LGBTQ+-friendly older adult centers - SAGE Centers - across the City.

One of our Centers, SAGE Center Harlem, is located in the Drew Hamilton Community Center. SAGE leases the space from NYCHA. SAGE Center Harlem, like all four of our SAGE Centers, allows for LGBTQ+ elders to live as their full and best selves surrounded by joy. We do this by offering meals, classes, case management, informational resources, veterans' services, social events, and much more – thanks to the funding from the City Council and NYC Aging.

Unfortunately, frequently, our ability to provide these essential services has been repeatedly disrupted by longstanding and ongoing issues with NYCHA regarding the maintenance and management of the Drew Hamilton Community Center. These issues, despite repeated requests and reports from our team, continue to hinder our mission and, at times, force us to suspend operations entirely, depriving our community members of vital services and resources.

Exterior Challenges

A large, dead oak tree looms near the Center's entrance, which was deemed hazardous by a NYCHA-coordinated vendor, posing a serious safety risk. Despite being informed that bids were needed for its removal, we have not received any updates since November 2024. With the winds and snow that we have already experienced this winter, we are concerned that this tree may fall down, putting LGBTQ+ elder constituents at great risk.

Additionally, the walkway between 142nd and 143rd Streets—maintained by NYCHA—is frequently left uncleared of snow, ice and debris. After multiple requests to NYCHA for snow removal following a January snowfall, SAGE was forced to hire someone to clear the walkway at our own expense to ensure safe passage for staff and program participants.

Interior Challenges

Security and accessibility to the Center are ongoing concerns. The front door to the SAGE Center does not have a lock, compromising safety during programming and leaving the vestibule open to unwanted guests outside of business hours.

Further, there continues to be issue with heating and cooling. Each winter, , our requests to NYCHA to turn on the heat go unanswered for weeks. This past winter, the Center's heat was still not on during a brutal cold snap, , which forced the Center to close for nearly a week, leaving elders out in the cold without hot meals or congregate programming. Conversely, we also have challenges in fulfilling the Center's role as a designated Cooling Center during extreme heat events. Despite multiple attempts, NYCHA has not granted our staff with 24/7 access to the space. This prevents the Center from fulfilling this critical public health function for New Yorkers.

Compounding these issues, the Centers gas stove has been unusable for over four years, due to a NYCHA-contracted vendor shutting off the gas line during a fire alarm system installation in 2019. This has severely hindered our ability to operate our congregate meal program efficiently, directly affecting our ability to provide hot meals to those who rely on them.

Lastly, bureaucratic obstacles have impeded our compliance with city regulations. NYC Aging mandates that we maintain a valid Place of Assembly and Certificate of Occupancy, yet NYCHA has failed to provide the necessary documentation, placing SAGE at risk of non-compliance --despite our best efforts.

These persistent challenges, stemming from NYCHA's lack of responsiveness and action, not only disrupt SAGE's ability to operate smoothly but also create unsafe and unreliable conditions for the LGBTQ+ older adults we serve. Elders rely on SAGE and our services for social connection, safety, meals, and essential community resources. Without immediate resolution to these issues, the well-being of our community members remains at risk. SAGE remains committed to advocating for these necessary changes to ensure that our Harlem location can serve as the safe, welcoming space it is meant to be.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your prompt action and commitment to ensuring the well-being of our community.



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Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Aging Jointly with the Committee on Public Housing

January 28, 2025

Good Afternoon Council Members,

My name is Charles Madray and I am the Vice President for Health Services and Community Based Programs at Samaritan Daytop Village, an organization with over 60 years of experience providing critical services to New Yorkers. Today, I am honored to speak about our Woodside Senior Center, a vital resource for older adults in our community.

The Woodside Senior Center is located in the NYCHA Woodside Houses, and serves as a lifeline for seniors, providing essential services, social engagement, and programs that enhance their well-being. While our team works tirelessly to ensure the center meets the needs of our members, several challenges limit our ability to fully realize its potential.

One of the most pressing issues is **capital funding**. The center has significant infrastructure needs that our current grants and budget cannot cover. For example, we have been waiting for NYCHA to address the repair of the air conditioning system, which would cost over \$200,000. This is beyond our financial capacity but is critical to creating a comfortable environment for our seniors, particularly during extreme weather conditions. Without these repairs, attendance may be affected, and the overall experience for our seniors is diminished. This is just one example of our current capital needs.

Additionally, we face challenges with **NYCHA's responsiveness**. Delays in addressing repairs and maintenance requests often prolong the time it takes to resolve critical issues, leaving seniors to cope with inadequate conditions. Better coordination between NYC Aging and NYCHA is essential to streamline these processes and ensure timely resolutions.


We also see an opportunity to enhance participation by integrating **technology and programming updates**. Expanding access to virtual and hybrid programs would allow more seniors to engage with the center, particularly those with mobility challenges or health concerns. Dedicated funding for technology upgrades would support this effort and make the center more inclusive.

We respectfully ask the Council to consider the following priorities:

1. **Dedicated capital funding** for older adult centers in NYCHA facilities to address urgent needs like air conditioning repairs, structural upgrades, and overall maintenance.
2. **Improved coordination** between DFTA and NYCHA to ensure faster response times for maintenance requests and greater alignment of resources.
3. **Support for programmatic and technological enhancements** to make centers more engaging and accessible, boosting participation and overall community impact.

Our older adult centers are more than just facilities—they are hubs of community, connection, and care for our seniors. We thank you for your leadership and advocacy for older New Yorkers, and we look forward to working together to address these challenges.

Charles Madray
Vice President for Health Services and Community Based Programs
Samaritan Daytop Village

Jan 28, 2025 |  committee on Public Housing

Oversight - Older Adult Centers at NYCHA Facilities

My name is Renee Keitt, and I am the Resident Association President of the Elliott-Chelsea Houses. I am here today to speak about the critical concerns regarding the impact of the proposed demolition on older adults in our community.

One of the most pressing issues is the planned relocation of seniors, who are slated to be among the first residents moved under this demolition plan. The Chelsea Addition, one of the proposed “as-of-right” buildings, is expected to prioritize senior relocation. However, critical concerns regarding isolation, mental health, and displacement remain unaddressed.

Isolation and Mental Health Risks

Seniors in our community are being relocated without transparency or meaningful engagement. Meetings regarding their future are happening behind closed doors, leaving them isolated from key decision-making processes that directly impact their lives. The proposed downsizing and displacement—whether within Elliott-Chelsea, through PACT partnerships, or into NYCHA developments citywide—creates uncertainty, especially given the limited number of single-bedroom apartments available. Many seniors have lived in this community for decades, and uprooting them without adequate planning poses significant risks.

Social and Cognitive Impacts

Older adults often struggle with mobility, making it difficult to maintain social connections. Forced relocation threatens their mental and emotional well-being, increasing the likelihood of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Social interaction plays a vital role in cognitive health, yet the city's current approach disregards the importance of maintaining strong, familiar networks that contribute to seniors' independence and quality of life.

Community Displacement and Loss of Cohesion

Beyond individual hardships, these relocations erode the social fabric of our neighborhood. Seniors who have been anchors in the community for decades are at risk of losing their connections, while longtime residents—many from low-income households, immigrant communities, and communities of color—face the broader effects of displacement. Even those who are allowed to stay may experience cultural erasure as familiar faces, businesses, and shared spaces disappear.

Quality of Life Concerns

At Fulton Houses, the older adult center operates within a larger community center, which serves residents of all ages. As we heard from Council Member Avilés in discussions on Red Hook, it is essential to recognize and center the community whose space is being altered. The goal should not be to make older adults feel displaced in their own neighborhoods. We must work toward a commitment to preserving their homes and their right to remain under Section 9 housing protections.

A Call for Transparency and Inclusion

Our objective must be to create a sense of belonging in changing neighborhoods, not to displace those who have built and sustained these communities for generations. NYCHA, Related, and Essence must engage seniors in meaningful dialogue, ensure transparency in decision-making, and guarantee that they are not forced out of their homes under the guise of redevelopment. This plan risks harming the very people it claims to serve.

Thank you for your time. I urge this committee to advocate for policies that protect older adults from unnecessary displacement and prioritize their well-being and dignity and humanity.

From: [Robert Moore](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tuesday hearing about older adult centers
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 4:54:28 PM

Good afternoon, Nicole:

I am Robert Moore, the communications director for Assemblywoman Latrice Walker. I am sending you this email because I am unable to reach you by phone. Your voice mailbox is full and not accepting messages. I spoke to a constituent, Sheila Glover. She is physically unable to attend the meeting scheduled for Tuesday at 1 p.m. at 250 Broadway regarding older adult centers at NYCHA properties. She has an ongoing medical condition that makes her attendance impossible. Ms. Glover is interested in testifying via Zoom, but she does not have an individual zoom link. And she is not great with the computer. Is there a way she can register and testify tomorrow? She lives at the Glenmore Plaza Houses in Brownsville, Brooklyn. She said that you told her someone was going to call her about this request, but no one has called.

Thank you!

RM
[REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/28/75

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ukiah Busgirth, Executive Vice President for Residua

Address: Services, Partnerships, and Initiatives

I represent: NICHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/28/75

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angela Alesandri, Associate Commissioner Bureau of

Address: Community Service

I represent: Agency

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/28/75

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ryan A. Murray, Executive Deputy Commissioner

Address: Chief Program Officer

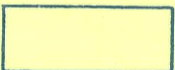
I represent: Agency

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/22/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dylan Baker-Rice, Deputy Chief Asset Capital

Address: Management Office

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angie Herasme, Associate Commissioner

Address: 2 Lafayette

I represent: NYC Aging

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ryan A. Murray, Exec Dep Commissioner

Address: 2 Lafayette St

I represent: NYC Aging

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

1

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/29/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Metin Sacci (Meh-teen)

Address: _____

I represent: N/A

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

2

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHARLES MADRY

Address: 138-02 Queens Blvd

I represent: SAMARITAN Village

Address: 138-02 Queens Blvd

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

3

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Princess Benn James

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

4

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Renee Keith

Address: Elliott Chelsea

I represent: elliott Chelsea houses

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆