

Testimony from NYCHA's Interim Chief Executive Officer Lisa Bova-Hiatt
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Public Housing
Committee on Public Housing
Monday, March 13, 2023 – 2:30 p.m.
New York City Hall Committee Room

Chair Alexa Avilés, members of the Committee on Public Housing, other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of the public: good afternoon. I am Lisa Bova-Hiatt, NYCHA's Interim Chief Executive Officer. I am pleased to be joined by Chief Operating Officer Eva Trimble, Executive Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer Annika Lescott-Martinez, Chief Asset and Capital Management Officer Shaan Mavani, and other members of NYCHA's team. Thank you for this opportunity to present the Authority's adopted budget, which was approved by NYCHA's Board of Directors in December. I would also like to briefly discuss our efforts to transform this vital institution and improve residents' quality of life.

Contending with the Impacts of Diminished Rent Revenue

There is considerable work underway to stabilize and strengthen the Authority so that we can improve conditions at our developments and provide residents with the quality of life they deserve. We are focused intensely on this mission, and the stakes could not be higher – NYCHA is home to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, a significant resource of affordable housing in our city. However, in addition to the accumulating impacts of decades of federal government disinvestment, today we are contending with another serious challenge – rent arrears, which are growing at an alarming rate.

Rent arrears now total \$466 million across about 73,000 households, having nearly quadrupled since 2019, when arrears stood at \$125 million. NYCHA is collecting only 64 percent of the rent owed over a 12-month period; HUD expects public housing authorities to collect 100 percent of the rent. NYCHA's primary mission is to keep families housed, and we launched a campaign to inform residents of the various ways they can get help with paying their rent – from one-time emergency assistance available from the City's Human Resources Administration to financial counseling opportunities from our partners – and we work with residents experiencing hardship. For instance, payment plans are possible, and residents experiencing a loss in income can have their rent reduced to as low as zero – a powerful demonstration of the vital safety net that public housing provides. In addition, we submitted \$121 million worth of Emergency Rental

Assistance Program (ERAP) applications to the State on behalf of more than 31,000 households. At this moment, though, there is no ERAP funding available for public housing residents. And at the same time, the NYCHA households with ERAP applications pending have amassed more than \$240 million in arrears. To bring attention to these critical needs, we sent each State legislator data on rent arrears in their district, as residents with subsidized rents have been granted the lowest priority for ERAP funds.

Rent payments fund one-third of NYCHA's operating budget and are crucial to our operations. We rely on rent payments, along with federal funding, to maintain our developments, which are aging rapidly and have more than \$40 billion in major capital needs. Without additional funding or an increase in rent payments, beginning next year NYCHA will have no choice but to significantly cut expenses and curtail repairs, including those related to the HUD Agreement – which will have a real impact for residents. We will discuss the ways we are mitigating the loss in rent payments later in our testimony.

Budget Outlook

Operating Budget

I would now like to take you through some specific information related to NYCHA's budget. For 2023, with expected operating revenues of about \$4.378 billion and an expected \$4.413 billion in operating expenses, we anticipate a year-end deficit of about \$35 million. We believe we can close this gap – we will continue to closely monitor our spending and implement cost-saving measures as necessary, as we did to close the budget gap in 2022. However, with the increasing needs and expected mounting losses in rent revenue, the anticipated annual deficit climbs to about \$56 million in 2027.

Two-thirds of NYCHA's operating revenue comes from federal sources. This year, we expect to receive about \$1.2 billion in federal operating subsidy. However, as noted, the other third of our operating revenue comes from rent, and we expect to collect about \$850 million in rent this year, about \$150 million less than we should be collecting. In our 2023 budget, we assumed a proration factor of 89 percent for the operating subsidy – \$150 million less than what NYCHA is eligible for. We also expect to receive \$234 million in City operating funds.

We expect to receive about \$1.46 billion for Section 8 vouchers, and the associated administrative fees, this year. NYCHA is receiving the previous year's expenses plus a Section 8 administrative fee that is estimated to be prorated by 88 percent. Along with program reserves, NYCHA will be appropriately funded to issue more Section 8 vouchers for low-income New Yorkers.

Our projected expenses for 2023 include about \$1.46 billion in Section 8 payments to landlords; \$1.52 billion in salaries and fringe benefits; \$463 million in contracts; \$604 million in utility payments; and \$367 million for expenses such as leases, supplies, vehicles, and equipment. A significant portion of our expenses are beyond our control and rising, such as utilities and employee benefits.

The majority of our buildings are more than a half century old, and the historic lack of investment is driving up the costs to simply maintain them. Due to the insufficient rental revenue and the escalating costs related to the HUD Agreement, NYCHA has relied heavily on operating reserves to improve services for residents and meet the demands of the Agreement. As part of our efforts to close this year's budget gap, we will withdraw \$65 million from our operating reserves, leaving less than one month of reserves. To put this in context, HUD recommends three to four months of operating reserves for public housing authorities of our size. To help close this year's deficit, we will also use \$17 million in restricted PACT proceeds. And we will again shift 35 percent of our federal capital grant for our basic operations (the maximum amount we can shift under HUD rules).

Chief Financial Officer Annika Lescott-Martinez will now provide a few more details about NYCHA's 2023 budget and financial outlook.

[Budget presentation from Chief Financial Officer Annika Lescott-Martinez]

Capital Investments

Thank you, Annika. In terms of NYCHA's capital investments in our properties, about \$2.45 billion is available for this purpose in 2023, including approximately \$390 million in expected federal capital funding; \$741 million in City capital funding available in the 2023 City Fiscal Year; and other federal, State, and City funds allocated from prior-year awards. We are grateful

for the City's support, which is vital to our efforts. We are also grateful for the State's commitment of \$350 million in 2022, which we plan to use to upgrade heating systems and repair façades across the city after finalizing a Funding Agreement.

While the capital funding we receive is only a fraction of the more than \$40 billion needed to provide residents with the quality of life they deserve, we are making a difference with the money we do receive. More than 700 capital projects are underway across the city; over 250 of these projects are in the construction phase. In 2023 we anticipate committing an additional \$950 million to upgrade heating systems, roofs, elevators, and waste management systems; repair building facades; and abate lead-based paint and asbestos in apartments, among other important capital improvements. Expenditure in 2023 is expected to be \$935 million, or \$78 million each month.

NYCHA consistently meets and exceeds HUD's deadlines for obligating and expending federal capital funds – for the past several years, we've exceeded those deadlines by an average of 7 months and 16 months, respectively. We have also increased our rate of committing City capital funds over previous years to 21.2 percent as of the end of February – and we expect to further increase this rate by the end of the City's fiscal year.

As of the end of 2022, we have completed \$2.83 billion of Sandy recovery work, providing thousands of residents with new roofs, floodproofed electrical equipment, boilers, backup power generators, flood protection, as well as exterior lights, CCTV cameras, and security systems. For the 2022 Hurricane Season, 100 apartment buildings had flood protection and almost 10,000 households had full backup power generators installed. By the end of 2023, those numbers will almost double.

Towards meeting our HUD Agreement targets, we have replaced 86 boilers and 8 elevators as of today through capital investments; in 2023, construction work will be underway at scores of developments to replace an additional 50 boilers and 160 elevators. There are now 317 brand-new roofs at NYCHA developments thanks to our roof replacement program, and an additional 383 roof replacements are in progress.

Additionally, we have completed or significantly advanced a range of smaller projects funded through Mayoral, discretionary City Council, or Borough President allocations. After the 2022

preliminary budget hearing, we began working to further accelerate projects with City funding allocated in 2020 or earlier. Of the 72 projects we prioritized through this effort, 20 are now substantially complete, 32 are in construction, and 20 are in procurement or completing design work to move to construction during 2023.

Even with the significant progress in our capital portfolio over the last year and the large number of projects completing or in construction this year, this area of NYCHA's work will be impacted by our operating budget shortfall and resulting staffing constraints. We are mitigating these impacts to the extent possible but have identified approximately 70 projects that we must pause in the next few months as a result of our operating budget constraints (which are due to growing rent arrears, insufficient operating funding, and rising expenses and have contributed to staffing and resource limitations).

These 70 projects account for only 1 percent of the unexpended budget across all of our active capital projects, and they do not involve work directly related to the HUD Agreement; other health, safety, and security issues; or other major programs. However, approximately 50 projects with City discretionary funding – mainly related to community center and playground renovations and grounds improvements – are included in this group of paused projects.

Investing in Residents' Improved Quality of Life

As we continue to invest in our buildings and campuses with the funds at our disposal, we are also investing in our organization, making fundamental changes that will enable us to better serve residents. This work is underway across various areas of NYCHA, as guided by our Transformation Plan. Developed and implemented through ongoing feedback from residents and staff, the Transformation Plan envisions operational and organizational changes that will improve customer service and responsiveness to conditions at our developments, ensure that large projects are completed in a timely manner, and promote accountability through property management performance metrics.

The Transformation Plan's Neighborhood Model created smaller property management portfolios that are easier to manage while bringing more decision-making and resources to developments. We also re-oriented our centralized functions, such as heat and pest management, to the Neighborhood Model to provide increased oversight and stronger

coordination with property management. The Transformation Plan's Work Order Reform initiative is bringing improved communication and enhanced service to residents across the city. Revised caretaker schedules provide for the unique janitorial needs of each development, providing greater accountability to ensure our properties are clean and well maintained. The implementation of a supplier risk management and vendor screening tool is helping to ensure that we are selecting the best vendors possible to carry out the critical work we are doing for residents.

We are striving to provide residents with safe and healthy homes in very tangible ways. For instance, we performed lead abatement at more than 1,500 apartments in accordance with the City's new and stricter standard for detecting the presence of lead. We discussed at last month's hearing the advances we have made in our ventilation improvement program, including how we completed the installation of thousands of new roof fans at developments in all five boroughs.

We are also working to help address the housing instability crisis in our city, by issuing more than 5,700 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) to New Yorkers last year. EHV's are tenant-based vouchers targeting those families experiencing at risk of homelessness or housing instability, referred directly by the City's Continuum of Care partners.

Our Comprehensive Modernization program will complete more holistic capital improvements at selected developments, instead of simply repairing individual building components. Launched at four developments so far, the program is supported by \$650 million in our City Capital Action Plan and \$200 million from the Gowanus Neighborhood Rezoning.

The PACT initiative is revitalizing the homes of thousands of NYCHA residents. In 2022, PACT drove \$2 billion in large-scale improvements, providing residents of more than 8,500 apartments across 17 developments with comprehensive apartment renovations, building system and infrastructure upgrades, and improved grounds and common areas. Currently, 137 developments comprising over 36,000 apartments are in either the engagement or pre-development process, under construction, or have received comprehensive repairs through PACT. Our goal is to bring dramatically improved quality of life to about 62,000 NYCHA families in total through PACT.

We are proud that collaboration with our partners in State government helped pass the NYC Public Housing Preservation Trust last year. The Trust will transform the homes of 25,000 NYCHA families through an innovative, 100 percent public model to bring much-needed new funding to the developments. As part of an extensive engagement process, residents at select sites will begin voting this year on whether or not to implement the Trust at their developments.

On the Path of Progress

While the challenges are numerous, and true change takes time, we know that with the dedication of NYCHA staff and the partnership of residents and other stakeholders, including members of the Council, we will prevail. Long-entrenched issues, those stemming from a half century of federal government disinvestment from public housing across the nation, can only be solved through innovative approaches and bold, new ways of thinking. We must come together as a community to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to pivot to a better and stronger tomorrow.

Thank you for your support as we strive to improve the quality of life for today's families and the generations to come. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

■ Family
 ■ Criminal
 ■ Community Development
 ■ Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

2. Harlem Community Justice Center
3. Headquarters
4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

6. Legal Hand (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
8. Bronx Community Justice Center
9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
13. Neighbors in Action
14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)



Citywide

■ Access to Justice
 ■ Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
 ■ RISE Project
■ Alternatives to Incarceration
■ Parent Support Program
■ Strong Starts Court Initiative
■ Driver Accountability Program
■ Project Reset
■ Youth Action Institute
■ Gender and Family Justice
■ Restorative Justice Practices
■ Youth Impact

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Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

**Center for Justice Innovation
New York City Council
Committee on Public Housing – Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 13, 2023**

Since its inception, the Center for Justice Innovation (formerly the Center for Court Innovation), referred to as ‘the Center’ throughout these remarks, has supported the vision embraced by Council of a fair, effective, and humane justice system and public safety built through sustainable, community-driven solutions that cultivate vibrant neighborhoods. The Center’s longstanding partnership with Council over the past 25 years has helped bring this vision to life through evidence-based and racially-just programming that spans the justice continuum.

Our firsthand experience operating direct service programs and conducting original research uniquely positions us to offer insights that Council can look to as it considers the development of initiatives that respond to needs of all New Yorkers. In addition to our annual renewal awards, the Center asks for Council support in achieving the following goals in FY24:

- Return to prior funding levels for Supervised Release Program, considering recent cuts to funding for existing contracts.
- A \$250,000 increase to the Innovative Core Funding partnership between the Council and the Center, to represent the first increase of this award in over a decade.
- \$550,000 to expand access to comprehensive support and prevent housing instability.

In each instance, our aim is to provide a meaningful and proportionate response, treat all people under our care with dignity and respect, prioritize public safety, and produce much-needed cost savings for the City. And, as an anti-racist organization, we work to ensure the needs of marginalized New Yorkers are addressed.

Restoring Supervised Release to FY22 Levels to Respond to Increasing Referral Volume

Community-based pretrial supervision is a critical component in the implementation of bail reform and safely shrinking the jail population to close the Rikers Island Jail Complex by the intended date. After a comprehensive assessment, the Center's Supervised Release Program removes people from the harmful environment of incarceration through community-based supervision and refers participants to relevant voluntary social services, including addressing supportive housing needs. **We are seeking a return to FY22 funding levels, as the FY23 contract was reduced by 10% while caseloads for the most intensive category of cases are already double the contracted caseload.** The Center operates the **Supervised Release Program** in Brooklyn and Staten Island, and citywide nearly 17,000 participants were served by all providers in 2022. The programs continue to grow, reflecting judges’ confidence that clients in Supervised Release show up for court dates at a very

high rate. Additionally, with this growth, the number of participants with higher needs has increased; in our two boroughs, 1,600 individuals had potential mental health needs in 2022 compared to 430 in 2019.¹ This reflects just under a third of all participants assessed in 2022 flagging for mental health needs.

After program eligibility expansion and initial budget increases, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice *reduced* the budget for Brooklyn and Staten Island from 2022 to 2023 by approximately 10%. This reduction in budget occurred amidst an over 60% increase in volume of participants. With the reduction in budget and increase in the number of participants with substantial needs, the program cannot function as intended. Lower caseloads are crucial for staff to provide quality time with each participant to ensure case management is responsive to their individual needs. With twice the caseload, it is difficult for case managers to have more frequent and intensive supervision with individuals, including at community locations closer to the participants' work/home. Rising caseloads prevent staff from working with participants who voluntarily seek or might benefit from enhanced support, including supportive *housing* and peer support, services that can have positive life-changing impacts. In addition, case managers experience stress and burnout, leading to a low staff retention rate and resources spent on continually recruiting, hiring, and training new staff that could be spent on programming. The Center seeks Council support and guidance on this urgent issue.

Innovative Core Funding

This year, we ask Council to continue and expand support for the Center's **Innovative Core Funding to \$750,000 from \$500,000, an amount not raised in over a decade**. Each year, the Center uses this funding to flexibly respond to the immediate needs of New Yorkers by piloting novel and effective community-based pilots to test for scalable solutions. Enhanced support would allow the Center to float programming despite delayed contract payouts from city agencies, which delays hiring and implementation across our programs. The Innovative Core Funding allows us to ensure programming doesn't get interrupted. In FY23, this contract transitioned from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) to the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD), and we call on Council to ensure there is a long-term plan in place to sustain this funding. Council's Innovative Core Funding supports public safety and criminal justice responses in all five boroughs.

The Center makes deep investments in engaging individuals as far upstream as possible by meeting young people where they are, promoting *housing stability*, preventing gun violence, and working at the intersection of the justice and behavioral health systems. Center programs currently serve thousands of young people citywide each year, offering meaningful off-ramps and justice system alternatives through counseling, academic support, and workforce development. The Center's Youth Impact program, for example, provides peer-led diversion that invests in youth leadership and restorative alternatives to detention. In Harlem and Red Hook, the Center works with tenants in community to increase housing stability and reduce evictions by helping tenants navigate housing court. Similarly, our Legal Hand program serves Crown Heights, Jamaica, and Tremont residents facing housing, immigration, and employment issues by training local residents to empower their neighbors with legal information. In both Brooklyn and the Bronx, the Center works to prevent gun violence by actively engaging those at risk of being involved in violence, building community

¹Center for Justice Innovation. (2023). [Supervised Release Program data file]. Retrieved from the Justice Center Application case management system.

movements against violence, and providing supports and opportunities to community members in need. The citywide Reimagining Intimacy through Social Engagement (RISE) Project addresses the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence.

The Center has a particular expertise in providing trauma-informed social services, which continue to be crucial given the increasing number of justice system-involved individuals facing mental health and/or substance use challenges. Through our Staten Island Justice Center, for example, the Center provides clinical support and restorative programming for court-involved youth who have mental health needs. Our Midtown Community Court's Misdemeanor Mental Health Court works with some of Manhattan's most vulnerable individuals—those with extensive histories of mental illness and/or substance use disorders—to resolve cases while reducing the use of incarceration and continued cycling through systems. The Center's Bronx Child Trauma Support provides therapeutic and court accompaniment services to children who have been victim or witnesses to violent crime.

Preventing Eviction through Comprehensive Housing Support

The Center seeks \$550,000 in new Council funding to expand comprehensive support to address the many interconnected factors that impact housing instability in New York City.

Access to quality, sustainable, and safe housing is a crucial element to the conversation around social justice and equity. By proactively addressing factors like access to housing and housing resources, we hope to reduce the likelihood of individuals intersecting with the justice system. Three Center programs—the Red Hook Community Justice Center, the Harlem Community Justice Center, and Legal Hand—work directly with New York City residents who are facing housing instability, whether through the threat of eviction, the need for permanent housing, or living conditions that pose risks to their safety and well-being.

While New York City has made significant investments in attorneys for low-income residents, tenants are more likely to remain stably housed when they have assistance beyond legal representation in Housing Court. The Center's **Housing Navigators** work at Legal Hand sites, or out of the Center's Housing Resource Centers, to connect directly with residents who are facing housing instability. Housing Navigators support tenants in obtaining critical home repairs, preserving affordability, preventing evictions, and finding justice and fair treatment in housing court. We have found that a problem-solving approach in and beyond Housing Court helps both tenants and landlords connect to resources to address challenges like building repairs and back rent. Support with organizing files, evidence-gathering, and other written requests prior to legal filings have been noted to improve legal representation.

The Center's unique positioning—a community-based organization with programs across all five boroughs and individuals already engaging in this work—means that we can bridge those gaps to ensure that our most vulnerable residents do not fall through. We seek new Council funding to support Housing Navigators in Staten Island and the neighborhoods of Harlem, Brownsville, Red Hook, Crown Heights, Jamaica, and Tremont. Known as the **Housing Justice Community Navigator Program**, the initiative is dedicated to preventing evictions while promoting housing stability, affordability, and tenant protections for vulnerable tenants and public housing communities through a network of trained housing navigators and mobile pop-up events in all five boroughs. The Housing Justice Community Navigator Program is currently supported by congressional funding that is due to sunset in late 2023.

Conclusion

By partnering with the Center, Council can go beyond transforming the justice system to cultivating vibrant and prosperous communities that center public safety and housing stability for all who live here. We thank Council for its continued partnership and are available to answer any questions you may have.



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Center for Justice Innovation FY24 City Council Housing Proposal Summaries

Center for Justice Innovation Innovative Core Funding (formerly Center for Court Innovation) #151226 - \$750,000 (Renewal/Expansion) This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation's innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, immigration and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all.

Initiative: Innovative Criminal Justice Programs

Brownsville Community Justice Center: Housing Resource Center and Housing Navigator #153364 - \$100,000 (New) Brownsville Community Justice Center (Justice Center) is seeking funding to bolster its Housing Resource Center—including through the hiring of a new Housing Navigator—in order to prevent homelessness and help community members maintain safe, affordable, and stable housing. With City Council support, the Housing Resource Center, in addition to providing direct tenant support, will conduct community education campaigns around important issues, like NYCHA's new portal and HP Actions. Additionally, the Housing Navigator will work with a team of Housing Navigators across the Center to address a wide range of housing needs. Although the Justice Center has long provided services that help prevent evictions via annual recertification, support residents secure benefits, and provide assistance overcoming homelessness, this dedicated Housing Navigator will expand and deepen its housing work in Brownsville.

Initiative: Community Housing Preservation Strategies

Harlem Community Justice Center: Housing Help Center and Housing Navigator #153428 - \$100,000 (New) The Harlem Community Justice Center's Housing Help Desk seeks funding from the Community Housing Preservation Strategies Initiative to support a Housing Navigator who will help seniors, non-English speakers, and other public housing tenants living in Harlem obtain critical home repairs, preserve affordability, prevent evictions, and find justice and fair treatment in housing court.

Initiative: Community Housing Preservation Strategies

Legal Hand: Crown Heights– Housing Navigator #153220 - \$100,000 (New) City Council funding will support a dedicated Housing Navigator at Legal Hand: Crown Heights, which will be a part of a network of Housing Navigators across the City at other Center for Justice Innovation sites to address a wide range of housing needs. Although Legal Hand: Crown Heights has always provided services that help prevent evictions, assist residents to secure benefits, and support community members overcoming homelessness, this dedicated Housing Navigator role will expand and deepen its housing work in Crown Heights, in response to rising need.

Initiative: Community Housing Preservation Strategies

Legal Hand: Jamaica – Housing Navigator #153254 - \$100,000 (New) City Council funding will support a dedicated Housing Navigator at Legal Hand: Jamaica, which will be a part of a network of Housing Navigators across the City at other Center for Justice Innovation sites to address a wide range of housing needs. Although Legal Hand: Jamaica has always provided services that help prevent evictions, assist residents to secure benefits, and support community members overcoming homelessness, this dedicated Housing Navigator role will expand and deepen its housing work in Jamaica, in response to rising need.

Initiative: Community Housing Preservation Strategies

Legal Hand: Bronx – Housing Navigator #153284 - \$100,000 (New) City Council funding will support a dedicated Housing Navigator at Legal Hand: Bronx, which will be a part of a network of Housing Navigators across the City at other Center for Justice Innovation sites to address a wide range of housing needs. Although Legal Hand: Bronx has always provided services that help prevent evictions, assist residents to secure benefits, and support community members overcoming homelessness, this dedicated Housing Navigator role will expand and deepen its housing work in the Bronx, in response to rising need.

Initiative: Community Housing Preservation Strategies



Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.
Testimony at the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing
Honorable Alexa Aviles, Chair
March 13, 2023

Thank you Chairs Menchaca and Cornegy and the Members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded since our founding to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 60,000 people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities.

To that end, we are grateful to testify about the housing disparities that impact the individuals and families we serve, and we are grateful to the Council for their leadership on these issues.

Housing Stresses for Immigrant New Yorkers

Immigrant New Yorkers face disproportionate housing barriers, even prior to COVID-19. Immigrants are more likely to be increasingly rent-burdened, live in overcrowded spaces, and live in substandard conditions that don't receive regular maintenance. First generation immigrants are more likely to be low income and significantly rent-burdened (more than 50% of income for rent) than second generation immigrants, at 19-35%. AAPI immigrants are also more likely to live in multi-generational households, which are more prone to crowding. Additionally, AAPI immigrants face significant language barriers and access with public housing and assisted living. In combination with the long waiting lists of NYCHA and Section-8 Housing, AAPI immigrants are left with fewer opportunities to find truly affordable housing.

Economic Impacts of COVID-19 Exacerbated Housing Disparities

It goes without saying that the economic impacts and health impacts are inextricably related. Communities of color are both bearing the brunt of the economic hit, while simultaneously being forced to endanger ourselves while working on the front lines of this crisis. Some of the things we have seen include:

- More than half of our community members surveyed reported that they are out of work or income, and will run out of money in the coming weeks;
- Many of our community members continue to work, either because they are essential workers or because they cannot afford to stop working since they are left out of Federal relief and State unemployment benefits;

- In one of our preschool families, 20 out of 24 families lost all income within two weeks, and less than half qualify for Federal relief or State unemployment, leaving them unable to pay rent, buy groceries or pay for prescriptions;
- Our young people reporting caring for their younger siblings while their parents work (and juggling remote learning simultaneously), and rationing their daily food intake because they are running out of food;
- Our homebound seniors unable to get food delivered through the City's meal program, or receiving inadequate meals- including two pieces of bread and two pats of butter as a meal, or meal boxes featuring items like pudding, fruit cups, crackers, cheerios, and applesauce as a five-day meal supply;

Anti-Asian and anti-Asian American Discrimination

Our Asian American, particularly East Asian community members are experiencing a double virus of discrimination and racism. We are grateful to the City and the City Council for taking a strong stand on this issue and for your leadership. Our community members have been experiencing:

- Verbal and physical harassment while traveling to work or running errands. This includes frontline healthcare and essential workers who have become increasingly scared of going to work.
- Fears of going outside, seeking treatment, or getting the COVID-19 vaccine because of reports of harassment and violence against Asian Americans.
- Continued social isolation from fear of Anti-Asian violence.

Yet while all of this happens, the City is slashing funding to the very programs and social safety net programs that support these communities and help combat disproportionate health outcomes. Services like senior food programs, homeless services, youth development and summer programs, public health and others are experiencing more demand than ever before, yet instead of boosting funding to these programs, the City is cutting them. Discretionary funding, often the way that small organizations and people of color-led CBO's access city funding, has been cut retroactive to March 22nd with the exception of programs that are the same as they were before the PAUSE order.

These services are more important than ever in addressing the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color. Our staff have been designated as essential workers, yet we are on the front lines without adequate PPE, and many of us barely making minimum wage. We need to fully fund our essential workers, and fully fund these essential programs and safety net services. CPC urges the City to fully fund all services and contracts through at least FY21, and ensure that contracts have maximum flexibility to allow organizations to meet emerging and changing needs.

Additionally, in order to fully address the housing disparities that low-income immigrants in New York face, New York City needs to fully invest in truly affordable and mobility-accessible housing that is language accessible in its application process. There needs to be increased accountability processes with landlords to ensure that affordable units are rent-regulated without loopholes, regular maintenance procedures are followed through on, and that all uncertified units comply with safety conditions for residents. Currently, the Section 8 housing application requires identification, which discourages and prevents many undocumented



immigrants from applying to public housing. New York City needs to keep a lookout on the Section 8 Voucher Reform Act and the Omnibus Public Housing Preservation bills, two pieces of federal legislation that require identification on public housing applications, which will significantly impact immigrant access to public housing.

At the same time, while key social services are being cut, the NYPD budget remains largely untouched. Overpolicing of communities of color and the increasing expanding of the NYPD into social services- from homeless shelters to the subways- contributes to adverse public health impacts, and fails to keep our communities safe and healthy. Rather, we urge the City to invest in critical programs and social safety nets, in relief for everyone, regardless of work or status, and in keeping the organizations that serve communities of color and low income communities whole.

CPC appreciates the opportunity to testify on these issues that so greatly impact the communities we serve, and look forward to working with you on them. If you have any questions, please contact Carlyn Cowen at ccowen@cpc-nyc.org



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Testimony on the New York City Housing Authority and the City's Preliminary Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing

March 13, 2023

Sean Campion, Director of Housing and Economic Development Studies, Citizens Budget Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Sean Campion, Director of Housing and Economic Development Studies at the Citizens Budget Commission (CBC), a nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank and watchdog devoted to constructive change in the finances, services, and policies of New York State and City governments.

At last year's Preliminary Budget hearing on public housing, CBC testified about the risks that cloud the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) fiscal outlook. NYCHA's already high operating costs were rising quickly, while operating revenues were failing to keep pace due to a plummeting rent collection rate. To balance its budget and fund its basic operations, NYCHA was increasingly reliant on City subsidies and non-recurring funding sources.

Over the past year, these structural challenges have worsened.

Decades of deterioration, mismanagement, and inaction on renovation plans have worsened the physical conditions of NYCHA apartments and quality of life for NYCHA residents. Now, deferred maintenance is driving higher costs in NYCHA's already strained operating budget. Furthermore, combined with flagging rent collection, NYCHA faces a structural budget gap, perpetuating its continued reliance on non-operating revenue and local government subsidies to balance its budget.

The cost of delaying needed repairs is also now becoming clear. In 2018, CBC warned that without action, by 2027 [more than 90 percent](#) of NYCHA units would be so deteriorated that it would be cheaper to build new units than to repair them. While some developments have

benefited from repairs through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program since that report was published, the moment of reckoning for the remaining properties is growing alarmingly closer.

To improve the lives of tenants and preserve NYCHA's viability, CBC continues to recommend that NYCHA:

- Fix deteriorating buildings through the RAD program and the Preservation Trust;
- Improve property management;
- Boost rent collections; and
- Negotiate savings and increased productivity through collective bargaining.

Rising costs

As developments convert from Section 9 to Section 8 under RAD as part of the Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program, the number of public housing units under NYCHA management has fallen by four percent, but the total operating cost for those remaining units has increased rather than decreased. Overall, operating costs for NYCHA's public housing portfolio increased 6 percent between 2021 and 2022, while spending per unit increased 10 percent year-over-year. In 2022, there were 162,000 public housing units under NYCHA management, down from 168,000 the previous year. (Data is based on CBC's analysis of actual revenue and expense data from the New York City Comptroller's *Checkbook NYC* open data portal, excluding federal Section 8 funds.)

NYCHA's operating costs are also rising more quickly than those of comparable rental properties. The average cost to operate NYCHA's public housing reached nearly \$1,500 per unit per month. That is 80 percent higher than cost to operate both privately owned rent regulated buildings, excluding property taxes, and NYCHA buildings converted to Section 8 under the RAD/PACT program. Worryingly, this gap has more than doubled since 2015, when the cost to operate the average NYCHA unit was just 39 percent more than the average rent stabilized unit.

NYCHA has always had high costs, driven by a combination of high fringe benefit rates for employees, high overtime use, outdated work rules, and inefficient management practices. However, most of the recent spending increases appear to be attributable to deferred maintenance for NYCHA's aging and deteriorating building stock. Spending increases are concentrated in the other than personal services budget: contracts increased 12 percent to \$546 million, with increases in spending on façade repair, environmental remediation, plumbing and heating, and related project management. Spending on supplies increased 23 percent to \$127 million, and insurance costs have also risen significantly in recent years, reaching \$80 million in 2022.

NYCHA's in-house workforce also has faced additional pressure to meet repair needs. Notably, overtime remains high despite NYCHA's efforts to reduce it. NYCHA set a goal of reducing overtime costs by 40 percent in 2022, but overtime spending wound up increasing 3 percent, reaching \$152 million.

Flagging rent collection

While expenses rose, the rent collection rate fell to an all-time low of 64 percent in December 2022, costing NYCHA hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue. The State's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) put public housing in the lowest priority funding tier, which contributed to NYCHA's substantial and growing rent collection problem. However, flagging rent collection appears not to be caused by its limited ERAP eligibility alone. As of December 2022, 46 percent of NYCHA households were in arrears, having accrued \$454 million in unpaid rent, but only one-third of those households had pending ERAP applications, covering only 24 percent of total NYCHA arrears.

NYCHA's rent recertification process also should have helped residents get current on their rent, which would have the effect of stabilizing the current collection rate. This appears not to have occurred. During the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) granted waivers to speed up the income recertification process, which is designed to reset a resident's rent to an income-based affordable level following a decrease in income. Between March 2020 and February 2022, 59,811 households, or more than 35 percent of occupied units, requested rent decreases, according to data reported last year by the City Council. Yet despite that, the rent collection rate has continued to fall, and the number of households in arrears has continued to increase.

It appears there are deeper challenges with NYCHA's approach to rent collection and enforcement that need to be addressed to ensure adequate revenue to operate and maintain its housing units. While financial hardship is a critical factor, and additional State funding for back rent would be appropriate and help many residents and improve NYCHA's balance sheet, going forward, NYCHA should seek to appropriately enforce tenant obligations to pay rent.

Continued reliance on non-recurring revenues and subsidies

Lastly, NYCHA continued its unsustainable reliance on non-operating revenue and City subsidies to balance its budget. At its December 2022 board meeting, NYCHA reported using \$789 million, 28 percent of its total revenue budget, in non-operating sources to balance its 2022

budget, including \$248 million in transfers from its federal capital subsidy; \$247 million in subsidies from the City budget, primarily used to pay salaries; and \$194 million in miscellaneous other sources, including proceeds from the sale of development rights, RAD transactions, and grants. Even those transfers were not enough to bring the budget into balance, forcing NYCHA to withdraw \$100 million from its operating and replacement reserves. At the end of 2022, NYCHA was left with \$211 million in reserves, less than one month of expenses in cash on hand. No other large public housing authority relies on non-recurring revenue sources and local government subsidies to the extent that NYCHA does.

Conclusion

While a balanced budget remains in sight for 2023, fiscal stability is not on the horizon. Ultimately, structural reforms—not just one-time bailouts—are needed to put NYCHA's operations back on the path to solvency.

NYCCELP • LEAD ROUNDTABLE



New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) Fiscal Year 24 Budget Statement

New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) is a New York City coalition of organizations that work to eliminate lead poisoning in New York City through a holistic, multi-city agency approach. In 2022 NYCCELP released our [Roadmap to End Lead Poisoning](#) which calls for the policymakers to invest in programs and interventions that protect children from lead poisoning through the City's budget.

We urge the New York City Council to enforce the City's [commitment to eliminating lead poisoning](#) by ensuring resources are available to the following agencies in order to meet that goal:

- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)
- Department of Buildings (DOB)
- Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Department of Education (DOE)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- New York Housing Authority (NYCHA)

Lead poisoning is an entirely preventable problem that has long-term [effects](#) on children's health and well-being and can contribute to what is sometimes called the "[poisoning to prison pipeline](#)." Because both the causes and prevention methods are so well-established, New York City must take urgent steps to completely eliminate childhood lead poisoning as well as adult lead exposure. Lead poisoning is [racial justice issue](#) with [links](#) to [criminalization](#) as well, as alluded to above. Living in substandard housing that exposes young children to lead creates a terrible legacy with high obstacles for children to overcome, but investing in preventative measures is a [cost savings](#) measure: **Every dollar spent on prevention results in a return of \$17 – \$221.**

We know the primary source of lead poisoning is lead paint in NYC's old housing stock. Old lead paint can crack, chip, and peel and create dust, especially on friction surfaces like doors or

windows, or be dispersed through a building from poor construction and renovation practices. Drinking water is another significant pathway of lead exposure. It can make up at least 20% of a person's total exposure to lead, and up to 80% of total exposure for formula-fed babies under 1 year old. While [Local Law 1 of 2004 \(LL1 of 2004\)](#) has done much to combat lead poisoning, there are still thousands of children found to have high blood lead levels every year. To enforce LL1 of 2004 and the provisions that have been added to city code in the intervening years, the city must fully fund agencies in order to conduct inspections, test dust and paint for lead, remove lead service lines that deliver water,¹ and other necessary functions that address lead concerns of New York City's families. The City's budget must reflect the needs of this unnecessary and long-standing crisis.

The city has already [committed to eliminating lead poisoning](#), so should ensure resources are available to meet the goal. Multiple separate city agencies have been identified in playing a key role in combating lead poisoning:

- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)
 - [Healthy Homes Program](#)
- Department of Buildings (DOB)
 - Code enforcement (complaints and lead violations)
 - [Office of Tenant Advocate](#)
- Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
 - [Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes Program](#) (formerly, Lead Paint Primary Prevention Program)
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
 - Water monitoring (lead monitoring)
 - [Lead Service Line Replacement Program](#)
 - [NYC Clean Soil Bank \(CSB\)](#)
- Department of Education (DOE)
 - [Spaces and Facilities Report](#) (Paint Inspections and Water Safety)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - Remediating hazardous lead paint chips that [fall to the streets and sidewalks from elevated train lines](#)
 - Removing lead paint in subway stations and other infrastructure throughout the city
- New York Housing Authority (NYCHA)
 - [Lead-Safe Housing Policy](#) (Lead-Based Paint Abatement and Dust Wipe Sampling)

¹ Complete lead pipe removal is, according to EPA, urgently needed to protect the public from lead exposure from drinking water.

New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) Fiscal Year 24 Budget Statement

- [XRF Testing Initiative](#)
- [Team for Enhanced Management Planning and Outreach \(TEMPO\)](#)

Crucial agency work, some of which was outlined in the [LeadFreeNYC Plan](#) (2020 [progress report](#)), needs appropriate funding and staffing to audit reports, update construction codes, inspect high-risk areas, expand testing, remove lead service lines, and other critical work to ensure the eradication of lead poisoning.

NYCCELP is concerned that sweeping cuts in the budget through the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) could negatively impact the efficacy of lead poisoning prevention policies and programs due to hiring freezes and vacancy reductions across all of the agencies listed above. And recent and future lead laws will lack the funding necessary to properly enforce and to reach the goal of eliminating lead poisoning in New York City.

The DOHMH [reported](#) that 67% of children under six years of age with elevated blood levels are from high poverty neighborhoods. Furthermore, Black, Latino, and Asian children represent 82% of all newly identified cases of elevated blood levels in children under age six. It is imperative that this City Council sees this as an environmental health injustice and should make ending lead poisoning and exposure in New York City a top priority. This can be achieved by funding City agencies to administer lead poisoning prevention and intervention programs and lead service line replacement; funding staff to collect data and enforce current lead laws; and supporting legislation that closes the gaps in existing lead laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the importance of including lead poisoning prevention in the Fiscal Year 24 budget. The New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning Lead Roundtable is always open to having more detailed conversation on this issue.

Sincerely,

New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP)

Contact:

Lonnie J. Portis
Environmental Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
1854 Amsterdam Avenue, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10031
646-866-8720 | lonnie@weact.org

List of New York City Lead Laws and Bills

Since LL1 of 2004, there have been additional lead laws implemented:

- [Local Law 27 \(2020\)](#) – Soil lead testing in certain department of parks and recreation capital projects.
- [Local Law 28 \(2020\)](#) – Permanent removal of lead-based paint.
- [Local Law 29 \(2020\)](#) – Lead poisoning prevention and control in certain dwellings.
- [Local Law 30 \(2020\)](#) – Investigations by the department of health and mental hygiene in connection with reports of pregnant persons with elevated blood lead levels.
- [Local Law 31 \(2020\)](#) – Investigations of lead-based paint hazards by independent and certified inspectors, and contractor certifications for construction activities that disturb lead-based paint.
- [Local Law 39 \(2021\)](#) – Investigations by the department of health and mental hygiene in connection with lead poisoning incidents.
- [Local Law 40 \(2021\)](#) – Improving tenant notification, interagency cooperation, conducting inspections and issuing stop work orders, in connection with lead paint and construction work.

There are currently five bills that aim to close remaining loopholes in existing lead laws. When passed, these bills will also require funding for continued enforcement:

- [Int 0006-2022](#) – Permanent removal of lead-based paint on friction surfaces in child-occupied dwellings.
- [Int 0005-2022](#) – Records of lead-based paint investigations.
- [Int 0193-2022](#) – Lead-based paint hazards in common areas of dwellings.
- [Int 0200-2022](#) – Quarterly reporting on objections to orders for the abatement or remediation of lead conditions.
- [Int 0750-2022](#) – Proactive identification and inspection of dwellings where children are at risk of lead poisoning.



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Public Housing
FY24 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 13, 2023**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Avilés, and members of the Committee on Public Housing for the opportunity to comment.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has been long-neglected due to significant underinvestment and mismanagement. Chronic issues such as lack of heating and hot water, mold, lead paint, rats and other pests, and little to no recycling access have plagued NYCHA residents for years. Compounding this, NYCHA residents are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Many campuses are located in flood zones, exposing residents to sea level rise, coastal storm surge, and inland flooding. Many NYCHA campuses also lack access to air conditioning, leaving residents, especially seniors, more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses and death. NYLCV stands with advocates calling for increased funding for long-needed building upgrades and public health improvements, as well as significant funding to address the impacts of climate change.

As advocated in NYLCV's recently-released [2023 NYC Policy Agenda](#), the City must prioritize safeguarding the health and safety of NYCHA residents by (though not limited to) eliminating lead-based paint, mold, and pests from NYCHA residences, all of which contribute to adverse health impacts such as asthma and lead poisoning. As stated in the [Public Housing Committee Report](#), "NYCHA's five year 2023-2027 capital program totals \$8.6 billion, *a fraction of the over \$40 billion needed* to repair the Authority's stock of housing. The City-funded share of the five year capital program decreases slightly, from \$3.53 billion at Adoption to \$3.49 billion in the Preliminary Plan." NYLCV calls on the City to work with New York State and Federal agencies to identify more funding for capital repairs, including heating and cooling systems, and lead and mold removal. NYLCV echoes the call by the Council for New York State to increase its capital contribution for NYCHA restoration and maintenance. As the Committee Report stated, if the State were to match the City's five-year capital commitment of \$3.5 billion, it would need to provide about \$600 million more annually. Moreover, the City should also identify long-term capital funding to make permanent [a pilot program that switched out gas stoves for electric induction ones](#) at 20 NYCHA apartments in the Bronx. The program, run by WE ACT, in partnership with NYCHA, the Association for Energy Efficiency, Columbia University, and

Berkeley Air Monitoring, saw a significant improvement in air quality compared to households with gas stoves.

Relatedly, NYCHA should explore opportunities to pair building capital repairs such as elevator improvements and mold and lead abatement with energy efficiency retrofits and zero-emission heating, cooling, and cooking systems installation. Additionally, according to the Public Housing Committee Report, “NYCHA now estimates the likely cost of Local Law 97 compliance through heat pumps, insulation, windows and other features to be another \$5 billion.” The City must ensure that NYCHA is sufficiently funded so that campuses are on track to meet emissions reduction targets and procurement commitments for renewable energy, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050. The City also must work with State and Federal agencies to identify sustainable funding streams to make NYCHA campuses resilient to climate hazards such as sea level rise, storm surges, and extreme rainfall. This includes protecting mechanical, electrical, and plumbing infrastructure, floodproofing buildings, and installing new, more efficient boilers and back-up generators.

NYCHA should continue working with DEP to fund and improve NYCHA's stormwater management and implement green infrastructure projects such as permeable pavement, porous asphalt, porous concrete, rain gardens, and subsurface storage systems. Funding should also be prioritized for mitigating extreme heat for NYCHA residents. In addition to increasing and maintaining NYCHA's tree canopy and comprehensively retrofitting NYCHA buildings, there should be funding allocated to expand the City's GetCool Program, which provides air conditioners, free of charge, to NYCHA residents who are 65 or over or have a qualifying underlying condition. Additionally, although the Committee Report stated that there is \$214,000 in FY 2023 to support resident engagement and education work in Queens developments for organics composting, NYLCV urges the City to provide long-term funding for composting and recycling for all NYCHA campuses, especially as the City plans to roll-out the curbside organics program in the next few years. An organic waste collection program that leaves out NYCHA cannot be called a citywide or universal program.

Lastly, as with other City agencies, NYLCV calls on the City to prioritize hiring and staffing at NYCHA. While there are 845 vacant positions at NYCHA (a 6.9% vacancy rate), the Operations Division (covering heating, elevators, safety, and resident services) has almost 500 vacancies and a 17.8% vacancy rate. As the Committee Report stated, “this is particularly concerning, given that this area is required for compliance with the HUD/SDNY Monitor Agreement.” We urge NYCHA to prioritize hiring for the Operations Division so that fundamental and long-needed services and maintenance is addressed.

With historic underinvestment and constant quality of life issues, NYCHA residents deserve significant funding and investment not only to address existing public health and building maintenance problems but to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Testimony of WE ACT for Environmental Justice

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Executive Director

Peggy M. Shepard

To the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing

Regarding The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2024

To Chair Alexa Avilés and the Committee on Public Housing:

WE ACT for Environmental Justice, an organization based in Harlem, has been fighting environmental racism at the city, state, and federal levels for more than 30 years. WE ACT convenes a group of members living in New York City Housing Authority developments to discuss and organize around the various environmental health hazards that currently exist in their homes and communities.

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), faces a myriad of problems – most of which are tied to the fact that it has been chronically underfunded for years. As a result, the New Yorkers who rent apartments in NYCHA developments often have to endure environmental challenges such as mold, lead, and pests along with substandard service in terms of repairs and other basic issues. NYCHA residents are also disproportionately impacted by disasters – whether flooding, extreme heat, or the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the City must work with State and Federal agencies to prioritize making NYCHA campuses and residents resilient to climate hazards by identifying vulnerabilities and integrating resiliency and sustainability measures in the planning process.

In 2021, NYCHA released a new [Sustainability Agenda](#), a “5-year roadmap for creating healthier, safer, and more comfortable homes for residents” with Goal #2 being to “Cultivate healthy and resilient communities based on design excellence”. In this agenda NYCHA acknowledges that they are “...responsible for ensuring that its apartments are comfortable, safe, and free of lead, mold, and pests. Any city funding cuts to NYCHA would perpetuate and exacerbate existing environmental health issues and hinder any progress of NYCHA’s sustainability efforts.

The City should restore and/or increase funding for any programs that:

- expands mold management program to address water infiltration through capital upgrades;
- upgrades mechanical ventilation systems for mold prevention;
- performs lead outreach and remediation;
- completes XRF testing and lead-based paint reporting;
- ensures every NYCHA family with a newborn or infant has a safe home and is connected to available supportive resources by evaluating the conditions



of the apartment for key environmental hazards such as lead, mold, pests, and asbestos and;

- expands paper, metal, glass, plastic, and organic waste recycling to all NYCHA developments by 2026.

In addition, the City should invest \$5 billion to fund the cost of Local Law 97 compliance (through heat pumps, insulation, windows and other features) and must continue implementing and increase funding for NYCHA's [Sustainability Agenda](#) to ensure that NYCHA buildings are on track to meet emissions reduction targets and procurement commitments for renewable energy; advancing electrification and deep energy retrofits. Also, it is vital that NYCHA's "Vacant Unit Readiness" program funding be restored. In the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Plan, the program represented about 85 percent, or \$30.6 million, of the four-year Program to Eliminate the Gap. This program was responsible for preparing and rehabilitating NYCHA units for turnover and placements including "light touch" rehabilitations and environmental remediation (e.g. lead or asbestos abatement).

According to a NYCHA presentation given to Manhattan Community Board 10 on January 23, 2023: Out of the approximately \$40 billion capital needs for NYCHA over 40% of that is estimated for remediating environmental health hazards like lead, mold and pests (see Chart 1, attached); all of which must be remediated before building electrification. Complete electrification is estimated to cost an additional \$6.2 billion in capital needs. NYCHA should incorporate electrification whenever developments undergo major upgrades, renovations, or complete demolition/reconstruction. Similarly, NYCHA should require properties that go through a Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) or Public Housing Preservation Trust agreement to fully electrify as a part of comprehensive renovations. This will allow the maximum benefits to quality of life.

It is crucial that the New York City Council provides the funding NYCHA residents need to improve their health, safety and quality of life.

Lonnie J. Portis

Environmental Policy and Advocacy Coordinator

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

1854 Amsterdam Avenue, 2nd Floor

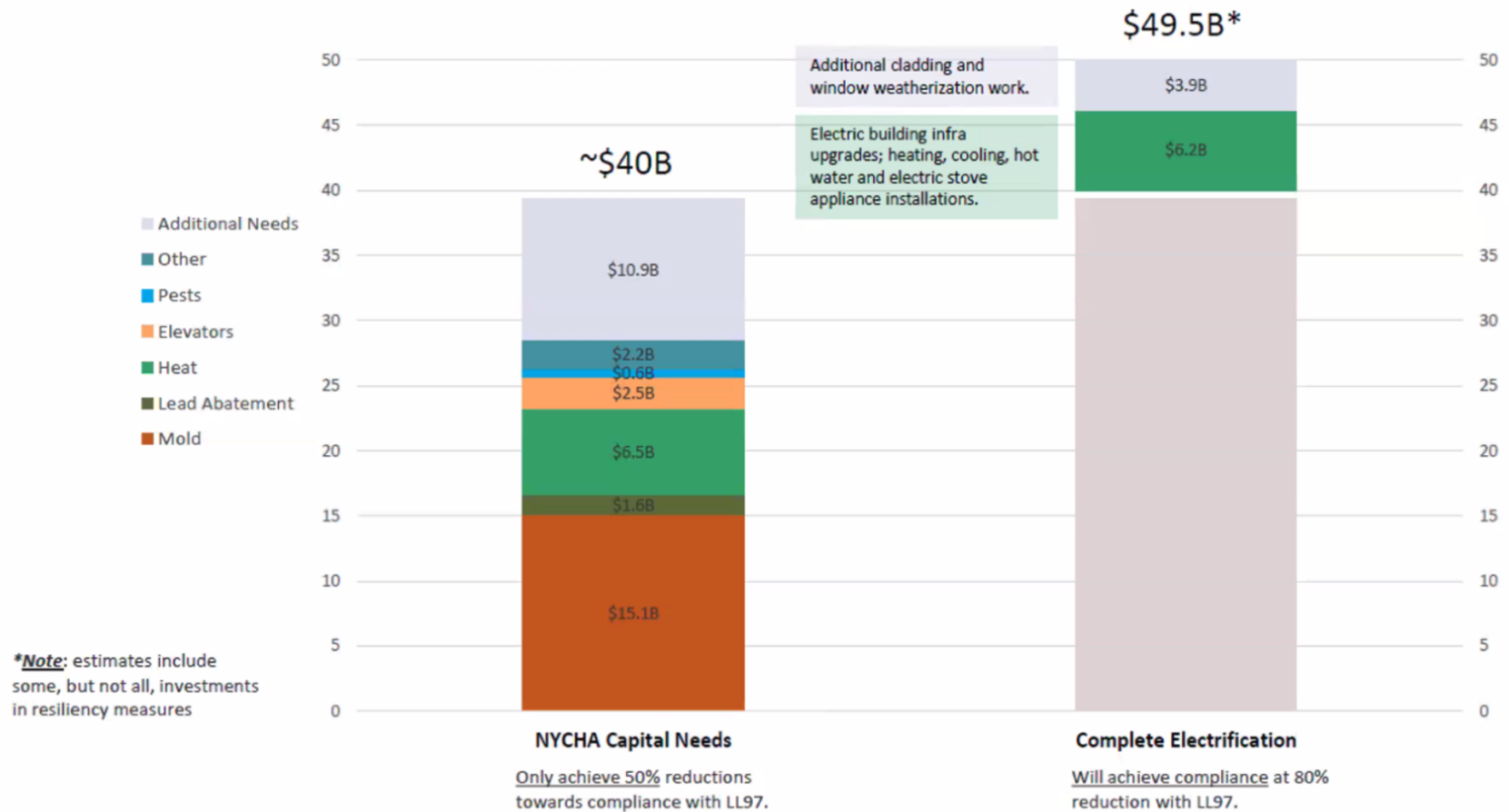
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Chart 1 – How big is NYCHA’s capital need across the city? (Image captured on January 23,2023 at Manhattan CB 10 meeting)

How big is NYCHA’s capital need across the city?



From: Save Section 9 <savesection9@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 6:11 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Housing Committee Testimony

Subject: The infrastructure of a just city is public housing.

Date: March 13, 2023

My name is Guatuke Ini Inaru, my colonial name is Ramona Ferreyra. I am a social entrepreneur, public housing tenant and community advocate.

I am here today to ask that you not accept Mayor Adam's budget until it invests in the only truly affordable housing stock in NYC, public housing.

New York City must invest at least \$5Billion in Section 9 public housing. But no public funds should be invested in the privatization of public housing. Human Rights Watch and Neighbors Helping Neighbors have proven that Project Based Section 8 is harmful, it violates the rights of tenants, leads to increased evictions, and costs taxpayers more than public housing. This differentiation is important to the survival of the largest public housing stock in America.

NYCHA continues to focus on executing the Trust against the wishes of tenants. They secured legislative approval to develop the Trust, organize city wide voting and privatize 25k units. While doing so they have neglected the rest of us. To reverse the damage done to our housing stock we need to develop a housing authority to manage the units that won't be switching over to the Trust. This new housing authority would recenter tenant empowerment and development while adhering to Section 9 guidance. Instead of taking trips abroad to admire public housing stock in other cities it is time that we reimagine what Section 9 should be in NYC.

A key to achieving this is the elimination of vacant units. Keeping units vacant allows NYCHA to justify the obsolete designation that is necessary for Section 18 dissolutions. This is key to securing the Tenant Protection Vouchers (via Section 8) that the Trust depends on.

Our Section 9 units could house those sitting in homeless shelters.

Those staying in unsafe relationships.

Those living in unsafe spaces.

Those staying on Rikers Island, not because they are guilty, but because they don't have a home to return to. And to be clear 1 in 6 persons held on Rikers island are staying there because they lack adequate housing to

return to. We waste half a million dollars on each of these New Yorkers. New Yorkers that have their rights violated regularly simply because release to a shelter leads to recidivism.

Finally, as a community destroyed by over policing and the war on drugs, NYCHA tenants are owed reparations. A first step in this process is the allocation of tax proceeds from legal marijuana sales to Section 9 public housing. This investment is necessary to ensure our community begins to recover from the trauma created by governmental abandonment and racist housing policies.

To create a just and inclusive city you must invest in expanding and rehabilitating public housing. To do so responsible a portion of this income stream must be earmarked for the development of a **new public housing authority**.

Any further cut to NYCHA endangers tenants and violate our right to have dignified and safe housing.

Any cuts to NYCHA ensure that privatization will be the only answer.

Any cuts to NYCHA ensures that demolition and disposition via Section 18 is attained.

Any cuts to NYCHA lengthen the time a person is in a shelter, on the streets, unsafe or in Rikers Island.

Any cuts to NYCHA ensure that our seniors will not be able to retire in the city that they built; they make up 40% of NYCHA.

Any cuts to NYCHA increase the rent burden working families face; they make up 20% of NYCHA.

Any cuts to NYCHA ensure that those of us with disabilities find ourselves trapped in our homes; we make up 20% of NYCHA.

Any cuts to NYCHA ensures that our children will continue to spend evenings with gangs, being lost to gun violence because we no longer control our community centers and they have no havens.

Each dollar NOT invested in public housing ensures that our culture and talent are no longer nourished and then exported to the world. And it is important that we note that what makes New York bold, bright, grimy and dope is what is created in the projects, and in the communities that are too often overlooked. We have given you hip hop, we have given you graffiti, we have changed the world. But I assure you that we don't need to live in slums to be creative. We've done these things because creativity flourishes when your rent is locked to your income!

Not investing in public housing cheats not only those that currently live in it, it robs the city of our output and full participation.

Ramona Ferreyra
Mitchel Houses Tenant
Save Section 9 Founder

--

Save Section 9

[Sign Our Petition to Save Public Housing Across the US!](#)

[Join our Facebook Group!](#)

[View our meeting notes!](#)

P.S. If you aren't already receiving 1-2 emails from us a week, you aren't on our mailing list! Opt in by replying and requesting that we add you!



**SAVE
SECTION 9**

**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: Brian Honan

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA SVP Intergov

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: 3/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Annette Tomlin

Address: _____

I represent: _____

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: Evan Trumble

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA CEO

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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Annika Lescott-Martinez

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA EVP of Finance & CFO

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: Shaan Mavani

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA Chief Asset & Capital

Address: Management Officer

**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: Lisa Bova-Hiatt

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA Interim CEO

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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marquis Jenkins

Address: 272 E 7th St

I represent: RPPH

Address: Same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

P.H ☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Rusk

Address: Bronx NY 10474

I represent: ProSentry

Address: 39 West 37th St. New York NY 10018

**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: Jessica Yager

Address: visitation Place, BK, NY

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: 520 Eighth Ave. NY, NY