



An Affiliate of the Metro NY Industrial Areas Foundation

297 East 3rd Street ~ New York, NY 10009

Email: ManhattanTogether@gmail.com Website: www.mt-iaf.org

Before the City Council Committee on Public Housing
October 2025

Chairman Banks and Council Members,

My name is **Maria Roman**. I'm a member of **Our Lady of Sorrows Church**, a leader in **Manhattan Together/Metro IAF**, and a resident of **Baruch Houses** since **1975**.

In **July 2019**, a **major leak** developed inside my kitchen wall.



called NYCHA many times, but the problem was never solved.

Through **Manhattan Together**, I learned about the **OCC**, which was created through our lawsuit to help get real mold and leak repairs.

I contacted them in **March 2020**—and through persistent follow-up, they helped me get my wall fixed in **July 2020**.

This July a smaller leak returned. I reported it to NYCHA, but things only started moving after I called the OCC. NYCHA scheduled plastering and painting for **July 2026**—but thanks to the OCC's help, the work was completed **on September 23rd**.



We also know some NYCHA employees, especially Executive Vice President Daniel Greene, are working very hard to improve NYCHA's response. Unfortunately, too many tenants still suffer unnecessarily.

The **OCC** has made a real difference for tenants. But they can't do everything. They need **more resources** and **more authority** to hold NYCHA accountable.

For example, in my case:

- **NYCHA staff often fail to show up** when scheduled.
- There's still **a hole in the staircase** from earlier repair work



- I have a **recurring mold problem** around my bathtub. A NYCHA employee told me it's because the **roof fan on my line isn't working**. That was months ago—and no matter how hard I scrub, the mold keeps coming back. Until they fix the fan, the mold will keep coming back.

The OCC has proven that tenants **don't have to accept terrible conditions**. But to keep making progress, they need **more resources, more authority to hold NYCHA accountable**.

Thank you.



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October 27, 2025

Chairman Banks and members of the Committee on Public Housing,

Good morning. My name is Wanda Salas, I am a resident of Amsterdam Houses and a leader with Manhattan Together.

I'm here to share how the OCC and Manhattan Together helped make my home safe for my first child. After the NYCHA annual inspection in 2020, I was told that our floors were to be replaced, and I simply waited and waited. Twice our apartment was tested for lead, yet I was never informed it required remediation. When my daughter was born in 2023, I had no idea how dangerous our home was.

Later, a contractor who came to look at our ceiling pointed out possible asbestos in the broken floor tiles. Yet, when the floor tester came, he simply said... you will get relocated. I was alarmed and started packing. Yet, when nothing happened, I visited the office only to be told that another test had to be scheduled. What!? My daughter was nearing crawling age. I repeatedly contacted Property Management, with no results. I was freaking out. I was stressed, desperate ... not good for a nursing mother... Then, by grace, I met a volunteer from Manhattan Together, who guided me through the process and helped get NYCHA to finally do the work.

After asbestos and lead remediation, NYCHA left a large gap under the bathroom window and the shower panels, and mold began to grow. Six months later, the carpenter removed the bathtub panels and left bare walls covered with plastic. The mold became uncontrollable.

Luckily, I learned about the OCC through Manhattan Together. I took my baby across the city at night to attend a meeting—because I needed help. The OCC was wonderful. They followed up with calls, texts, and emails until NYCHA finished the job properly. The bathroom was healthy again. I cried with relief. Not only could my toddler bathe in the bathroom, I didn't have to lack sleep thinking the mold would get into her body.

Thanks to Manhattan Together and the OCC, I finally feel safe in our home and my daughters use every space.



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Good morning.

My name is Father Frank Skelly,
a Redemptorist priest assigned to the Archdiocese of New York.

I have ministered in East Harlem for 15 years
and in the South Bronx for 20 years.

Both parishes had many NYCHA residents.

I became a member of Metro IAF in 1994 and in 2000 began a heavy involvement in issues with NYCHA.

I served a parish in Brooklyn for 4 years where there was no public housing.

When I came back to the Bronx in 2023 a faithful parishioner approached me and asked
“are you still the NYCHA priest”

and then told me about a recurring leak and mold,

When I asked, did you call the OCC.

she said she had several tickets and had called the CCC.

I gave her the OCC number and received a fruit basket the following Sunday because the OCC resolved
her problem with the leak from above.

Another parishioner described the OCC as an answer to prayer

When a similar leak from above was taken care of.

Reverend Cruz mentioned the Baez case and consent decree.

Maribel Baez was a parishioner of Immaculate Conception in the South Bronx.

The legal proceedings were a difficult journey and finally resulted in a consent decree and the creation of
the OCC.

In retrospect it might not have been the best acronym since it sounds so much like the CCC which is the call center for NYCHA.

People do get confused.

The City Council introduced legislation requiring the city to inform NYCHA residents of the new call center for the mold ombudsman.

At times It seems that this legislation has been as effective as some of my sermons.

Pastors like to think that the congregation hangs on your every word, but that is not the case most times.

Fliers in the church bulletin gave the new number for the OCC, I talked about the OCC and still people asked, "Are they ever going to fix the mold?"

We all need to do a better job in making the OCC known.



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I'm Rev. Getulio Cruz Jr., Senior Pastor of Monte Sion Christian Church and Co-Chair of Manhattan Together, Metro IAF. Half my congregation lives in NYCHA housing along the East River—and we've been organizing for justice in public housing since 1996.

Here's the good news: progress is possible.

For years, tenants fought just to get basic repairs. NYCHA's response kept getting worse. But we didn't give up. We organized. Eventually, we filed the Baez v. NYCHA lawsuit. And when the consent decree was revised in 2018–2019, things finally began to shift.

That decree brought real oversight:

- **Independent Mold Analyst (IMA (Microecologies))** identified what needed fixing.
- **Independent Data Analyst (IDA (Stout))** showed how to better use NYCHA's resources.
- And the **Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC)** started getting mold and leak repairs done.

The results? Over 31,500 families have received real repairs from the OCC alone, and tens of thousands more have benefited from other Baez related work.

We've worked hand-in-hand with OCC, IDA, IMA, and committed NYCHA staff to make this happen. But too many tenants are still waiting—months, even years—for help.

That's why we're pushing for more.

Just last week, **Metro IAF brought together over 1,750 people**—tenant leaders, clergy, elected officials. Assemblymember Mamdani and former Governor Cuomo committed **\$100 million** to expand the OCC model and appoint a Deputy Mayor to ensure accountability.

This investment will:

- Clear the repair backlog
- Modernize NYCHA's scheduling systems
- Expand successful pilots like the Building Line Initiative
- Ensure all repairs—not just mold and leaks—are done right

We know what works. We've seen it. Now we need the City Council to help scale it.
Fr. Skelly will now share how tenants are connecting with the OCC—and how it can help even more tenants improve their quality of life.

Statement to the Chair and Committee

Testimony of Yolanda Moore, EBC Leader and Resident of New York City Housing Authority
Statement to the Chair and Committee

Good afternoon, Chair and Committee members. My name is Yolanda Moore, and I am an EBC Leader as well as a long-term resident of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). I have lived in NYCHA housing since 1972 and currently reside at East New York Boulevard Houses.

In 2020, Blvd. Houses underwent a significant transformation when it converted from Section 9 to RAD/PACT (Rental Assistance Demonstration/Project-Based Assistance). After the completion of the RAD/PACT conversion, major renovations were undertaken. However, once these renovations were finished, tenants at Blvd. Houses, including myself, began experiencing persistent and severe issues with mold and water leaks throughout the buildings, as well as other serious problems.

The presence of mold and ongoing water leaks has significantly impacted the quality of life for many residents. These issues pose health risks and create challenging living conditions, especially for families and elderly tenants. To address these problems, the residents of Blvd. Houses, with the support of EBC/Metro IAF, engaged with the Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC). We have relied heavily on the OCC for assistance. The OCC has proven to be an invaluable resource, helping tenants navigate the process of reporting and resolving mold and water leak issues, advocating for necessary repairs, and ensuring our voices are heard by housing management and city officials.

Boulevard Houses has a long way to go before life returns to normal. We continue to push management to resolve challenges such as plumbing issues, heating problems, security and are going to push them on the threat of mass evictions, as well as difficulties in communication between management and residents. However, we are grateful to the OCC for improving our living conditions.

We appreciate the committee's attention to these ongoing concerns and urge continued oversight and support to ensure that all residents of Blvd. Houses and all Public Housing tenants can live in safe, healthy, and well-maintained homes. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Topic: Housing Voucher Recipients to directly receive housing vouchers (full award amount) deposited onto their benefit cards or deposited into their checking accounts.

- Request to allow all housing vouchers (CityFHEPS, Section 8, Section 9, etc.) to be given directly to the housing voucher recipient. The housing vouchers will be deposited onto their benefit cards or directly deposited into their checking accounts.
- The housing voucher recipient will receive the Full Award Amount – regardless as to the monthly rent. For example: \$1500 voucher \$2000 rent or \$1500 voucher \$5.00 rent; either way the voucher recipient will receive the Full Award Amount.
- This will allow the housing voucher recipient to be in control and have a say in where they live, how they live, and it allows them to have a say and a vested interest in their communities and their environments. This will allow the housing voucher recipient to move into communities and environments that are more conducive to their preferred lifestyles, locations, and surroundings. And this will allow them to move “at will” and without any “red tape” from CityFHEPS, Section 8, Section 9, etc.
- By allowing the housing voucher recipient to directly receive the full award amount this will eliminate slumlords, unscrupulous landlord's practices, computer glitches with unpaid rent, frivolous evictions, and the failure of landlords to make repairs because they will no longer receive the voucher from CityFHEPS, Section 8, Section 9, etc. As it stands now, they receive the housing vouchers - regardless as to whether or not they make repairs or whether or not they ensure a safe and secure environment. It will no longer be “money in the bank” for the landlords.
- And it will offer a viable and doable solution to most of the topics and issues that have been discussed at length at City Council Housing Hearings.
- It will not cost the city, state, and or federal governments any undue burdens and/or additional financial costs. With just a few changes to the computer systems – and the full award amounts will be forwarded onto their benefit cards or directly deposited into their checking accounts. Note: use the government shutdown to your advantage, by rerouting all housing vouchers to the recipients; and sending letters to all housing voucher recipients, and all landlords who participates in the housing voucher program about the upcoming changes.

- Make the appropriate changes to the computer systems and send letters to all housing voucher recipients informing them that on “this” date all housing voucher recipients will receive their full award amounts deposited onto their benefit cards or into their checking accounts. Also, send letters to all landlords who participates in any housing voucher programs that on “this” date they will begin receiving their full rent (housing voucher amounts and any personal contributions) directly from the residents and inform them that they will no longer receive housing voucher payment deposits from any housing voucher program.
- Personal story: CityFHEPS recipient since 2015, and the City Marshalls Office placed a lock on my door on July 31, 2025, exactly 6 days after landlord received August 2025 rent from CityFHEPS. City Marshalls Office contacted HRA & CityFHEPS before placing the lock on my door, and they failed to inform the City Marshalls Office of the housing voucher. I went to court, and the Housing Court Judge ordered the locks removed 4 days later on August 4, 2025. Case still ongoing in court.

Contact information:

Tabitha Ward

[REDACTED]

New York, New York 10025

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CESAR DE CASTRO

Address: 111 Fulton St, Ste. 602, NY, NY 10038

I represent: OCC 3 Ombudsperson

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristen Arevalo

Address: 120 W 45th St. New York NY 10036

I represent: Stout / OCC + IDA

Address: " "

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shannon McManus

Address: 111 Fulton St, 602, NY, NY 10038

I represent: Ombudsperson / OCC

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: 10-27-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Neil Steinhart

Address: 120 West 45th St, Ste 2900

I represent: OCC and Omnicomperson

Address: 120 West 45th St, Ste 2900

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jaclyn Sullivan

Address: 90 Church St

I represent: NCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4298

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Neil Bavofsky

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY

I represent: Myself

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. 4294

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elena Tenchikova

Address: 90 Church St.

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Greene

Address: 90 Church St.

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 442194

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Greene

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA EVP for Property

Address: Mgmt Operations

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. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jaclyn Sullivan

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA SVP for Healthy Homes

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elena Tenchikova

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA VP of OMAR

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Heather Beck

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA Deputy Chief of Real

Address: Estate Development

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. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: REV. FRANCIS SKELLY

Address: 389 E. 150 ST.

I represent: METRO IAF

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: Jabir W. W. W.

Address: [REDACTED] 10025

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rev. Getulio CMZ Jr.

Address: [REDACTED] Bklyn NY 11208

I represent: Manhattan Together Metro IAF

Address: 297 E 3rd St. NY NY 10009

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. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/26/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARIA Roman

Address: 140 Columbia St.

I represent: Manhattan Together / Metro IAF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 4294

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/27/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: WANDA SALAS

Address: 249 W C2ND ST

I represent: MANHATTAN TOGETHER

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: 10/27/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: SC18

Address: _____