

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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September 29, 2025

Start: 1:09 p.m.

Recess: 3:16 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR- HEARING
ROOM 1

B E F O R E: Chris Banks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Erik D. Bottcher
Darlene Mealy
Chi A. Ossé
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Pierina Ana Sanchez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Rita C. Joseph

A P P E A R A N C E S

Lakesha Miller, Executive Vice President of Lease Housing for New York City Housing Authority

Brian Honan, Executive Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs for New York City Housing Authority

Tabitha Ward, self

Rukaya Hamza, law graduate with Staten Island Legal Services

Neil Rana, attorney at Manhattan Legal Services Housing Unit

Alex MacDougall, Legal Aid Society

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

Anna Luft, Project Director of the Public Housing Justice Project in the Tenants Rights Unit at New York Legal Assistance Group

Amy Blumsack, Director of Organizing and Policy at Neighbors Together

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check for the Committee on Public Housing, recorded on September 29, 2025, located in Hearing Room 1 by Nazly Paytuvi.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon, and welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for the Committee on Public Housing.

At this time, please silent all electronic devices. Please silent all electronic devices.

No one may approach the dais at any time during this hearing. Thank you.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm calling this meeting to order. [GAVEL] Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this hearing of the Committee of Public Housing for the New York City Council. I am Council Member Chris Banks, Chair of the Committee, and I'm glad to be joined by my Colleagues, Councilman Ossé.

Today, we will hold an oversight hearing on the administration of Section 8 and the Emergency Housing Voucher Program. It is no secret that New Yorkers face an affordable housing crisis, and far too many people are facing down the prospects of

having to live without a stable roof over their heads, threatening their livelihoods and future prospects and holistic well-being. Indeed, having a place to call home has been consistently linked to several benefits, including improved health outcomes, increased educational attainment, and improved economic standing. Public housing and publicly subsidized housing in New York City has historically been one of the primary means to help secure residence for those in need, giving them some valuable stability, which allows them to improve their lives. Some of the ways this has manifested are the Section 8 program and emergency housing vouchers, which provide rental assistance so that people can afford to stay housed.

However, public housing assistance is under an increasing threat. This is not to imply that public housing was safe before. I'm sure most of us here are well acquainted with the funding issues NYCHA has faced and continues to face, but recent federal budget proposals and conversations are signaling an unprecedented level of desire to cut public housing funding over the coming years. This is particularly worrisome for our city, which has over

100,000 households relying on federally funded housing vouchers. We must be prepared for circumstances in which we are forced to reckon with a drastically reduced and even completely eliminated federal funding environment for public housing assistance. To this point, we must also acknowledge the present circumstances wherein a worrying number of folks with vouchers are unsuccessful in finding a home. As I am sure my Colleagues can attest, a constant issue raised by our constituents is navigating the housing voucher programs and finding a place that accepts their voucher. In fact, it was found just 53 percent of NYCHA voucher recipients were able to use their voucher to lease a home in 2022, a 13 percent decrease from 2018. While those who were able to successfully use their voucher had to typically search for 171 days, the number of people unable to find a home, as well as the length of time it takes for individuals to finally find a home, are both factors that must be improved. This is especially persistent when understanding NYCHA's desire to increasingly rely on the vouchers from Section 8 programs, given the dire prospects of Section 9 funding.

I would like for this hearing to be a timely discussion on how NYCHA is preparing for the uncertain future we currently see with Section 8, as well as what NYCHA is doing to improve its administration of the voucher programs so that more New Yorkers who currently have vouchers can successfully find homes sooner rather than later.

I would like to thank my Staff, Michael Lambert, Kyle, all of the Public Housing Committee staff, Jose, Charles, Jack, Reese, James, Sierra (phonetic), and all those who made this hearing possible today.

Now we'll go forward with swearing in the Administration.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good afternoon. If you could raise your right hand, please.

Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this Committee, and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I do.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And then whenever
3 you're ready, you can begin, and just state your name
4 and title for the record, please.

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Lakesha
6 Miller, Executive Vice President for Lease Housing.

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Brian
8 Honan, Executive Vice President for Intergovernmental
9 Affairs.

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Chair
11 Chris Banks, Members of the Committee on Public
12 Housing, other distinguished Members of the City
13 Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and
14 members of the public, good afternoon. I am Lakesha
15 Miller, NYCHA's Executive Vice President of Lease
16 Housing. I am pleased to be joined by Brian Honan,
17 Executive Vice President of Intergovernmental
18 Affairs, and other members of the NYCHA team. Thank
19 you for this opportunity to discuss the Authority's
20 Section 8 program, including our administration of
21 emergency housing vouchers.

22 For half a century, NYCHA has helped low-
23 income New Yorkers rent housing in the private market
24 thanks to the Federal Housing Choice Voucher Program,
25 also known as Section 8.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Stop one minute. We
3 just want to make sure the mic is on.

4 There we go. Okay.

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: That's
6 better?

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Okay.
9 Now I can hear myself. All right.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: If you want to start
11 from the beginning, I appreciate that. Thank you.

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Okay.
13 Chair Chris Banks, Members of the Committee on Public
14 Housing, other distinguished Members of the City
15 Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and
16 members of the public, good afternoon. I am Lakesha
17 Miller, NYCHA's Executive Vice President of Lease
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20 Affairs, and other members of the NYCHA team. Thank
21 you for this opportunity to discuss the Authority's
22 Section 8 program, including our administration of
23 emergency housing vouchers.

24 For half a century, NYCHA has helped low-
25 income New Yorkers rent housing in the private market

thanks to the Federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as Section 8. The Section 8 rental subsidy allows families to typically pay no more than 30 percent of their adjusted monthly income towards rent. NYCHA pays the remaining amount to the owner of the home on the family's behalf. NYCHA administers the largest Section 8 program in the country. We currently serve about 110,000 households, over 223,000 residents, who rent homes from approximately 27,000 participating landlords. More than half of our participants are children and seniors. The average household income is about 23,000 dollars, and families pay an average of 472 dollars in monthly rent. Program eligibility is based on a family's gross annual income and the size of their household.

The Emergency Housing Voucher Program, EHV, is also administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. It was established four years ago to help our most vulnerable families and individuals gain stable and affordable housing, including people who are experiencing homelessness or are victims of domestic violence. NYCHA currently serves more than 5,400 EHV participants. This past March, HUD announced that it

is ending the EHV program. However, HUD is allowing public housing authorities across the nation to transition current EHV households to the traditional HCV or Section 8 program. NYCHA will begin transferring all of our EHV participants to the HCV program because we want to support at-risk families and keep them stably housed. EHV participants will continue to receive the same benefits. Their rental subsidy will not be impacted, and the program rules and requirements will remain the same. They will benefit, however, by moving from a time-limited program to one that is not time-limited. To accommodate this, NYCHA must temporarily pause voucher issuance and outreach to applicants on the general HCV wait list. Applicants who have not yet received a voucher will be returned to their original position on the wait list. They will not be removed from the wait list. Once outreach and voucher issuance restarts, NYCHA will contact households according to their spot on the wait list. There is no impact to current voucher holders. My colleagues and I have been working hard to prepare administratively for this transition and ensure there is no

interruption to the vital assistance that every EHV participant receives.

Our team also provides invaluable support to Section 8 voucher holders beyond the powerful foundation of a monthly rental subsidy. For instance, our Housing Navigation Unit helps voucher holders find housing in the private market. Our Inspections Team makes sure that voucher holders are living in safe, decent housing, and we arrange for any valid reasonable accommodations, as well as transfers to other housing authorities. The Family Self-Sufficiency Program helps Section 8 residents build their assets while they pursue financial independence through education, job training, and money management. And many of the other valuable academic advancement and workforce development programs offered by NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability are available to Section 8 voucher holders, in addition to public housing residents.

We also support the landlords who participate in the program, who likewise benefit from the guaranteed monthly rental subsidy payments. For

example, our free online property management tools help landlords manage their Section 8 portfolio.

As we have reported in previous Council hearings, we continue to monitor the news coming out of Washington, and will continue to adapt to the fiscal realities. No matter what happens, our top priority is providing decent, affordable housing to the families we serve, and we remain steadfast in pursuit of our mission. NYCHA's work, including its administration of Section 8 vouchers, is a critical lifeline for so many New Yorkers. We appreciate the Council's support as we continue to navigate the challenges and the changes, and we look forward to continuing our vital work together. Thank you. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your opening statement. We've also been joined by another Colleague of mine, Council Member Sanchez.

We will begin, and we'll go straight into our line of questions. I think you've actually answered this particular question, but I'll just ask it again. How many residents are currently served by NYCHA's Section 8 program, and what is the breakdown

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2 between tenant-based vouchers and the project-based
3 vouchers?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Thank
5 you for that question, Council Member. NYCHA's
6 program currently provides rental assistance to
7 110,000 families. There are 80,595 tenant-based
8 vouchers in use and 29,875 project-based vouchers in
9 use.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Are the
11 emergency housing voucher holders included in those
12 numbers?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Are PACT
15 developments included in these numbers as well?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Does NYCHA
18 project that its Section 8 population will grow in
19 the coming years, and how many Section 8 residents do
20 NYCHA expect to serve in 2023, for example?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: We do
22 expect for the program to grow. The PACT program has
23 a pipeline of 62,000 units that it will be converting
24 from Section 9 to Section 8 under the project-based
25

program. We also have the Preservation Trust, which will have a separate pipeline of 25,000 units.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The 62,000 is projected? What's the current amount of units that have been converted?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We're about 27,000 right now, and we have close to 40,000, including that 27,000, close to 40,000 that were in engagement with residents. So the residents already know that they're candidates for the program and moving towards conversion.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And when it comes to staffing, how many staff work on NYCHA's Lease Housing Team?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Our Lease Housing Team has a headcount of 520 personnel.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you repeat that number again?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: 520 personnel is our authorized headcount. We have 476 active personnel, so there are 44 vacancies that we are actively working to fill.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA have plans to expand its Lease Housing Team to meet the needs of the growing Section 8?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes. As the program grows, annually we look at the staffing to make sure it's sufficient.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: NYCHA's Fiscal Year '26 draft annual plan requested that HUD approval to convert a subset of FHA homes to project-based Section 8 through PACT. How does that plan impact NYCHA's projection about the Section 8 population and the demand for the staffing needs?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, the FHA homes, these are homes that are individual homes that NYCHA inherited mostly in the 1970s. They are largely in southeast Queens, Rockaway area, and we even have a few in Brooklyn, and we have been, well, most of these homes already have been converted, not necessarily to Section 8, with their homeownership opportunities. So, we partnered with groups like Habitat for Humanities to renovate these homes. And then, our first preference is to sell it to the occupied family who's there. But if that can't work,

we look to sell it to, you know, for below market rent to, you know, people who are income qualified.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are the NYCHA residents given the opportunity?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: (CROSS-TALK) Yes, exactly. And we have about 100 more of these homes left, and our hope is to eventually, you know, and very soon, announce a plan to make all of these homes available.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Does NYCHA coordinate with HPD or other agencies in administering the Section 8 program?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: HPD has their own program.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: You know, so, we have three programs here in New York State. We have, well, in New York City, excuse me. We have NYCHA's program, we have HPD's program, and we have HCR's program as well. We speak to them regularly. Lakesha speaks to the head of their programs very frequently. But they are separate programs, and they're used differently, too.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. First of all, let me recognize Council Member Sanchez again, and I will allow her to give her questions. Council Member Sanchez.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Hold on, Council Member Sanchez. Also, too, we've been recognized by Council Member Avilés and Council Member Joseph.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you so much, Chair, and good afternoon. Thank you for speaking before us today.

So, I have two sets of questions. I'll quickly run through all of them, and would love to hear the responses. So, first, with respect to federal threats, can you first, would you be able to provide us a unique number of landlords that participate in NYCHA's Section 8 program? So, understanding that some buildings have multiple units that have Section 8 vouchers assigned to them. And, second, what would be the impact on NYCHA's Section 8 program if the changes that we're seeing being proposed in Washington were to pass? What preparation, if any, is NYCHA doing for the impact, brace for impact?

And then, secondly, and on a different note, with respect to source of income discrimination, can you walk us through what NYCHA's role is with respect to dealing with source of income discrimination complaints? Are those routed to you? Do you work with CCHR? Anything you can share with us? And if they are routed to you, can you share with us what the numbers are?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, thank you for your questions, Council Member. Currently, we have 27,000 participating landlords with Section 8.

And before we jump into the impact of the changes, I would like to address the question on the source of income discrimination. NYCHA's role in this is minimal. We advise voucher holders of the resource with CCHR if they encounter source of... oh, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yeah, it's... just move it a little closer, yeah.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: As it related to source of income...

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: It's still not...

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2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: It's
3 still not on? I don't know why they don't want me to
4 talk to you guys today.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Speak... just get a
6 little closer.

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We can handle the
9 truth. Speak up a little closer.

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, as
11 it relates to the source of income discrimination, we
12 do advise voucher holders that CCHR is their
13 resource, they're the entity that handles those
14 complaints. We do partner with CCHR if there are any
15 questions or if we need to take an action like to put
16 a voucher on hold as they work through a complaint.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Sorry. Just a
18 quick follow-up on that. Do you log the number of
19 complaints that come in with respect to source of
20 income complaints?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: No,
22 because the complaints aren't made directly to NYCHA,
23 they're made to CCHR.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Never? No voucher
25 holders come to you and say, I was turned away?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Very
3 rarely, like anecdotally, you'll hear those
4 complaints, but we, again, we defer to CCHR as an
5 entity who actually takes action on those.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay. So, you are
7 not recording when that does come your way, you're
8 not recording that information?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: No.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay. That seems
11 like a problem. That seems like something that you
12 would want to know to be able to, you know, better
13 direct resources and try to address the issue as an
14 agency.

15 Okay. Can you go on to the federal
16 threats question?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, we
19 have over 27,000 landlords in our program. It's the
20 largest program in the country. There are so many
21 threats on the federal level in terms of housing, but
22 on the Section 8 side, if you look at the House and
23 what the Senate is proposing, the House keeps funding
24 flat on tenant-based vouchers, and the Senate
25 proposes a 6 percent increase. On the tenant

protection vouchers, and these are the vouchers that we use to convert to PACT, and the Trust, the House offers an 11 percent increase, and the Senate a 27 percent increase. Where we do have a big concern is on Section 8 admin fees. So, this is the money used to run the program. The House offers a 29 percent cut. So, you know, Lakesha mentioned the fact that we have a little bit more than 500 staffers running an entire program, the largest program in the country. It is going to grow, but unfortunately, Congress, and this isn't just unique to this Congress, year after year sees this as an easy place to cut, but as the program gets larger, we see more cuts. So, we are spending a tremendous amount of time in Washington speaking about this, but the funding on the Section 8 side is much more secure than, say, on the public housing side.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Back to the emergency housing voucher transition to Section 8. How many current EH vouchers, households, will lose assistance because of the federal cuts, and do you have an estimate of how many of those households will

2 face eviction or homelessness once they lose their
3 subsidy?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So,
5 funding for the EHV program is provided separately
6 from Section 8, and that funding is due to last us
7 through the end of 2026.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So,
10 that's why we have the intention to transition them
11 over to Section 8.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And has NYCHA pushed
13 HUD or Congress to guarantee continued support for
14 the current EHV households? And if not, why not? And
15 if so, what has been their response?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes. I
17 mean, we have raised this as an issue. The program
18 was supposed to last until 2030. It was a 5-billion-
19 dollar allocation. They have told us the money has
20 run out. It's a different administration, it's a
21 different Congress, and they have just told us flat
22 out that they are not going to renew funding or add
23 funding to the program. They have stated to us that
24 they're not opposed to us or any other housing
25 authorities continuing to provide subsidy for these

families, and so we worked with HUD to figure out a way to transition these families from EHV to tenants-based vouchers. And that required a waiver that we did receive from HUD.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How many of the EH voucher households have been transitioned to Section 8 as of today?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Well, they are Section 8 currently, but we haven't started to transition them to the tenant-based program yet.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Gotcha. Okay. And what is the anticipated timeline?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: We anticipate that it will take about a year and a half to complete that process.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And when does NYCHA anticipate the last of its EHV federal funding will run out, and will those funds be sufficient to complete the EHV transition?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: The program is funded until 2026, with the Calendar Year 2026. The federal calendar year starts on October 1st, and we're confident that they'll be okay until that time so, we're working toward, you know, our

hope is that this will be seamless and the families will just, and in some ways it's going to work out really good for them because they will have a permanent voucher, you know, because right now, even if the program was fully funded, it was set to expire in 2030.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, are any EHV voucher households, are they at risk of losing assistance during the transition period?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Well, you know, if we're able to put our program in place as proposed, which we are confident that we could do, we hope to transition them from emergency vouchers to tenant-based vouchers, and that risk will not be there.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Well, we know that a lot of the EHV serves vulnerable populations, like folks who were recently homeless or fleeing domestic violence, so what supports will NYCHA offer to participants to ensure that they do not face eviction or homelessness during this transition?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, we have issued a letter to the households describing what this process will look like and offering them

the opportunity to contact us to help work through any issues that they may have. In terms of eviction, as far as the rental assistance is concerned, there should be no rental assistance evictions.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Will the transition happen automatically or will the EHV vouchers need to take any affirmative steps to initiate or complete the process?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, my colleagues and I have worked on the transition process to make it as seamless as possible, so that's part of obtaining the HUD waiver because the choice was get permission to add them all to the wait list at one time or make each individual household complete an application. We didn't want them to have to go through that process, so we pursued the HUD waiver and received approval.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And when it comes to the outreach or guidance, has NYCHA provided to inform the EHV participants about the federal cuts? What has been the outreach to inform them of these cuts and the transition process?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure. Our CEO has sent out multiple e-mails to residents

informing them of proposals from the federal government. In the spring, the President released his, what they called, skinny budget. She did a communication to residents. And then later on, when both houses released their budgets, she did an updated version of that. We also held meetings with advocates to let them know what's going on, and we also did two open Zoom calls for elected officials and staff. So, we're trying to be a leader here and in real time let people know what's going on and the threats from Washington.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And you have dedicated staff members handling the transition?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:
Transition? Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Does NYCHA anticipate needing to hire additional staff to handle the transition? And if so, how many?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: No.
Since we suspended the issuance of vouchers from the Section 8 wait list, we will utilize that same staff to assist in the transition.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, it's enough staff?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

3 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I mean,
4 we would always welcome more, but it's suitable for
5 now, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Why did NYCHA pause in
7 the issuance of the 200,000 households on the Section
8 8 wait list? And when does NYCHA expect to resume
9 issuing vouchers to applicants on the wait list?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, it's
11 purely a funding decision. You have to be able to
12 support vouchers on the street as well as
13 transitioning the EHV households. At this time, we
14 cannot do both so we needed to pause issuing the
15 vouchers to the wait list. We anticipate that it will
16 take about a year and a half to complete that
17 transition because it is our goal to continue to
18 serve the needy people of New York so we're looking
19 forward to getting back to issuing vouchers.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what is the
21 outreach going to look like to those folks who are
22 now being pushed back?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: We will
24 issue written notification and make phone calls to
25

get them. When we're ready to go back to issuing vouchers, we will reach out to them.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How will the transition impact funding for existing Section 8 voucher holders and applicants on the wait list?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: There's no impact to current voucher holders.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, they'll remain on the wait list?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Well, current voucher holders, we are currently paying for their assistance.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: For the people on the wait list, that's why we had to put them back on the wait list.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And HPD also administers some of the Section 8 vouchers and the EHV vouchers. Has NYCHA coordinated with HPD in regard to this transition?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, like Brian said earlier, HPD has their own program.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: There's no coordination?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, we
3 do talk with them, but we can't speak for what, you
4 know, represent what their action plan is.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm going to ask...

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I'm
7 sorry. We do speak to them regularly. We spoke to
8 them about this. We do run different programs,
9 though, and we have different budgetary issues. So,
10 while we discussed our ideas on how to handle this, I
11 can't speak to where they landed, but we have done a
12 lot of coordination.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: But there is
14 coordination? Okay.

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Before I go on to my
17 next round of questions, I want to recognize Council
18 Member Bottcher, and then I'm going to, obviously,
19 start my round of questions, and then allow my
20 Colleagues to weigh in.

21 When it comes to Section 8 voucher
22 utilization and the success rates, what is the
23 current voucher success rate for new Section 8
24 participants in 2025, and how many vouchers expire
25 unused each year?

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2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, for
3 2025, the success rate is 54 percent.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 54 percent?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes. So,
6 the remaining 46 percent are expiring without rental.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how many of those
8 vouchers from August of 2024, the wait list lottery,
9 have been issued as of today?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: As of
11 today, we've issued a little over 2,800 vouchers.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And what is the
13 average search time for the voucher holders?

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: The
15 average search time is 134 days.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And what
17 assistance does NYCHA provide to voucher holders
18 struggling to find housing?

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: We
20 formed a Housing Navigation Unit in August of 2023,
21 and that unit's purpose is to work with voucher
22 holders who have 60 days remaining on their voucher.
23 We provide them with a list of brokers. We also make
24 them aware of other City resources with HRA, Housing
25 Connect, and Affordable Housing.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What's your success rate?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: The success rate with the Housing Navigation Unit?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: With those struggling to find... how are you effective in getting those folks assisted?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: 73 percent of the households assisted through the Housing Navigation Unit were able to locate units.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And does the source of income discrimination complaints get directed back to NYCHA?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No. Even though we are in contact with them, ultimately we don't know how many come in a year.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you're not getting any complaints or reports?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sometimes we do, and we direct them to the City's Office of Civil Rights, because they're the enforcement agency for that, but ultimately we don't know how many come in every year.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you don't document how many complaints come in?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We don't.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. What is NYCHA's involvement in the source of income discrimination complaint resolution, and what supports does NYCHA offer during that process, if somebody brings that to your attention?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: We direct them to CCHR, and if CCHR has any questions for us, we make ourselves available to answer questions. Ultimately, CCHR is the agency that handles those discrimination complaints.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And do you know how many source of income discrimination complaints NYCHA Section 8 residents submitted in 2024? That number is not? And how much funding does NYCHA receive for Section 8 for the housing assistance payments?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: The funding for housing assistance payments is based on your active participants so right now we are administering a 2-billion-dollar program.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. I'm now going to
3 move to Council Member Chi Ossé, who has some
4 questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Thank you. Thank you
6 so much, Chair. Good afternoon to both of you.

7 You know, I think we're all well aware of
8 how essential this program is to the people of New
9 York, especially when it comes to the issue of
10 houselessness, homelessness. This is a program that
11 keeps people in their homes. And as I've heard from
12 both of you, there is a budget deficit right now from
13 the federal government. Is that correct?

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No. So
15 there is a certain program, Emergency Housing Voucher
16 Program, that was created during COVID that was aimed
17 at families who are homeless, individuals who are
18 homeless, domestic violence victims, people who are
19 human trafficked, you know, really the most
20 vulnerable folks, and we were able to lease up to
21 5,500 of these individuals and families. It was
22 tremendously successful, but the program was supposed
23 to last until 2030. It is now going to be cut off
24 next year. So what we're going to do...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Sorry. That's
3 because of the current federal government, correct?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
5 correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Brian, I think you
7 said in a previous answer that NYCHA has been
8 lobbying or speaking to Congress about making sure
9 that this program will continue to be funded, right?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
11 right.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: I guess where my
13 concern lies in terms of us using the tools in our
14 toolbox to make sure that we secure this much needed
15 funding is that there is an advocate, you know,
16 within the city who, you know, is the Mayor of New
17 York. I think it's widely well aware that this mayor
18 has a warm relationship with our President, right?
19 Have you been aware of any conversation or advocacy
20 that has stemmed from, you know, the Principal of
21 City Hall and advocating for this much needed funding
22 that will house New Yorkers in need?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So when
24 we are in Washington, we are often joined by the
25 Mayor's Staff in Washington, and they advocate with

us as well but, you know, conversations higher than that level I am not aware of.

COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Sure. I think, you know, and I appreciate the work that both of you do, right, and sometimes it feels, and especially during this current political climate dealing with this federal government that at times can be very hostile, that we could go back and forth, right, about, you know, the funding that is needed and, you know, what you're not doing because of the funding that is lacking. But it's really difficult when we have an individual who is in power that can leverage that power to secure this much needed funding so I know that there is a lot that you cannot do within your current roles, but if there's ever a moment that you can leverage your voice in letting this Mayor know how essential this program is needed and how speaking to this current President that he's apparently close with, if he can understand the importance of this program through you two who are essential in making sure that families within New York City are housed, we would all benefit greatly from your advice and consent and pushing for that to become a reality. So that's all I wanted to say today.

I do have a bunch of questions in terms of, maybe we can turn phones off, in terms of vacancies and things of that nature, but I really want to make sure that we are using the tools to secure that funding, you know, for this program.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I appreciate that, Council Member, and believe me, Lakesha and I are never shy about advocating for families to live in both Section 8 and Section 9, so we appreciate that.

COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: All right. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. We've been joined by Council Member Mealy, and we'll allow Council Member Joseph to ask questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair. I just had a few questions around, do you have the current data on the demand for Section 8 and emergency housing vouchers in New York City?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: NYCHA's program, we currently serve 5,400 households.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: How many? 5,400?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. And
3 what is the process for identifying and correcting
4 inefficiencies in the voucher issuance and renewal
5 process?

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I want
7 to make sure I'm understanding your question.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Have there been
9 problems, and how are you correcting them in issuing
10 the vouchers and renewing them?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So if a
12 voucher holder comes to us with a discrepancy in the
13 voucher that was issued, we work through the issue
14 and correct anything that needs to be corrected. In
15 terms of renewing the vouchers, do you mean the
16 annual recertification process?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yes. Yes.

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, we
19 have an obligation to recertify all households
20 annually so we do an outreach process that starts
21 five months ahead of the effective date, and the
22 family has to respond, and we calculate the income
23 based on what is reported to us and what information
24 is available in the HUD database.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And if that person
3 misses that window, what happens?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Oh, I'm
5 sorry. Council Member, can I just add before?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Absolutely.

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So for
8 this particular program, it was hard to lease up. It
9 really was. It was a new program, and it really
10 targeted a very specific population. As I mentioned
11 earlier, it was families experiencing homelessness,
12 people with domestic violence, victims, and we really
13 put a lot of effort into making sure that people
14 understood the program, and the Housing Navigation
15 Unit that we talked about was born out of this
16 program because we knew that people needed additional
17 help in finding apartments. So the here's a voucher,
18 good luck just wasn't working. And the success rate
19 that we're seeing with the housing navigation program
20 really is showing to be great. It wasn't unique to
21 NYCHA too, though. I attend and speak to housing
22 authorities throughout the country, and they really
23 did have challenges. But just like our regular
24 Section 8 program, our emergency housing voucher
25 program is the largest in the country as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Thank you so much. What steps are being taken to improve data transparency, make key performance metrics such as voucher success rates, processing time, and landlord participation publicly available? Is that information publicly available?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: There is a HUD dashboard. The information that we report to HUD is made available to the public, and it covers everything from annual recertifications to voucher utilization, budget utilization.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you for that.

Voucher holders often report facing discrimination or resistance from landlords, particularly because when payments are delayed or administrative process is perceived as burdensome. What feedback have you received from landlords on this issue, and how is the agency responding?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, we hold periodic webinars where we have an engagement with the landlords where they give us feedback about our administration of the program. We have taken steps such as creating what we call the Owner Extra

Net that gives them full access 24 hours a day to be able to administer their vouchers that they have with the program. Whenever requests are made to us to add more features, we do work with our IT team to make those releases available.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Council Member, if I could add, the reason we have so many landlords participating in a program over 27,000 is the stability and the reliability of payment, right, so landlords know that they're going to get their subsidy on the first and second of every month. That is guaranteed. We did have a blip earlier in the year when the federal government issued a memo that they weren't going to issue payments, but that was a few days, and I think we handled that as fast as we possibly could, but that was an anomaly compared to what is normal. It is literally money in the bank.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Beyond delay in payments, what are some other major reasons landlords cited for refusing to participating or leaving the voucher program?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I haven't heard much about them wanting to leave because I think the biggest drawing factor that keeps

them involved is the security of having a monthly payment.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: A monthly payment, but yet we still have delays.

How many delays have we had in the past 2024 year? Sorry, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You may continue.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So the payments are not delayed. NYCHA acts as a pass-through, right, so HUD pays NYCHA on the first business day of the month, and then the NYCHA team works to issue those payments within 24 hours.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Some landlords may face delays, but those with cause, right, so each apartment has to go through an inspection every year, and HUD expects the apartments to be up to code, to not have issues. Landlords are given an opportunity to cure any violations that are found, but if they do not do that, then we are not allowed to issue subsidies. So in those cases, a landlord might say, I'm not getting payment, but in those cases, they need to cure the issues in the apartment.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: So what steps are
3 there, recurring delays in subsidy payments to
4 landlord, and what concrete steps are you taking? Are
5 you using any type of technology to help you fast
6 track some of this work as well?

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We do
8 have a portal for landlords that is strictly just for
9 landlords. We also have a portal just for tenants, if
10 they can upload documents. So in case, like I was
11 just mentioning, landlord says, I've cured all the
12 issues in my apartments. They could upload all the
13 receipts and all the proof that they've done it, so
14 this way they can get that payment turned on as quick
15 as possible. So no need to go to an office, no need
16 to rely on the mail, no need to do anything like
17 that. They can upload it and it's seamless.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: And you train your
19 tenants and landlords on the process?

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We have
21 regular Zoom seminars with them, so this way they
22 know how to do it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Appreciate you.
25

We will now allow Council Member Bottcher to ask his questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Banks and to the Committee.

Earlier this month, HUD sent out a directive to public housing authorities across the country demanding personal information about all their tenants with respect to their immigration status. We reached out to you upon hearing of this and you informed us that this wasn't a new rule, that this is something that has always been a requirement, reporting the immigration status of tenants, and that NYCHA had always done this and it had never been an issue. Is that still accurate and have there been any implications to this request at NYCHA?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We didn't get a special letter that was reported in the Washington Examiner article and then picked up after that. Every year, both on the public housing side and on the Section 8 side, tenants have to recertify. If you are undocumented, you can live in public housing as long as there's somebody who is a citizen or is documented in that apartment. You are asked if you are documented and people come forward and they say,

yes, I'm undocumented. They pay a little bit more in rent by admitting that. And we have to give HUD our recertifications every year. It's not like we're flagging for HUD or anything like that. This is just part of their recertifications so they do have that information. To me, what struck me is these are people who are actually doing the right thing. They're reporting their status. They're paying a little bit extra because they know that the federal government is not going to subsidize them. And yet, somehow this is raising a red flag.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: It's annually that NYCHA reports that information to HUD and for how many years have you been doing that? How many years have you been required to do that?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Oh, as long as I've been around and that's quite a while now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And this directive came out in late August, early September. When has that information last been transmitted to HUD?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So recertifications are done quarterly for different

populations and when they're completed, we transmit them to HUD. We're always going back and forth giving the recertifications to HUD. I just want to be clear. We're not giving them a separate file. Here are all the folks who are undocumented. They're just getting the recertifications that include this information.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Help me understand what that data looks like. It's essentially a list of every apartment with all the information related to their recertification and within that, their immigration status is included.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: It's just one of many different questions on there. I mean, if you look at your recertification, I guess it's the housing equivalent of your tax return, right, so it includes your income, it includes exemptions, it includes a number of things including your status in the country, and it's a federal requirement.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Yeah. I'm concerned about it. I know that it's always been a requirement apparently and it's something that's always been done. It's nothing new. But what we're seeing from this Administration is new and they're looking for every opportunity they can to chase

people down, and I'm concerned about it. Have there been any additional conversations within the Administration about the implications of this?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We have not. I understand the concern and I found the letter to be confusing because we weren't asked for anything new here but, at the same time, the federal government will not subsidize an apartment without a recertification so it's really tough. We have to submit these recertifications in order to keep the subsidy going, but it also includes a lot of information about individuals that may be harmful, who knows.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We have questions from Council Member Mealy.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I want to thank you for answering the call whenever I call.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Oh, thank you, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I just want to know, I don't know if this question was answered. What would be the impact on NYCHA's Section 8 program if the proposed budget by the President is passed?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: The proposed budget that the President called for was a 43 percent cut to all federally assisted programs. Thankfully, the founders were smart and presidents don't pass budgets, so it's Congress who passes budget. And Section 8 does a lot better under the proposals both in the House and the Senate. In the House, we're maintaining the current level. And in the Senate, we're even seeing increases. So we're confident in the future of the Section 8 program.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. I don't have that much time. But at one point, Section 8 was canceled at one point. True or not? And y'all just reopened it about five or six years ago?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Well, the program has always been strong. No, no. So we did close the wait list, and that shows the demand, right? So the demand here in New York City is so strong that we have three different programs, right, and then we have our local City program, and then on top of that, the State's going to open up their own program so we have a lot of different voucher programs, but we closed our wait list. But that

2 doesn't mean that we stopped issuing vouchers, you
3 know, on turnover.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Talking about
5 vouchers.

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Right.
7 But we continue to have a very, you know, robust
8 program.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So if it's a
10 shutdown, what impact would it have on Section 8
11 payments to HUD?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, we're
13 confident that landlords will receive their October
14 payment.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And then what
16 happened after October?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Well, you
18 know, then we'll start getting into uncharted
19 territory, right?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: For us to be people
21 for the people, we're supposed to be helping the
22 people of this city. What Plan B do we have in place?
23 Because landlords cannot go without rent. So, and
24 another thing is, who administer if a house
25 inspection? What means do they can say that the

2 inspection was bad? What recourse do the owners have
3 in regards to that?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Let my
5 colleague answer that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Quickly, because I
7 have two more questions.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, if
9 we perform an inspection and issues are cited, the
10 landlord needs to make the repairs. If the landlord..

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: If there's no
12 repairs need to be done. I had someone, brand new
13 apartment, and you said it wasn't, they didn't pass
14 the inspection then they said it was the electrical,
15 brand new electrical box. Thank God they had a
16 certified contractor, so what recourse do they have?
17 But in the meantime, they did not get paid for like
18 six months working this out. What recourse do our
19 landlords have in regards to fighting City Hall?

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So I can
21 speak generally. If there is a dispute about the
22 inspection, we do have a quality control inspection
23 where another staff member will go out and meet with
24 the landlord and inspect the unit. But I would like
25

to hear the particulars on the case you're talking about.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And how soon do you get to check back to the landlords, if they find everything is correct. Red tape. What's the median time?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: After an inspection?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: After inspection, now they could get their money. Couple of months or one month. What's the timeframe?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: It could take 30 to 60 days. We issue payment once a month so it may seem like it's taking longer, but as soon as the issue is resolved within that 30 to 60 days, they will get payment in the next payment cycle.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So if they do not, what recourse? In between this time, landlords, light bill, gas bill, insurance payments still have to be done. What are we doing in regards to that? Trying to get it back to them quick as possible.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Again, we will perform a quality control inspection and try to mitigate the issue as soon as possible.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: All right. Back to
3 Mr. Holman. If the shutdown happened, only one
4 month's rent they can get.

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Right
6 now, that's what we've been told. HUD, you know,
7 could issue guidance, you know, as we go on, but
8 really it is all about what the length is of the
9 shutdown. We are dependent on the federal government
10 for this program. We do not, you know, this is as
11 Lakesha was saying earlier, we are a pass through.
12 The money comes from the federal government, it goes
13 out to the, to the landlords. We cannot subsidize
14 this program on our own.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So do you wonder
16 why so many landlords are opting out getting Section
17 8 tenants? You don't have a plan for them. We have to
18 do better, even though maybe you should have a
19 resource money put aside or something that we can
20 help landlords. We all have to live here. And if more
21 landlords lose their buildings, the more tenants
22 we're going to have to start finding where we can
23 place them. And NYCHA is not opening up that often,
24 the apartments.

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We do
3 have a small amount of reserves, but HUD is also
4 really discouraging housing authorities from keeping
5 too much, too much reserves. In fact, housing
6 authorities that did have more reserves than they
7 thought was necessary, they sweep that money up, but,
8 you know, I would think, you know, being like good
9 stewards and putting money away for reserves, some
10 housing authorities were punished for that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: What is this new
12 program? Nice buyer?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Inspire.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Inspire?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Just in?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Inspire.
18 Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Inspire. What is
20 that program?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So as you
22 are familiar for, for as long as I can remember,
23 there has been a housing quality standard that
24 landlords are expected to adhere to in order to keep
25 their apartments, you know, up to code and making

sure that everything works. Inspire is a new is a new system. That's very similar.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Is it implemented yet?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: It is implemented on the public housing side, not any Section 8 side. It will be in the fall, correct?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: No. Actually last month, HUD pushed the implementation date to February, 2027.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: 27?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. Thank you. I got to ask one. Can I talk off topic?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Council Member Mealy, you can...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Off topic? Next go around.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, if you want to, yeah.

All right. Let's move on to technology and recertification issues. You know, that's been a lot of complaints about that. In 2021 and 2022, at least 10,500, Section 8 voucher holders received an

2 erroneous termination notice due to a glitch in
3 NYCHA's paperwork processing system. What steps did
4 nature take to correct the error?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, we
6 did work through the discrepancies with our IT team.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: There
9 was some, without getting into the weeds, some logic
10 misfiring. So since that time, we have corrected the
11 issue.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Repeat what you said.

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Logic.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Logic.

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, IT
16 logic, everything is matched up to the household.
17 Since that time, we have made the system enhancements
18 and the notices are going out correctly.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what specific
20 steps has NYCHA taken to improve its Section 8
21 technology systems to prevent this type of failure,
22 like the one that occurred in 2021 and 2022?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: We are
24 closely monitoring. As the notices are going out, we
25 do sample the notices.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And the default
3 option for the Section 8 recertification, which is
4 online. Is that correct?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Why is that a
7 default option?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: That is
9 the best way to complete it and get an up-to-date
10 status and confirmation that your information has
11 been received. When you're doing things via the mail,
12 now you have to wait for the post office to pick up
13 and deliver, and then it has to go through a scanning
14 process, so we have made the portal easy to access 24
15 hours a day, and for your uploads, you can take a
16 picture with your camera phone and upload it so we've
17 made it as easy as possible.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And is the option via
19 submission for physical form still available?

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And is there an
22 option to recertify in person in person with
23 assistance from NYCHA staff?

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So if a
25 person wants to do their recertification in person,

they can make an appointment at one of the in-person centers, and there are kiosk machines set up for them.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how does NYCHA assist residents who might have difficulty navigating or accessing the online recertification process?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Again, they can make an appointment to go to one of the centers and our staff do a lot of outreach to households. So for like seniors, if they're not able to complete the process on their own, we can actually do it over the phone.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And under what circumstances might a section eight voucher holder have their voucher terminated or not renewed?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: There's a wide range of issues. It could be not responding timely to the annual recertification, not allowing access to their unit for inspection. It could be not utilizing their residence as the sole place of residence (INAUDIBLE) subsidy, having unauthorized occupants. It's a long list.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What type of notification, is it detailed specifically the reasons why the vouchers being terminated or not renewed?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes. So, we adhere to the Williams consent decree that requires three notices to go out to the household and it tells them exactly why they're being terminated.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And can they appeal that decision? Is there a recourse to residents?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And under what circumstance might a PACT or residence rent increase?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: It is more than likely is associated with the annual recertification process. Those are project-based vouchers so those households generally tend to pay 30 percent of their income towards rent.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, we've been hearing of a spike of complaints from residents in a lot of the RAD-PACT converted developments where there's been a increase to rent and where there has been no income change. I know you're probably going to say (INAUDIBLE) cases, but we're seeing that throughout I know specifically in the four

developments that have been converted in my District. Residents are constantly saying either that or that they don't qualify for the voucher or the Section 8 voucher so that's something obviously that to me is of concern and can, you know, be a form of displacement for these residents who are not being able to, first of all, not qualifying for the Section 8 voucher. And then where there's circumstances where their rent is being increased, you know, this is, you know, NYCHA is supposed to be the OG affordable housing, but it seems like residents are constantly grappling with this increase, especially when the development has been converted.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yeah. Council Member, we are the OG of affordable housing. I just want to make that clear, but...

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Maybe you need to keep that saying.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yeah, but no, so if you are a resident of a development that is converting, you are automatically grandfathered in, you get the voucher. But what we are finding in a lot of PACT developments is there is a lot of management that needs to happen in that household. So, we do

recertifications for people. Sometimes people have been a few years behind in their recertification and, yes, they might say like my income hasn't changed, but the last record maybe we had of your household income was two or three, and sometimes four years ago so maybe it feels like my income didn't change, but it's different than what it was four years ago. You know, also too, we are able to add people to the household in PACT so we will tell people come forward. We can add you to the lease and, remember, it's household income so not individual so...

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Wait. You said add them to the lease.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right. So add them to the composition?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's right.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is that available for head of households?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes. So, say I'm the head of household, and my relative has

been living in the apartment for a while but I never added them to the household composition.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Through PACT, and through public housing, but through PACT we really encourage because we want to make sure their housing is protected, you can come forward and say, you know, and no questions would be asked on how long they were living here before, and we can add them to the lease.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Brian, but that's not happening on the ground, and what you're saying to me, it is sounding like you're speaking a whole different language because that's not happening and they are aggressively taking these folks to court and trying to evict them. So maybe you, and I like constantly say this, NYCHA needs to be a little more proactive in doing the oversight over these RAD-PACT developments that have been converted, and we're not seeing that because we're constantly seeing residents who are saying we're not on the lease, we're not part of the composition, we came back home for COVID, and now NYCHA is dragging me to court to, or they have declared and disclosed that, you know, they're living

2 in the apartment and they want to become head of
3 household so we need to see that translated on the
4 ground when these situations are taking place and
5 we're not seeing it.

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So,
7 number on, you know, don't get frustrated but it
8 really is...

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm not frustrated.

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No, no. I
11 just need to see the individual cases and it makes it
12 a lot easier. But... (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: (INAUDIBLE)

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: But
15 Boulevard and Linden, you know, the two developments...
16 (CROSS-TALK)

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You're well aware of a
18 lot of the cases so... (CROSS-TALK)

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes, I
20 hear them a lot.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What you're saying is,
22 is to me, sounds like you're speaking a different
23 language.

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I'm not
25 at all. I'm not at all.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

3 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I know
4 for sure that there are issues at Boulevard and
5 Linden, and Lisa Bova-Hiatt, myself, and many other
6 senior executives, you know, at NYCHA are meeting
7 with a group there every other month, with Reverend
8 Brawley's team to, you know, hash out, you know, many
9 of the issues, including the recertification issues
10 that we're hearing there. So, we know that there are
11 issues in especially those two developments, and
12 that's what we've been meeting with.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, just not those
14 two. You also... (CROSS-TALK)

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Not just
16 those two, but I'm just saying in your District.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Fiorentino. Also Penn
18 Wortman, there's been issues.

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I haven't
20 been hearing as much from Fiorentino, but the other
21 two, you know, but that's, again, it's all anecdotal.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right. I mean, in
23 those particular developments, we can get you those
24 cases...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure.

Please do.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Where we have those situations. I was just speaking to a resident at a family in Penn Wortman, and he's grappling with that. He came home during COVID to take care of his mother, and she passed away and now they're trying to evict him out the apartment.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And rent has been being paid but, again, as I said, if NYCHA was really boots on the ground, they would know what's going on, and I'm glad that you are having meetings with Reverend Brawley and those group of tenant organizers so we do appreciate that.

Also, too, I want to dive into what is the recourse that PACT residents have when it comes to their rent being increased or when there's an error that takes place? How is NYCHA stepping in and what is the recourse?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, if a family feels like an error has been made whenever we complete a recertification, they're able to appeal so they can...

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, if the rent was
3 increased by error, they're able to appeal?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: And we
7 will review that case, and there's actually a one-on-
8 one discussion to go through how we arrived at the
9 calculation. And if there's a calculation error, we
10 will fix it.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Also too, just on the
12 communication with the RAD-PACT management company,
13 are y'all being proactive at all when it comes to
14 overseeing these particular issues, rent increases,
15 and are they being brought to your attention by these
16 management companies?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: On issues
18 like rent increases and things like that and annual
19 recertifications, it is not the management companies
20 that determine that. That comes to Lakesha's staff.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So it is being brought
22 to your attention when these controversies arise?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
24 correct.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, do you have an
3 accurate number or account of how many of these cases
4 have come about?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We can
6 get that to you. I don't think, we really didn't
7 bring it with us today.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Particularly in Linden
9 Houses and Boulevard Houses...

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Since it seems like
12 it's constantly happening there.

13 When it comes to customer contact, the
14 customer contact center and communications with
15 Section 8 residents, what is the current average wait
16 time at the CCC and what is NYCHA's target wait time?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: At the
18 customer contact center, the current average wait
19 time is 17 minutes and 31 seconds.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how many staff
21 members currently work at the CCC and how many
22 additional staff are needed to meet the demand?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So,
24 NYCHA's customer contact center has 64 staff.

25 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

1 COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

66

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Of that
3 64, six of them serve in a supervisory manager role,
4 but the remaining 58 serve as agents. At this time,
5 based on staffing, that is a suitable level but, of
6 course, we would welcome... (CROSS-TALK)

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: (INAUDIBLE) yes.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Did NYCHA's Fiscal
10 Year '25 budget include money for more CCC staff or
11 was there any request for any increase?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I don't
13 want to misspeak so I would have to follow up on that
14 afterwards.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: And our
17 fiscal year goes to the calendar year so we are, you
18 know, still working through the details of next
19 year's budget.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And when it
21 comes to the walk-in centers, why are the so-called
22 walk-in centers still operate only by appointment
23 only and will that change?

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: If you
25 noticed, we didn't call them walk-in centers or

offices. But, yeah, this was something that we did change during COVID and we did notice though, too, that it does run a lot more efficiently if you do make an appointment. And folks go there, they know they're going to speak to somebody. They can definitely plan their day a lot better. But just showing up, oftentimes we'd have people waiting for hours and hours, you know, and sometimes not even getting heard at all. So, you know, we really...

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So do you plan on ever going back to...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: There are no plans right now to go back to just walking in.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: At our hearing back in February, I asked whether NYCHA would consider renaming the walk-in centers to obviously avoid confusion since they do not actually take walk-ins, and I think it was echoed by the audience, you said that you would consider it at that time. Has NYCHA given thought to this issue since then, and is that still a possibility to do walk-ins even though you said that there's no plans to, but would you consider doing it or taking it into consideration?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes,
3 definitely. We can definitely consider changing the
4 name so we'll get back to you on that shortly.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And when it comes to
6 the communication, what languages are available for
7 the Section 8 participants seeking assistance via the
8 CCC or the walk-in centers?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: The
10 general languages available are Spanish, Russian,
11 Cantonese, and there's a fourth language that I
12 can't, Mandarin. Thank you.

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: But we
14 also have a Language Line, too, that we could set up
15 three-way calls for other languages as well. And just
16 wanted to clarify, too, the 17-minute average wait is
17 for, specifically for, you know, Section 8 so there
18 is a prompt. If you call and you have a Section 8
19 question, you press that prompt and that's exactly
20 just for Section 8.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. How many Section
22 8 specific inquiries does the CCC receive monthly?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: The
24 daily average of CCC inquiries is 3,616.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And are the walk-in center staff trained to help residents with Section 8 specific issues?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And as of now, there are only two walk-in centers for NYCHA's entire population, for half a million residents. Are there plans to open up additional walk-in centers?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Not at this time. We have a tenant portal and we really are encouraging people to go there. But if they don't, they can call the CCC and really the offices are like a last resort.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

Council Member Mealy, we'll go into that second round. Council Member Mealy.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you. It's very quick. Just off topic. How many NYCHA playgrounds are being repurposed for parking lots?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I don't know of any, but if you do, please, you know, let me know, but I don't...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Van Dyke II. There was a parking lot and y'all built a...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Oh, we built a building there. Yes, yes. Oh, so, oh yes, yes. So, well...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Are any playgrounds being done?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Currently no, but... (CROSS-TALK)

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: (INAUDIBLE)

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes, currently, but we did build that building at Van Dyke II.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Three.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Well, three, yes. In fact, it came to me. So that was, you know, 100 percent affordable with...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: But still was a parking lot.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: But still was... yes, yes, and we work very closely with...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I think you're trying to do Tilden also.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, no, Armstrong. There is a proposal, but that's been many years now as a proposal. We have not moved forward,

but, you know, as we're moving forward, we would come back to you and of course talk to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: No playgrounds?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No playgrounds right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. So I have, just to get back on this budget, Section 8. With RAD and PACT, majority of the tenants was in Section 9. That was federally funded. True or not?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So now with the RAD and PACT now, we're turning everyone over to Section 8. So, could you just kind of let me know if they were still Section 9, would their payments will still go, the government (phone ringing) I turned this off, the government would have paid their voucher, right?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yeah. The...

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: If they was in Section 9.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That is correct, yeah, but the subsidy is less, right, so for a very long time now, the federal government has been

much more generous towards Section 8 than it is toward Section 9, right, so earlier I had talked about the House and the Senate proposals on Section 8, where in the House it's pretty flat and the Senate sees increases. If you look on the Section 9, the House has a 9 percent cut on Section 9 and an 11 percent cut on the Senate side for Section 9 so this is not inconsistent. What we've seen, you know, over the years, there is not the will in Washington right now and not in a very, very long time to fund Section 9 in a way that it should be funded.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay. So one more question. If Section 8 get dismantled, because I think 200,000 at one time we stopped, right, with Section 8?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, we have 200,000 people on the wait list so they currently don't have a voucher. They're waiting to be called.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So how is that going to help the new people with RAD and PACT?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Right. So it's a different...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Are they going to
3 be coordinating them getting into these apartments?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No. it's
5 a different list.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Now we have another
7 list.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We do
9 have another list. Yes. Yeah. So it's not the same...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How long is the
11 waiting list?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: The
13 range for a PACT apartment, it ranges, right? It
14 could be months up to years. We're talking about
15 developments that are already occupied. So when
16 they're converting, they're very close to 100 percent
17 occupancy so it's about that churn, the turnover of
18 those apartments so it could vary depending on
19 bedroom size, depending on location. It varies.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So now if anyone
21 is, oh, and one other question I have to ask, you
22 saying if anyone, you are doing succession rights now
23 with RAD and PACT or just NYCHA?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Both. The
3 succession rights exist on PACT, RAD, and also for
4 Section 9.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So, who should I
6 call in regards to that? You?

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: For PACT
8 and RAD?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: If people are
10 coming, saying my parent, I was living there and they
11 don't have their name on the lease, you're saying
12 they could've put their name on the lease and just
13 paid the extra funding?

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So,
15 during conversion, yeah. So, during conversion... now,
16 after conversion is harder, but during conversion, we
17 really encourage everyone to like, okay, now's your
18 chance to like come forward and, you know, put
19 somebody who's been living there on the lease. They
20 will have to go through a background check, all the
21 other stuff, but it is an opportunity to do it,
22 right, and that's the best time to do it. After that,
23 you don't want to wait, right? A lot of people think
24 like, you know, if I add somebody to my household,
25 maybe my rent will go up or something like that. But

what you are buying is security, right, so, you know, because you don't want to wait until after the fact, right? You don't want to wait until the head of household moves away or passes away or something like that and then start to worry about it. That's very late in the game.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So anyone who is living in someone house now, they can ask to be put on?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: They can ask. I'm not guaranteeing it'll happen, but they can come forward and they can say, you know, as long as it's not creating an overcrowded situation, as long as they pass the background check.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: And just to add also, that individual cannot come forward. The head of household needs to come and ask to add them.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's right. So, if the head of household says like, yeah, you know, they've been staying here for a while but I'm trying to get rid of them, you couldn't add. Everybody has to be in agreement.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Last one. If this budget does not pass with the federal government,

2 what is your recourse on tenants if they cannot pay
3 their rent? You going to take them to court right
4 away? Not their problem that... (CROSS-TALK)

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:

6 (INAUDIBLE)

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: President is, you
8 know, cutting the budget or holding it up, so what
9 would you do, what is your recourse?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I just
11 want to emphasize, yes, it is a good question, it
12 really is. So I want to emphasize how important it is
13 to make sure that tenants continue to pay their
14 portion of the rent, especially on the Section 8
15 side, you know, so even if the subsidy is not being
16 paid, you know, tenants just make sure that they're
17 not doing anything that, you know, make sure that
18 they're living up to their responsibility.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So they can pay
20 their portion...

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: They need
22 to pay their portion.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And you won't send
24 them to court right away?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
3 correct, that's correct. Yeah. They're protected.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How long would
5 y'all wait, six months? We don't know what the future
6 holds.

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We don't.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: We don't know if
9 this will ever get, you know, rectified. But if it
10 does not, how long would y'all wait before y'all
11 start doing process or are you going to let people
12 stay there as long as they're paying their portion?
13 That's my last question.

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, if
15 the Section 8 portion is missing, landlords are not
16 supposed to...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: No. If they paying
18 their Section 8 portion (CROSS-TALK)

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: If the
20 tenant is paying their portion...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: The government is
22 not putting their money into Section 8 vouchers.

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So if a
24 tenant is paying their portion of the rent, then
25 there's no cause for eviction. Right now, a landlord

2 is not supposed to take a tenant to court for the
3 Section 8 portion because it is not their
4 responsibility. As long as they are active on the
5 program, it is not the tenant's responsibility.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: We're going to have
7 to some way or other help the tenants also because
8 it's not their fault also so. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Council
10 Member Mealy.

11 Council Member Avilés.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank
13 you, Chair.

14 Good to see you. Forgive me if I asked a
15 question that you already, I was in and out, may have
16 responded to.

17 I wanted to quickly follow up just to
18 make sure I understood in terms of succession rights
19 did you say that succession rights. Did you say that
20 succession rights are exactly the same between
21 Section 9, RAD-PACT, and other version, Trust.

22 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No. I
23 just said that they exist, but they're not exactly
24 the same.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Could you walk me
3 through what would be the distinctions between
4 Section 9 and a RAD-PACT?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So that's
6 one where they're most similar, right, so in a
7 Section 9 apartment, same thing with a PACT
8 development, if you are on the lease, and you have to
9 be on the lease, that's the first, you know, minimum,
10 for one year prior to the head of household leaving
11 or passing away you, you can apply for succession
12 rights, right, so that's, you know, so that's on both
13 sides of the program. For tenant-based program, same
14 thing?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yep.

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Same
17 thing, so yep.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So that's the same
19 regulation for Section 9...

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And a RAD-PACT?

22 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yeah. I
23 just wasn't as familiar with the tenant-based
24 program.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. Great. Thank
3 you for that clarification.

4 In terms of recertification, I know you
5 walked through this, you know, I've heard many a
6 story particularly in the RAD-PACT arena that the
7 recertification processes were very difficult and
8 tenants haven't received as much assistance and
9 guidance in getting those and also that, in fact,
10 NYCHA's systems and some of the systems used in the
11 RAD-PACT developments didn't necessarily talk to each
12 other, which created some other additional
13 complications. Is this something that you have also
14 heard and experienced and has is it getting
15 addressed?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, the
17 systems between the PACT development on-site and
18 NYCHA will be different because they serve two
19 different purposes. So, my program, the Section 8
20 program, we do the annual recertification
21 calculations and we utilize our customer relation
22 management software. On-site is for property
23 management. Those systems cannot talk to one another.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I guess in in that
25 regard where I've heard specific where there were

problems in divergence is like on rent where tenants had, let's say, been told that they had owed rent when in fact they knew they didn't owe rent and it was really because it was a technical glitch because the systems were somehow disconnected. That's probably one of the more persistent things I heard. I don't know if that resonates with maybe some of the things you have heard and if that is connected. It may be development by development. It may be different managers. I don't have the most up-to-date information, but it was something that was pointed out.

In terms of the recertification, just to go back to that, I know there are three centers that are available, but I think what I was hearing from tenants as well was that the recertification process under PACT seemed much more rigorous and without as much assistance as tenants were used to under Section 9, which had different. So, is NYCHA sitting in the RAD-PACT developments doing the recertifications or is the new management doing that?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So, the annual recertification is performed by NYCHA, by my team. The requirements are the same from public

housing to Section 8 with the documentation and the questions that we asked for. If anyone is having trouble with completing that process, we do have the centers where they can make an appointment and we have the PACT partners who are often willing to assist the voucher holders in that process so I would like to have a little bit more detail about the particular developments.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah. I can certainly follow up, so just what I was understanding it sounded like in some of these PACT developments it was the PACT partners that were doing that and there was a disconnect with the way people had... they were used to engaging with NYCHA in a very particular way and now these PACT partners operated very differently and didn't have, in some instances, the language ability and/or just didn't have the same kind of engagement that tenants were used to. It's a different system so.

Under that vein, and thank you, Chair, I'll wrap up here, does NYCHA conduct quality control around how RAD-PACT developments engage with tenants around either recertification or just generally?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

3 There is a program. The Compliance Department does a
4 quality control on the PACT process.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And could you
6 expand a little bit on that, like where do we find
7 the data around the quality control and the frequency
8 with which they look into these aspects of work?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I don't
10 think it exists publicly but, you know, I'm sure I'm
11 giving you ideas, but it doesn't exist publicly but
12 it is something that, you know, anyone who is living
13 in the PACT development, they could go to the
14 Compliance Department and say, you know, can you look
15 into this and it is available. They have their own
16 website, and it also has somewhere where individual
17 tenants can file complaints or ask them to look into
18 something.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: All right. Well,
20 I'll follow up. I realize this is not a RAD-PACT
21 meeting, in particular, but these things are all
22 connected and recertification issues, the Section 9
23 issues, the fact that the City is only really
24 interested in RAD-PACTing all of our public housing,
25 to me is problematic, so I think we'll just continue

2 to have that conversation. Thank you. Thank you,
3 Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you.

5 Just a couple questions just to get
6 clarification again on the project-based Section 8.
7 Now, residents who don't qualify in those RAD-PACT
8 converted developments, how does NYCHA handle those
9 situations?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Go ahead.

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: So,
12 generally, people residing at the public housing
13 site, they are able to get under the contract. We may
14 not be paying a subsidy for... (CROSS-TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm not understanding
16 your response you said. Repeat that.

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER:
18 Generally, anyone who is an active resident at a
19 converting development, they are converted to the
20 Section 8 program whether or not we are paying
21 subsidy for them. They're still able to be under the
22 contract.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, their rent will be
24 increased?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes. So, if there's a household who is not eligible for subsidy, meaning that we will not pay subsidy because their income is too high, they are then phased in...

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So they're still paying 30 percent of the income, correct?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And obviously those particular residents, their apartments, are rehabbed?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When it comes to, let me see, oh, when we were talking about residents who are not part of the composition or a situation where a person who comes back home and is living with their family and the head of household passes away, how was that communicated to them because I know in the beginning of the conversion, there's these community engagement meetings that take place. Is that communicated during those engagement meetings, that residents who are not part of the composition in a situation like that, if they disclose it that they can now become part of head of household or become the head of household?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We do.
3 During engagement, we make sure that people know. We
4 also partner with Legal Aid to make sure, because
5 sometimes people don't want to come to us and they
6 tell us or they don't want to come to the new
7 management so they could go to...

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: But have there been
9 examples of situations where our residents have come
10 and disclosed?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes,
12 definitely.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You said that in the
14 engagement meetings that you have with the community,
15 do you have minutes or anything that documents those
16 meetings showing...

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We have
18 PowerPoints that we've...

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, I'm not talking
20 about the PowerPoint. I'm talking about documentation
21 of what you're saying that you said in those
22 meetings.

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I can go
24 back and ask our folks in real estate... (CROSS-TALK)

25 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: (INAUDIBLE)

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We can get you the presentation that we use.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Specifically, the reason why I say that, and I'll just give you, if you can bring those minutes or documentation of what NYCHA said to the residents in those meetings, I'll give you four developments. If you can do it for Linden Houses, Boulevard Houses, Penn Wortman Houses, and Fiorentino Houses.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Because we're constantly, or we're hearing one thing said in the beginning of these conversions but it's not happening on the ground and we're also seeing that in Stuyvesant Gardens where quote, unquote they had these community engagement meetings and now the residents are now up in arms against the conversion.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yeah. I mean I was very involved with the Linden, Boulevard, and Penn Wortman. Remember, like too, the engagement started there pre-COVID and went into COVID so we were doing a lot of in-person meetings and then a lot of Zoom meetings as well, and I do remember that

2 being discussed. I also remember, like in many other
3 meetings, we told...

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I don't remember
5 anything. I'm asking you to...

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes. I'll
7 get you the documentation, right. So, like you don't
8 have to go by my memory, please don't, but also, too,
9 and I will also look for the documentation on this,
10 it being stated that as long as you're not over-
11 income that you automatically qualify for the Section
12 8 voucher. But if you're over-income, that's a larger
13 issue and not...

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Over-income meaning
15 you don't qualify for the Section 8.

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
17 correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, obviously, once
19 they feel out the application... (CROSS-TALK)

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Most
21 people are, the far majority, you know, automatically
22 transition into the program.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So when they
24 transition into the program, they don't qualify for
25 the Section 8 voucher, they're rent is increased?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And have you had
4 any situations where residents have come to NYCHA or
5 there's been any ask for NYCHA to get involved or to
6 mediate those situations.

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And are those
9 documented as to how many of those cases exist?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I can
11 get the number of how many of them exist.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I would appreciate it.

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: But
14 generally the process is if we're not paying subsidy,
15 the rent is increased over a five-year period until
16 it hits 30 percent of the household income.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And if they
18 can't afford to pay the increase, you then displace
19 them, you put them on the streets, right? Or you take
20 them to court, you evict them?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I can't
22 speak to that.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Why.

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MILLER: I do
25 subsidy administration.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I said if they can't
3 afford to pay the increase, what happens? Because
4 under Section 9, they were able to pay their rent and
5 they didn't have this issue, but now this new dream
6 that comes in, this fairy tale comes with RAD-PACT,
7 if they don't qualify for the Section 8 voucher and
8 now they're housing is in jeopardy.

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Over-
10 income is also an issue on the Section 8 side now as
11 well, right, so HOTMA was passed in 2016 and we are
12 seeing tenants who are over the threshold now for
13 public housing too, and in those situations, we are
14 not only increasing their rent but also technically
15 they're not public housing residents either, and so
16 they are faced with a situation, right, do I stay and
17 pay more. And if they're not able to, you know,
18 continue to pay the rent... (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: (INAUDIBLE)

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: And they
21 get a different lease as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You said they're not
23 public housing residents anymore?

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes.
25

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So now what would they be, what would be their status?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, they pay fair market rent but they are not technically public housing residents, like they couldn't serve on the resident council, they couldn't run for office, and this is all federal statute.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. All right. That concludes my questions.

Thank you so much and hopefully you can get back to us with those minutes. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Thank you. And my colleagues did tell me that there are minutes for those minutes so I definitely can get them for you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. We look forward to seeing those.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And hopefully they match what the residents said they heard and didn't. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Now I'm going to open
3 the hearing for public testimony.

4 I remind members of the public that this
5 is a government proceeding and all decorum shall be
6 observed at all times. As such, members of the public
7 shall remain silent at all times.

8 The witness table is reserved for people
9 who wish to testify. No video recording or
10 photography is allowed for the witness table. Members
11 of the public may not present audio or video
12 recordings as testimony but may submit transcripts of
13 such recordings to the Sergeant-at-Arms for the
14 inclusion into the hearing record.

15 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,
16 please fill out the appearance card with the
17 Sergeant-at-Arms and wait to be recognized. When
18 recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on
19 today's hearing topic: Section 8 and Emergency
20 Housing Vouchers.

21 If you wish to submit a written statement
22 or additional written testimony for the record,
23 please give a copy to the Sergeant-at-Arms. You may
24 also email written testimony to
25 testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this

hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be accepted.

I will now call the first panel, and we have Alex MacDougall, Neil Rana (phonetic), last name is Hamas, Hamis, Rukaya (phonetic), sorry, hope I didn't chop it up too bad, and the last name is Hamis, Hamzah (phonetic), sorry about that, and Tabitha Ward.

Thank you. We'll begin with Tabitha. Mrs. Ward.

TABITHA WARD: Hello. My name is Tabitha Ward, and I'm asking..

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Mrs. Ward, can you speak into the mic so we can hear you? Thank you.

TABITHA WARD: Thank you. Hello. My name is Tabitha Ward, and I'm asking the City Council to support a resolution to allow the housing voucher recipients to directly receive their housing voucher instead of it going, and this will include CityFHEPS, Section 8, Section 9, and any other housing voucher program that we have here in New York City, New York State, and so on and so forth. Currently, right now, these housing vouchers are going directly to the landlords and by allowing us to directly receive our

housing vouchers, it'll give us control and allow us to decide where we live, how we live, and have more of a say in where they send us, and it also will eliminate slumlords. Because the housing vouchers are going directly to the landlords, as the gentleman said before, it is money in the bank. They have no reason to make repairs as they should. They have no reason to resolve a lot of the issues that I've heard that was discussed today. There is no incentive there. However, if those housing vouchers are going directly to the rental recipients, either on our benefit cards or directly deposited into our checking accounts, right, the same way we get everything else, we will be able to play a more authoritative role in what happens with us. I am a recipient of the CityFHEPS housing voucher, and I have been receiving CityFHEPS since 2015 and recently, on July 31st, the landlord had the City Marshall's office to place a lock on my door. I had to run down to HRA, to CityFHEPS, to show that they were paying the housing voucher directly to the landlord. I then had to run to the housing court to show it to the judge. Four days later, the judge ordered them to remove the lock from the door. (TIMER CHIME) The thing is, the reason

why they were able to do it is because it went directly to the landlord.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You have 30 seconds to...

TABITHA WARD: However, if I had received it directly, I could've been able to show if they were receiving that directly and I would've been able to pay the rent myself.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimony.

TABITHA WARD: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Rakiyah.

RUKAYA HAMZA: Hi. Good afternoon, Members of the City Council. My name is Rukaya Hamza, and I am a law graduate with Staten Island Legal Services, which is a part of Legal Services, NYC. As mentioned earlier, the EHV program, which is the federal Emergency Housing Voucher program that was enacted in 2021 as part of former President Biden's Rescue Plan, was intended to mitigate homelessness and also assist individuals and families in securing safe and affordable housing. However, that program was expected to last until 2030, but currently, the current Administration has announced that the EHV

program would be terminated, which means it's being cut a few years before its expected date, and this expected to have disastrous consequences on NYC residents. Currently, New York City is facing a homelessness crisis. In January 2024, more than 140,000 people lacked stable housing and, in July 2025, 104,052 people slept in NYC shelters each night. Although that number has reduced compared to that of 2024, there is still an overwhelming need for housing assistance for New York City tenants who can't afford to live in a city that they work in and reside in with their families. Although NYCHA has announced that it will move its voucher holders to its regular Section 8 program, as a standalone agency, it cannot solve the homelessness crisis so (TIMER CHIME) the New York State and City can step in and provide a comprehensive solution to this probably so that EHV families can continue to receive the housing subsidy that they need and thousands of other families already on the wait list are not further delayed in accessing affordable housing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimony. Neil Rana.

NEIL RANA: Good afternoon. My name is Neil Rana. I'm an attorney at Manhattan Legal Services in our Housing Unit, and I'm here today to testify about two public/private partnerships that are negatively impacting the tenants that we serve. One is the RAD-PACT program that has been previously discussed, and the other is HUD's administration of their statewide contracts for Section 8 housing.

Starting with RAD, the RAD-PACT program was designed ostensibly with one of their goals being to leverage the private sector money to address things like repairs in apartments. If that was a goal of the program, it is not happening. RAD-PACT buildings across Manhattan are replete with repair issues, and the failure to address those repairs have direct negative implications for our clients that we serve. For example, one group of clients is a family that has lived in a RAD-PACT program building for years and has failed to get their repairs addressed in a timely manner, which led the apartment to fail HQS inspections, and in line with NYCHA policy, their subsidy was terminated and they are given them a voucher to move out rather than even NYCHA or the

private manager of the building stepping in to make the repairs.

Another example of a failed public/private partnership is HUD's administration of their (INAUDIBLE) contracts for Section 8 housing across the city. Through hundreds of audits that LSNY has reviewed, it's come out that CGI, the private statewide administrator in New York, has failed to take any corrective action for failing properties across the city. This has led to consequences such as termination of subsidies happening arbitrarily and often times without notice, repair issues going unaddressed, and dangerous health conditions like lead violations persisting in apartments.

What these public/private partnerships ultimately have done is allow each actor in this system, whether it's the government actor, NYCHA (TIMER CHIME) and HUD, or the private administrator, to shield each other from accountability. There is no accountability across the board and, if this Council wants to take this issue seriously, they should consider how they can help the constituents living in these buildings actually get the services that they're owed. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 Alex MacDougall.

5 ALEX MACDOUGALL: Hi. To Chair and Members
6 of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to
7 testify today. I'm just going to highlight a few
8 issues from our written testimony. A lot of it was,
9 I'd like to just echo from my colleague who talked
10 about the EHV program and the absolute importance of
11 making sure folks with EHV's continue and so that they
12 don't lose those subsidies despite funding for the
13 program ending, and so we strongly support NYCHA's
14 plan to prioritize EHV households for housing choice
15 vouchers, and I know we're not talking about HPD at
16 this hearing, but we urge HPD to do the same and, if
17 necessary, use CityFHEPS or other tools to ensure no
18 household falls through the cracks.

19 We'd also like to address NYCHA's rapidly
20 expanding Section 8 program as thousands of families
21 are moving from traditional public housing into
22 project-based Section 8 development through NYCHA's
23 PACT initiative. You know, Brian mentioned that NYCHA
24 has already converted over 25,000 units with a goal
25 to convert 62,000 units by 2028, and so the

significant influx of new participants into the program really necessitates conversations about NYCHA's capacity to meet the increased need for program administration. Legal Aid maintains several housing and benefit helplines, and we are constantly hearing from NYCHA Section 8 tenants facing problems with their vouchers that they've not been able to fix. Callers report trying to contact the CCC and waiting on the phone for hours, sometimes taking days to reach someone. Calls are dropped, disconnected, and our staff call all the time and they report the same thing. The volume is often so high that the system doesn't even pick up calls, and it just suggests that callers call back later.

We've addressed the walk-in centers are not really walk-in centers so that's not a solution, so folks are reliant really then on the self-service portal to resolve issues, often alone, and the self-service portal is a necessary tool and we appreciate (TIMER CHIME) NYCHA's commitment to its development, but the portal really needs improvement. Callers report issues uploading documents, glitches, and not even being able to really view or use the portal on their smartphones, and we know that for lots of

folks, a smartphone is their only internet-connected device.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds.

ALEX MACDOUGALL: Yeah, okay. Just quickly beyond the technical and customer service issues that folks are facing, our callers, clients, my colleagues are also reporting issues that folks are experiencing that jeopardize their ability to maintain their subsidy: inconsistent notices, notices that omit the information they're seeking, termination notices that don't include the reason for the termination. So, these are huge problems and more relevant than ever with the expanding program so we just want to ensure NYCHA gets the support it needs to administer the expanding Section 8 program but also raise awareness about the issues people are experiencing trying to meet program obligations so that they can stay in their homes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimonies.

Also, too, want to recognize my Colleague, Council Member Salamanca.

Now we'll move to the next panel. We have Anna Lutz and Christopher Leon Johnson.

Wait for her to be seated.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. I'll go for it because I know she wants to take her glorious time. Yeah. You got to take more time to talk. I'm going for it. I got to go to Nicole Street.

All right. So, hello. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. Thank you, Salamanca, for coming. Thanks for coming out. I'm surprised that you're here for this hearing.

So, I'm here to call on the City Council to cut all ties with VOCAL New York with handing out these vouchers because the problem with the city is that what they'd like to do is hand out vouchers to these non-profits and then the non-profits hand out the vouchers. I believe that the vouchers for Section 8 and the emergency vouchers should be handed out directly from HUD and directly from DHS and NYCHA. The issue is that the non-profits does nothing to support the people that they supposed to support. When you go and try to get a voucher, they always give you the runaround. I believe that these non-profits act on bad faith. They act on political will. They only do help out people that they believe that's going to benefit them politically. Why does VOCAL New

York champion a level two sex offender named Douglas Powell and the City Council says nothing about it? That type of association should be a disqualifier from the City Council from even working with them, including the City of New York for working with them and allowing them to hand out vouchers to the people in New York City. We have to save NYCHA. I mean we have to save NYCHA. Make it public. Keep it public. Don't privatize NYCHA. Like I said, that's my that's my feeling so thank you. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimony.

Now we'll move to Anna Luft.

ANNA LUFT: Thank you, and greetings, Chair Banks and Members of the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing. Thank you so much for this opportunity to testify today. I am Anna Luft, and I am the Project Director of the Public Housing Justice Project within the Tenants Rights Unit at NYLAG. And I just want to start off by saying, you know, coming in at the end that there has been a lot of really excellent testimony, and I echo the concerns raised in particular by Alex MacDougall at Legal Aid Society. I don't want to be redundant, but

we have seen through our hotline the same issues being raised and from our community clinics the same issues being raised in terms of notice, inability to access the CCC, and inability to navigate the recertification processes, in particular with RAD-PACT. Across the board, Section 8 recipients in New York City need more transparency and better access to information from the agency that administers their subsidy. HPD is responsible for one-third of the EHV's in New York City but has not publicly shared a plan for what they plan to do when those households when the program winds down. This lack of transparency puts these vulnerable households at even greater risk. We hope that they'll do what NYCHA is going to do but, if they're not planning on doing that in either way, they need to publicly share that so that their voucher holders and those voucher holders' advocates can properly plan for the future. For NYCHA Section 8 households, the Administration is already strained and will be further strained with cuts to the funding from the federal government. Inaccessible walk-in centers and long unpredictable wait times on the CCC hotline mean that participants often can't access the information that they need. (TIMER CHIME)

For RAD-PACT residents delays mean that there is sometimes a gap in the conversion so their lease will become active but they will have months where they're not enrolled in Section 8 and arrears accrue that way. One suggestion that I have is put the forms online. Just put the forms online. Put the recertification packet online, not through the portal but just on the website. Put the PACT pilot application on the internet so that if we have a client who can't access the portal, they don't have to call the CCC, wait an hour, have their call dropped, or get it generated and mailed to them. We can just help them go to the website, print it out, and fill it out for them so that it can be submitted. HPD does this. It is possible. This would reduce the strain on NYCHA, it would increase access to information for voucher holders, and it would make everything more efficient with like a very minimal lift from anyone. So, I know I'm out of time but just put it online. I just I feel like I'm crazy for saying this over and over again, just put it online.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. Thank you. so much to the panel for your testimony at today's hearing.

We will we will now turn to our remote testimony. Once your name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant-at-Arms will give you a go ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant-at-Arms to say that you may begin before delivering your testimony.

We will now call Amy Blumsack.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

AMY BLUMSACK: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is Amy Blumsack. I work at Neighbors Together. We're located in Ocean Hill Brooklyn. We serve hot meals. We do direct services helping people with vouchers find housing. We also do organizing and policy work with our members. First of all, thank you for holding this hearing on this really important issue. I'm here today because over 60 percent of our over 10,000 members are homeless and a number of them have Section 8 and or EHV, and I wanted to testify on behalf of our members to say that we very much support NYCHA's plan to port people over from EHV to Section 8. I know it's not the purview of this Committee but it is worth saying on record that HPD needs to make a similar plan and, whatever their plan is, you need to make it public immediately and

clearly. And going back to NYCHA and porting people over from EHV to Section 8, I think it's really important to say that the communication needs to happen clearly and early and often. All of our members who have EHV are incredibly stressed. They just got out of homelessness just a few years ago and it takes a long time to stabilize and so to suddenly be on the verge of homelessness again and have no idea what's going to happen is incredibly scary so I can't stress how important clear and frequent communication is about the plan and that the transition needs to be very, very smooth. I think also if there's difficulty getting a hold of those folks who have EHV who are being ported over to Section 8, there needs to be really proactive follow-up, like go into the community and find people.

The last thing that I wanted to say is that I heard a lot of the Council Members mentioning source of income discrimination. This is an issue we work on a lot at Neighbors Together. I wanted to say that NYCHA can be doing so much more to help its Section 8 tenants address this really important issue.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is expired.

Thank you.

AMY BLUMSACK: I'll just say quickly that...

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You can have another minute to close out. It's not a problem.

AMY BLUMSACK: I'll just say quickly that there's really simple and easy Know Your Rights education that NYCHA could be handing out to its Section 8 tenants. There are also really great tools out there to do proactive reporting of source of income discrimination when you encounter it as a voucher holder. UnlockNYC has worked for years to develop a really great tool online that helps people step by step to report discrimination with evidence that gets sent straight to CCHR. And last but not least, Neighbors Together and a number of other organizations have a bill package with six bills addressing source of income discrimination, it's Intros 1210 through 1215, and all of them are bills that would help disincentivize source of income discrimination because vouchers are a critical tool to end homelessness, but in order to make vouchers work we also need to address source of income discrimination so I believe that NYCHA can be doing a

2 lot more in this arena. Thank you for your time and
3 for holding this hearing.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 If we have inadvertently missed anyone
7 that has registered to testify today and has yet to
8 have been called, please use the Zoom raise your hand
9 function. If you testify remotely, you will be called
10 in the order that your hand has been raised.

11 If you are testifying in person, please
12 come to the dais.

13 All right. Seeing none, I will now close
14 this hearing.

15 Thank you to the members of the
16 Administration and to the members of the public who
17 have joined us today to discuss this very important
18 topic.

19 This hearing is now adjourned. [GAVEL]
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 15, 2025