

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm., 16th Fl.

B E F O R E: Crystal Hudson
Chairperson

Chris Banks
Chairperson

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Darlene Mealy
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Ryan Murray
Executive Deputy Commissioner NYC Department for
the Aging

Ukah Busgith
Executive Vice President for Resident Services
Partnerships and Initiatives

Dylan Baker-Rice
Deputy Chief Asset and Capital Management
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Houses

Metin Sarci
Public Housing Specialist

Jasmine McFarlane
Deputy Chief Program Officer at Lenox Hill
Neighborhood Houses

Terry Campuzano

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet please. Good
3 afternoon. Welcome to the New York City hybrid
4 hearing for the Committees on Aging jointly with
5 Public Housing. At this time, please silent all
6 electronic devices. If you have any questions,
7 please raise your hand. One of us at Sergeant at Arms
8 will kindly assist you. At no time, please do not
9 approach the dais. Chairs, we are ready to begin.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. [gavel]
11 Good afternoon everyone. I'm Council Member Crystal
12 Hudson, Chair of the Committee on Aging. Welcome to
13 today's joint oversight hearing with the Committee on
14 Public Housing on older adult centers at NYCHA
15 facilities. Thank you to Chair Banks and the
16 Committee on Public Housing for holding this
17 important hearing with me today, and we are joined by
18 Council Member Chi Ossé. New York City is home to
19 322 older adult centers, or OACs. 108 of these
20 centers or about one-third are located on NYCHA
21 properties. Per NYC's Aging's report on Older Adult
22 Center Metrics published last year, OACs and NYCHA
23 facilities served 6,325 daily participants out of
24 almost 26,000 daily OAC participants in New York
25 City. In other words, about one of every four OAC

2 participant goes to an OAC in a NYCHA facility. OACs
3 provide older adults with access to nutritious meals,
4 activities, resources-- okay, apologies, and thank
5 you for your patience. Good afternoon everyone. I'm
6 Council Member Crystal Hudson, Chair of the Committee
7 on Aging. Welcome to today's joint oversight hearing
8 with the Committee on Public Housing on older adult
9 centers at NYCHA facilities. Thank you to Chair
10 Banks and the Committee on Public Housing for holding
11 this important hearing with me today. Today, we are
12 joined by Council Member Chi Ossé. New York City is
13 home to 322 Older Adult Centers, or OACs. 108 of
14 these centers or about one-third are located on NYCHA
15 properties. Per NYC Aging's report on Older Adult
16 Center Metrics published last year, OACs in NYCHA
17 facilities serve 6,325 daily participants out of
18 almost 26,000 daily OAC participants in New York
19 City. In other words, about one of every four OAC
20 participant goes to an OAC in a NYCHA facility. OACs
21 provide older adults with access to nutritious meals,
22 activities, resources and social engagement while
23 also working in partnership with other community
24 agencies, organizations and businesses to offer
25 opportunities to stay active, healthy and safe. OACs

2 are vital community hubs. Research shows that older
3 adults who participate in OAC programs experience
4 better psychological wellbeing across several
5 measures, including greater life satisfaction, higher
6 levels of health and increased social interaction.

7 OAC program participants can learn to manage and
8 delay the onset of chronic disease and may experience
9 measureable improvements in their economic,

10 emotional, mental, physical, social, and spiritual
11 wellbeing. In short, OACs help older adults stay

12 healthy and independent, allowing them to age in
13 place with dignity. So, what happens when an OAC on

14 NYCHA property is faced with an urgent repair request
15 that impacts operations? What if an OAC is forced to
16 close due to a maintenance issue or broken equipment?

17 Where do older adults turn when their community space
18 is shuttered because of mold or broken stove or
19 extensive water damage? Who is ultimately

20 responsible for ensuring the upkeep of these centers
21 and creating safe and modern spaces for older adults

22 to congregate? As our city's older adult population
23 grows exponentially, there remains a dire need for

24 major investments to support the infrastructure of
25 aging in place, including and especially OACs in

2 NYCHA buildings. OAC staff and participating older
3 adults at OACs on NYCHA properties face unique
4 challenges in addressing facility issues due to the
5 lack of clarity around which agencies are responsible
6 for which repairs. While NYC Aging has previously
7 testified before these committees that NYCHA's
8 responsible for everything inside the wall or above
9 the ceiling, the delineation of responsibility
10 between NYC Aging and NYCHA is not always clear in
11 practice, and this has been the case for years. In
12 one instance shared by an OAC provider in Flushing
13 Queens, NYC Aging and NYCHA failed for months to
14 agree on which agency was responsible for fixing a
15 gym's leaking roof, leaving the space unusable by
16 community members in the meantime. Press reports and
17 direct feedback from OAC staff and participants to
18 our committee illustrate continued confusion and
19 finger pointing when something goes wrong. Much of
20 this bureaucracy could be streamlined or at least
21 clarified by a memorandum of understanding between
22 NYC Aging and NYCHA. I look forward to discussing
23 the status of an MOU to ensure that the division of
24 responsibility for facility and maintenance issues is
25 clear, and I'm eager to learn more about the ways in

2 which NYC Aging and NYCHA are educating OAC staff and
3 older adults about who to turn to when they need
4 help. The OAC metrics report tracks the number of
5 complaints about NYCHA facilities such as needed
6 repairs or other structural or operational issues. In
7 2024, NYC Aging reported 27 such complaints regarding
8 NYCHA facility issues at OACs. The majority of such
9 cases where OAC staff or NYC Aging could not resolve
10 the issue, NYC Aging's NYCHA liaison escalated the
11 facility complaint to NYCHA management for
12 resolution. We will check in today on these
13 escalated requests and their statuses, as well as
14 whether such facility issues have disrupted OAC
15 operations. In closing, NYC Aging and NYCHA have a
16 responsibility to ensure that our city's older adults
17 congregate in clean and safe OAC facilities and to
18 quickly make repairs and address facility issues when
19 they arise. No OAC should have to close due to a
20 lack of resources for needed repairs. Thank you to
21 the representatives from the Administration for
22 testifying today. Thank you to the members of the
23 Aging Committee and the Committee on Public Housing
24 who have joined us. I'd also like to thank my staff,
25 Andrew Wright [sp?], Erika Ruintan [sp?], and Omar

2 Richardson, and Aging Committee staff, Chris Pepe
3 [sp?], Chloe Rivera, and Saiyemul Hamid. I will now
4 turn it over to Chair Banks for opening remarks.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Chair
6 Hudson. I'm Councilman Chris Banks, Chair of the
7 Public Housing Committee. I would like to thank Chair
8 Hudson for co-chairing this important hearing and
9 helping to bring attention to the concerns and the
10 needs of older public housing residents. Older Adult
11 Centers are the lifeline for many NYCHA residents,
12 providing essential social services, meals, community
13 support, but too often we hear troubling reports that
14 these spaces are neglected. Plagued by pests, mold,
15 heating outages, broken elevators, plumbing and
16 electrical issues, and kitchens and bathrooms in dire
17 need of renovations. I've heard these complaints
18 firsthand from residents at the five centers in my
19 own district. But I know these issues persist
20 throughout the Older Adult Centers throughout NYCHA
21 campuses across the city. There is unfortunately a
22 longstanding history at NYCHA of failing to
23 adequately maintain their facilities, ultimately
24 leading to the creation of the Federal Monitorship in
25 January of 2019. There have been some improvements

2 in recent years under the monitorship, but NYCHA has
3 certainly shown some admirable resilience in the face
4 of the years of the dwindling support of the federal
5 funding, but a significant amount of work remains to
6 be done, and we must continue establishing
7 accountability. Just last week it was reported that
8 more than 3,000 NYCHA residents lost heat and hot
9 water while outside temperatures dipped below
10 freezing levels, and this is isn't an isolated
11 incident. These outages occur everywhere. Older
12 residents are especially vulnerable. So I'm curious
13 to know why we keep seeing NYCHA struggle to meet the
14 needs of its older residents, and what can we do
15 moving forward to ensure that Older Adult Centers are
16 properly maintained and funded so they can eventually
17 fulfil their promise. I hope that today's hearing can
18 provide answers to these questions and more. We are
19 undeniably partners in our collective mission to best
20 serve New Yorkers. We need full transparency from
21 both NYCHA and New York City Department for the Aging
22 about the challenges facing these centers. The budget
23 and operational decisions that impact them, and the
24 steps being taken or not being taken to improve
25 conditions for older residents. We are also here to

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2 hold NYCHA accountable and explore how they can do
3 better to provide older residents with the dignity
4 and support and safe space that they deserve. I also
5 look forward to hearing from those present today, and
6 I hope we can work together to find real solutions--
7 real solutions to some of these critical issues
8 facing our older adults. I would like to also thank
9 my staff, Michael Lambert [sp?], along with the
10 Public Housing Committee staff, the former staff
11 member Connor Mealey [sp?], Jose, Charles, Kim, Dan,
12 and Reese [sp?], and Ms. Townsend, and for all the
13 work they put into this hearing. And with that, I'll
14 now turn it back over to Chair Hudson.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, Chair
16 Banks. I will now turn it over to the Committee
17 Counsel to administer the oath to the Administration.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chairs.
19 Good afternoon. If you could all please raise your
20 right hand? In accordance with the rules of the
21 Council, I will administer the affirmation to the
22 witnesses from the Mayoral Administration. Do you
23 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing
24 but the truth in your testimony before this committee
25 and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

3 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may proceed with
5 your testimony.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good
7 afternoon Chair Hudson, Chair Banks, members of the
8 City Council, staff, and those who are here or at
9 home. I am Ryan Murray, the Executive Deputy
10 Commissioner for the New York City Department for the
11 Aging, NYC Aging. I appreciate the opportunity to
12 testify before you today about older adult centers in
13 the New York City Housing Authority facilities.
14 Throughout the NYC Aging portfolio of programs there
15 are about 106 older adult centers located in NYCHA-
16 owned buildings across the five boroughs. These
17 represent a range of OAC types including some of the
18 largest and smallest centers. As we've discussed in
19 past hearings, OACs are a critical component of the
20 many social services and programs offered to older
21 New Yorkers as part of our community care plan. In
22 addition to the important work of providing over six
23 million meals at OACs which Council has been a
24 partner with us for over the years, older adults also
25 need to be connected to critical programs which

2 address these needs. These include workforce
3 programs, health and mental health services, elder
4 justice, elder abuse, elder survivor, older adult
5 survivor services. What is clear to us is that these
6 centers serve nearly one-third of all older adults
7 served by NYC Aging at OACs. Because of that fact,
8 we are constantly working to ensure that the services
9 in these centers are well-run and meet the needs of
10 older adult communities who live in NYCHA facilities.
11 As with NYCHA facilities themselves, we understand
12 the unique challenges of repairs and maintenance in
13 these buildings and work with our partners at NYCHA
14 to address complaints when they are filed and rectify
15 any pressing concerns which may arise. I'm joined by
16 Ukah Busgith and Dylan Baker-Rice. Ukah is the
17 Executive Vice President for Community Engagement and
18 Partnerships at NYCHA, and she and her team, many of
19 the members who are here, work very closely with us
20 on a day-to-day basis. They address and repair any
21 of the facilities needs that are brought to their
22 attention in the OACs within NYCHA complexes. New
23 York City Bureau-- Aging Bureau of Community Services
24 oversees 300 Older Adult Centers and NORC programs in
25 the five boroughs, and they work closely with NYCHA

2 and the Executive Vice President to ensure that the
3 programs and the facilities are functional and
4 repairs are addressed quickly. The working
5 partnership is pivotal to the success of NYCHA OAC
6 locations and how we ensure that we deliver the best
7 services for older New Yorkers possible. Thanks to
8 the Council's leadership, the New York City Cabinet
9 for Older New Yorkers, created by the Adams
10 Administration in 2022 was codified into law with a
11 permanent slate of cabinet member agencies. NYCHA's
12 been part of the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers since
13 its inaugural meeting in September 2022, and their
14 partnership has led to a number of improvements in
15 programing at the spaces such as intergenerational
16 initiatives, public safety responses, and
17 transportation-related enhancements. Like many
18 partner agencies in government, NYCHA and NYC Aging
19 work every day to better serve New Yorkers over 60
20 and in our OACs, but also in ways beyond serving
21 meals and programming. NYC Aging has OACs at NYCHA
22 facilities since the founding of our agency and the
23 establishment of centers through the Older American's
24 Act. In fact, the nation's first OAC was at William
25 Hodson Older Adult Center in the Bronx. It's located

2 in Daniel Webster Houses and serves older adult
3 population in that complex as well as the surrounding
4 community. Throughout New York City there are over
5 42,684 older adults who attend the OACs located in
6 NYCHA complexes, and about 12,686 individuals who
7 receive services from NYC Aging and are NYCHA
8 residents. Historically, NYCHA did run a number of
9 OACs and then they were known as Senior Centers in
10 their facilities. Though, as I mentioned before, it
11 was not the totality of centers that were run and
12 located in NYCHA development within the NYC Aging
13 portfolio. While NYC Aging has always had some OACs
14 in NYCHA sites, newly added OACs came from NYCHA to
15 NYC Aging in two distinct tranches. First, during
16 the Bloomberg Administration, NYC Aging took on a
17 number of centers which NYCHA transitioned over to
18 us, and those were previously run independently. We
19 folded those into our current network of programs
20 based on a range of factors such as the size of the
21 programs, the space, capacity, as well as budgetary
22 needs for our agency. This, as you know, lets you
23 visit our Older Adult Centers throughout the City,
24 shows the diversity of the programs. And as we talk
25 about addressing facility issues, you'll also

2 appreciate that that's some of the nuance that
3 happens when we're going to different centers to
4 address issues. So, the other tranche that came our
5 way was 2018 to 2019 period. NYC Aging assumed
6 oversight over all remaining Older Adult Centers
7 still managed by NYCHA. A similar situation occurred
8 with other NYCHA social programs for children where
9 New York City Department for Youth and Community
10 Development took on new programs as well. During
11 these transitions from NYCHA to Aging, not one center
12 was closed. NYC Aging and NYCHA agree that the
13 facility management and funding are large concerns to
14 running these centers effectively. Just as repairs
15 and maintenance concerns at NYCHA apartments, the
16 state of our facilities are also a concern and an
17 area where we frequently interface. In order to
18 provide older adults in the OACs a safe experience,
19 we have a system in place with our partners at NYCHA
20 to report and address issues or complaints when they
21 arise. First, the center itself should report an
22 issue either to the property manager or to NYCHA,
23 whether that be in-person or over the phone. NYCHA-
24 located OACs maintain the relationship with the
25 property managers for the facility repairs like any

2 other center would if it was with a landlord. NYCHA
3 then issues a ticket number to the individual who
4 reported the problem and the issue is either
5 addressed or potentially referred out based on its
6 complexity. As you can imagine, some issues are
7 fixed immediately, but as NYCHA must prioritize
8 repairs throughout their portfolio, some issues may
9 be addressed later when they do not impede safe
10 functioning of the center such as repainting needs or
11 light replacements. Major issues such as roof and
12 ceiling leaks or flooded spaces would still receive--
13 will still receive a ticket number, but will be
14 triaged differently based on the severity and the
15 impact of the space, the OAC or the older adults
16 themselves. In all cases, NYC Aging prioritizes the
17 service continuity and we do everything we can to
18 ensure that centers may remain open. In order to
19 better monitor these repairs and determine which need
20 to be escalated, the NYCHA liaison at NYC Aging
21 regularly reviews reports of open tickets that need--
22 needs at individual centers. Our goal is to create
23 constant communication and open dialogue between our
24 agencies to ensure that repairs do not languish and
25 the needs are addressed quickly. During repairs, if

2 a center is indeed closed for whatever reason, older
3 adults at those locations clearly will know what
4 options they have for meals and programming at nearby
5 centers or any other alternatives which best meet
6 their needs. When a repair ticket goes unaddressed,
7 a second complaint might be opened with NYCHA. It is
8 escalated. The escalation happens a visit to the
9 property manager takes place, and then we are working
10 with them as part of what we refer to as our NYCHA
11 Escalation Team. We bring these issues up during
12 regular meetings with NYCHA facility staff and work
13 quickly towards a resolution for that center.

14 Because we are a NYCHA space, while NYC Aging may
15 wish to fix an issue ourselves, we're not always able
16 to do so, must rely on NYCHA to escalate the matter
17 further in order to remedy the situation. We do much
18 of the escalation through the NYCHA liaison and the
19 NYC Aging team that manages the process in meetings
20 for NYCHA. We ensure that the appropriate escalation
21 happens to avoid any center closures or alterations
22 to programming. It is imperative that we monitor and
23 respond quickly to repair issues so that's there no
24 disruption to services for older adults. Recently,
25 NYC Aging has been working to address issues with

2 NYCHA-located kitchens which prevent a center from
3 cooking on site because of the range of compliance
4 issues and safety issues. Currently seven OACs in
5 NYCHA sites which have kitchen issues which need to
6 be legalized and brought up to code. This includes
7 whether the kitchen is on the certificate of
8 occupancy for the space itself, if a range hood is
9 code compliant for the FDNY or if there's gas-related
10 issues in the space, or the building at-large which
11 we would have to address with the Department of
12 Buildings. This would prevent jus from legalizing
13 that kitchen or allowing the space to operate.

14 Additionally, there's some NYCHA-located OACs where
15 gas line issues prevent the center from cooking on-
16 site. However, these can be larger concerns at the
17 NYCHA facility itself. We are also thankful for the
18 Council's leadership when the second tranche of NYCHA
19 centers was transferred to NYC Aging, and you
20 allocated \$4 million to the OACs for facility repair
21 and upgrades to be used principally for heating,
22 ventilation, and air conditioning, or as we refer to
23 it, HVAC repairs. As I know Council is aware,
24 overarching throughout the discussion today is the
25 need for capital investment in NYCHA facilities. We

2 believe that Council can continue to be a strong
3 partner as you have been in the last fiscal years to
4 improve these facilities which serve older adults.
5 New York City older adult population continues to
6 grow, and as I've said before and in today's
7 testimony, roughly one-third of our overall OAC
8 portfolio is located in the NYCHA facility. As NYCHA
9 has pursued its rental assistance demonstration
10 [sic], RAD, or through their Permanent Affordable
11 Commitment together programs, or RAD PAC, NYCHA-- NYC
12 Aging has needed to work more closely with NYCHA as
13 the relationship with our centers has evolved or
14 changed with these programs. When a NYCHA
15 development converts through their program, OACs
16 remain at those locations, and they have not signed
17 leases with the new landlord once NYCHA has
18 relinquished control of the site, but it does
19 maintain a licensing agreement that allows them to
20 provide services there and delineates
21 responsibilities. This agreement also outlines the
22 space needs for that location and the interaction
23 between the provider and the landlord. As the PAC
24 program continues to develop through NYCHA, more OAC
25 are involved in those change, and the approach to

2 those transitions is on a site-by-site basis.

3 Additionally, we take seriously NYCHA's relationship
4 to the Tenant Association Presidents, or the TA
5 Presidents, at NYCHA, and their commitment to the
6 development and the community residents utilize
7 common areas and shared spaces like the OAC. As you
8 may remember, NYC Aging OACs are required to maintain
9 advisory councils of older adult participants who
10 host regular meetings and hear complaints or
11 suggestions regarding how centers are run and
12 managed. In NYCHA facilities, these can be some
13 inevitable overlap between the TA presidents, the
14 resident councils, the advisory councils, all serving
15 older adult in those locations. Similar to our
16 partnerships with NYCHA, we view the TA presidents as
17 important stakeholders in our operation at our
18 centers and look to their support navigating issues,
19 whether it's in the buildings or advocating for older
20 adults for services in the centers more broadly. As
21 I've stated before and as NYCHA is a partner in our
22 Cabinet for Older New Yorkers. Their collaboration
23 with NYC Aging goes beyond the administrative and the
24 facility needs of OACs. We've deepened our
25 relationships with multiple agencies through the

2 cabinet, and that includes our work with NYCHA.

3 Beyond working to serve older adult needs at centers,

4 NYC Aging has partnered with NYCHA as a cabinet

5 member on intergenerational programming in these

6 communities. one initiative focused on what we refer

7 to as My New York Story, and that is an effort at

8 community building with younger and older individuals

9 in the development where they've shared a variety of

10 stories, prioritized [inaudible] and it brings folks

11 together to be stronger advocates and strengthen the

12 relationships on-site in the developments. Those

13 kinds of programming with DYCD or other programs with

14 our public schools and NYC service are really

15 important to us and reflect a coordination not just

16 with NYCHA, but multiple agencies across the

17 spectrum. Story-telling and building connections is

18 critical. This is just one example of the many ways

19 NYCHA is focused on the fundamental network of

20 providers and are highly innovative with us in how we

21 address the needs in the community. In conclusion,

22 at NYC Aging, we are pleased to provide services to

23 over 150,000 older adults last fiscal year through

24 our OACs, including those with NYCHA developments,

25 and we look forward to continuing these efforts to

2 address the needs of the growing population in New
3 York City. NYC Aging and NYCHA have a strong
4 relationship and we look forward to continuing to
5 build this relationship through the work of our
6 cabinet and our daily interactions on facility needs
7 and improvements for older adults. We're currently
8 looking forward to the third year of other events
9 that showcase the vibrancy, energy and community
10 building of older New Yorkers like Talent is
11 Timeless,--some of you've heard us talk about this
12 and many of you supported in communities-- where over
13 1,000 older adults across the five boroughs competed
14 to showcase whether it was dancing or singing or art
15 or theater. All of these culminated in a final show
16 where we had winners, and it's one of the things that
17 steps up the energy and the vibrancy of programs
18 beyond the usual. That it is our commitment moving
19 forward in terms of how we work together. So, we are
20 happy that NYCHA is strengthening our relationship
21 with us and we look forward to your questions. Chair
22 Banks, Chair Hudson, thank you for the opportunity to
23 be here today. Thank you Committee Members for your
24 advocacy. I will pause for the Executive Vice

2 President to share a few words before we take any
3 questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you.

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Chairs Chris
6 Banks and Crystal Hudson, members of the Committee of
7 Public Housing and Committee on Aging, other
8 distinguished members of City Council, NYCHA
9 residents, community advocates, and members of the
10 public. Good afternoon. I am Ukah Busgith, NYCHA's
11 Executive Vice President for Resident Services,
12 Partnerships, and Initiatives, and I am pleased to be
13 joined by Dylan Baker-Rice, Deputy Chief Asset and
14 Capital Management Officer, as well as my colleagues
15 from NYC Aging. Thank you for this opportunity to
16 discuss the Authority's efforts to support older
17 adults as they age with grace and dignity in their
18 homes at NYCHA. Older adults are an integral part of
19 the NYCHA community. Every day, we strive to support
20 older adults in our communities through connections
21 to beneficial programs, services, and other resources
22 from a range of quality providers. We believe
23 strongly in the power of partnerships to serve the
24 population-- populations like older adults. Our
25 collaboration with NYC Aging is one fundamental

2 example, as they operate a variety of programs for
3 older adults' right at our developments. And we are
4 an active participant in the City's Cabinet for Older
5 New Yorkers, which brings together over two dozen
6 City agencies to help address the needs of aging
7 adults. One especially helpful initiative that
8 resulted from our participation in the Cabinet is a
9 program where liaisons from the NYPD connect with
10 NYCHA seniors to provide assistance and raise
11 awareness on issues like domestic violence. The HUD-
12 funded Elderly Safe-At-Home program is another key
13 initiative. Through the program, NYCHA staff offer
14 on-site assistance at several NYCHA developments,
15 supporting older adults as they age in place safely
16 and independently through home visits and connections
17 to services, workshops on crime prevention and other
18 topics, and floor captains which are residents who
19 volunteer to support their neighbors. These are just
20 a few examples of the initiatives that are serving
21 NYCHA seniors. I am proud of our efforts to support
22 older adults in the community, and I am happy to
23 answer any of your questions on this topic. I also
24 want to thank members of the Council for your
25 support. Partnership is key to our success. We are

2 eager to continue our very impactful collaborations
3 with you and other stakeholders. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you all so
5 much for your testimony. I'd like to just share that
6 we've been joined by Council Member Rivera, Brewer,
7 and Salamanca online. We're actually going to start
8 with Council Member Ossé, because I know he has a
9 time constraint with some questions specifically
10 about [inaudible].

11 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you so much,
12 Chairs, and good afternoon to the panel testifying
13 here today. I want to speak about a specific site in
14 my district. I represent Bed-Stuy in Crown Heights.
15 And according to the committee report that we
16 received for today's hearing, Maria Lawton [sp?]
17 Older Adult Center which is Roosevelt II Houses, was
18 one of the centers where DFTA escalated complaints to
19 NYCHA management. This center, again is in my
20 district in the Roosevelt development, always has an
21 infrastructure issue. I visited this site two years
22 ago, and the HVAC system was down in the middle of
23 July last year. My staffer received a complaint from
24 one of the CBOs at Roosevelt that there were still
25 HVAC issues. Our older adults are, as we all know, a

2 vulnerable population and need temperature controlled
3 spaces, especially in OACs where most of their day-
4 to-day social circles, resources, and programming
5 exists. What is the update on this center, and have
6 issues that DFTA reported in the HVAC system been
7 resolved?

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: hi, thank
9 you for that question. So, I apologize, I don't
10 have the exact details about that center. We could
11 obviously look into it, but generally speaking we do
12 work with the program to repair HVACs. That is
13 something that New York City Aging has committed to.
14 And so there are different hurdles in doing that.
15 It's not always an easy process. Both with the
16 program there's different steps of getting quotes and
17 things like that. So what we can do is look into
18 obviously the status of that site. It's possible it's
19 in the process somewhere, but we are committed to
20 serving as cooling centers, and so that is a priority
21 of ours.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And Council
23 Member, heard you-- you said that two years in a row,
24 we have an issue. So, we will get a response to you
25 later this week or early next week.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: A response would be
3 great. We'd love to hear that it's currently in the
4 process, but again as you said, two years is a decent
5 amount of time. How on average-- how long on average
6 does it take for some of these infrastructural
7 repairs to take place, especially if they are brought
8 up to a top of the list or made to be a more posing
9 issue to a constituency?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, I'll
11 start and then maybe I'll turn to NYCHA. In terms of--
12 - sadly, the answer is it depends, right? If you're
13 talking HVAC, there might be a significant multi-
14 months process to get a vendor in there as the
15 Associate Commissioner shared, whether it's quotes,
16 the timing of funding and certain other issues that
17 need to be addressed. So, some of these processes
18 are lengthy. I am concerned about the particular case
19 that you brought, so I do want to look into it.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I know
22 everyone says that, but we will be actually looking
23 into it, and I want to get you an update and confirm
24 if, for example, this one they've gotten a vendor in
25 place and there are other issues related to the

2 facility that make it a bit more challenging to just
3 simply replace the HVAC. I will get those details for
4 you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Okay, thank you
6 very much, and thank you, Chairs.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, Council
8 Member Ossé. And before we get into our question--
9 oh, yes?

10 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Thank you. I was just
11 going to add to that. If the HVAC replacement is
12 more extensive capital repair, then it was follow the
13 more typical capital process which would--
14 expectation it's four years to five years. And in
15 those cases, we have to replace an entire HVAC
16 system, and it's often coupled with roof replacement,
17 because much of the equipment is on the roof, so it's
18 much more extensive to get into the space. To
19 remove, we have to abate, particularly for older
20 systems. So we need to check for lead, asbestos, due
21 diligence there, and then bring a vendor on board and
22 complete the repairs. If it's a maintenance item,
23 that's much faster than a typical capital project,
24 but that gives you an idea of some of the challenges
25 with replacement. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Before
3 we jump into our questions, I do just want to ask a
4 few questions from Council Member Schulman who is in
5 another hearing at the moment and is extremely
6 timely. So, as you are likely aware, the White House
7 Budget Office has ordered a pause on all federal
8 grants and loan, effective 5:00 p.m. today. This
9 pause could impact trillions of dollars already
10 congressionally approved for dispersement. The
11 primary source of federal funding for older adult
12 nutrition programs like Meals on Wheels is the Older
13 Americans Act Nutrition Programs which is a grant. If
14 the White House memo applies to the Older Americans
15 Act Nutrition Program, it could jeopardize service to
16 millions of vulnerable older adults who have no other
17 means of purchasing for preparing meals. What is the
18 plan to ensure that home delivered meals continue for
19 the city's older adults given the President's order
20 to halt all federal grand dollars which most likely
21 includes home-delivered meals? And I know this is
22 all, you know, breaking news happening in real time.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Here's the
24 short answer, and I appreciate the acknowledgement
25 that this is every single day breaking news and

2 flashes and updates and alerts and whiplash for
3 everyone. much of the-- yes, the grants that the--
4 Council Member Schulman very well familiar with-- do
5 support New York City, much of our dollars are CTL
6 dollars in terms of programs to the City. So there
7 are working groups that have been looking at this for
8 quite a while. We must ensure that meals continue to
9 be delivered, and there are other budget mechanics
10 that we're going to have to get through. So I know
11 I'm not being extremely significant here, and I can't
12 be in this moment--

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Yep.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: but we're
15 aware of the impacts that could happen with various
16 federal funding. The truth is that across the board,
17 New York City directly funds most of its programs,
18 and so the term I've heard or the ratio-- and this is
19 just-- we'll get to budget season soon-- but it's
20 roughly 25 cents on the dollar, right, is usually
21 what we're talking about overall for a number of
22 other than New York City-funded, but we fund most of
23 our programs, and we-- you know, we're going to have
24 to figure this out, but I appreciate that this is

2 breaking and there are other impacts in terms of
3 benefits and services across the board.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, we're
6 going to just have more conversations.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: We'll get to that
8 I'm sure in another hearing. But I do just want to
9 ask NYCHA, because-- or specifically, do federal
10 grants impact OAC operations at NYCHA facilities?
11 What about other NYCHA operations? And if so, how
12 can we make sure the NYCHA Older Adult Centers do not
13 lose their ability to exist if federal grant money is
14 removed. I know obviously the financial situations is
15 different for city agencies versus one like NYCHA?

16 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I'm not aware of
17 funding affecting Older Adult Centers at this time,
18 but there are other grant programs that are impacted
19 at NYCHA, and you know, this is fresh news and trying
20 to grapple with this and put things in place, but
21 it's still very new for us to comment further.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And for NYC Aging,
23 have you heard from providers about how this freeze
24 might impact their operations? Have you been told
25 about potential furloughs or layoffs at all?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: As of 9:30
3 last night we haven't received specifics from
4 providers about other federal-- other programs that
5 they run where there's federal dollars that
6 principally support them. We were-- I was just with
7 400 providers at a Live On conference this morning.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: this morning, yeah.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And you can
10 imagine the mood, but we're also pretty riled up.
11 So, no, providers haven't reached out yet to talk
12 about impacts to programs that they might be directly
13 funded from the feds on. I could imagine that they
14 exist. Folks understand that, again, we principally
15 fund the programs that are on the ground here, and
16 the concern is more about immigration and other
17 things.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And just one
19 suggestion also from Council Member Schulman is to
20 have maybe a meeting for the Cabinet on Older Adults
21 to start discussing if they haven't already -- some
22 of these cuts from the federal side.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yeah, and
24 we-- there have been working groups since the
25 election within the New York City government where

2 folks-- there are federal working groups that our
3 alleged [sic] team is involved in, looking at what
4 those impacts are. So, happy to bring this up to the
5 cabinet overall, but those work groups do exist.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great, thank you so
7 much. Aside from location, is there anything
8 specific about OACs located on NYCHA property that
9 sets them apart from other OACs in New York City?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: It's a broad
11 question, Council Member.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It is.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Here's what
14 I'll say. You know, that's like why is NYCHA
15 important and who's been there? Like, this is, you
16 know, as we said, one of the oldest Older Adult
17 Centers in the nation. It happens to be a NYCHA
18 Older Adult Center. What for us sets them apart is
19 that rich, deep history of organizing, of making sure
20 that services are brought to a location in terms of
21 social services or responsiveness. So that energy I
22 think is something that I, when I visit the centers--
23 I've been out to about a third now of the 300.
24 That's the thing that I think sets it apart, and
25 folks, you get the sense of deep commitment to

2 community. Folks live there, right? And just for
3 folks who know, it's not-- the centers are hubs of
4 activity overall, that's all of our centers, but you
5 get a sense that folks who aren't in the development,
6 that go to the development also are invested in the
7 community as a whole. So, it's that energy and
8 vibrancy that I think is what sets apart the NYCHA
9 programs.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: I know we're going
11 to get into facilities and stuff in just a bit, but I
12 do want to say I've been to the William Hodson Center
13 in Council Member Stevens' district. It is an
14 amazing community that's incredibly vibrant and
15 active, but I will say that I was extremely
16 disappointed when I went and saw the physical, you
17 know, center and infrastructure. You know, the
18 floors were coming up. There are holes in the walls,
19 leaks, and to be the oldest, you know, proudly the
20 oldest Older Adult Center in the nation, I just think
21 that our older adults deserve a better environment
22 than that. And so I would encourage you all, if you
23 haven't been to that center specifically recently to
24 visit them there, because that should be sort of the
25 shining light and the example for the entire network

2 of what it means to be the oldest and the first older
3 adult center in the nation that's here in New York
4 City, in the Bronx, in a public housing facility with
5 such a vibrant community as it has. That, you know,
6 that should be the example of what these centers
7 should look like. What I'll-- yes, yes, sure.

8 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: We certainly take note
9 of that, and that's been our focus, so that's one of
10 the centers that's funded for critical upgrades.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great. Thank you.
12 What is the Administration's long-term vision for
13 OACs on NYCHA property, and how does it align with
14 broader efforts to support NYC Aging's population?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I'll talk
16 about the vision for Older Adult Centers overall, and
17 then I'll pause for any additional thoughts that
18 NYCHA might have on how we continue our partnership
19 to strengthen programming at NYCHA as a service
20 provider. As you know, the vision remains that older
21 adults thrive, not just get basic needs met, but have
22 active, engaged lives for the long-term. Longevity
23 is obviously thankfully a thing we can now look to
24 where folks are living longer, and so the vision for
25 us is to ensure that folks remain healthy, that they

2 have basic needs met, and beyond that, that we have
3 vibrant, energized communities that are
4 multigenerational. Earlier today, another stat just
5 hit me that, you know, it might be a little different
6 stat if I fact-check it, but one in nine public
7 school students has an older adult as their emergency
8 contact. I think it might-- either one in six or one
9 in nine. We will get the real numbers, but that's
10 just striking to me. And you know, I think we share a
11 vision around how to ensure that folks continue to
12 contribute to community, built it and they're still
13 here, and have a say in what happens on the ground in
14 every New York City neighborhood. So, as a
15 foundational thing, that is part of the vision,
16 community services, community building, and beyond
17 that, it is important to acknowledge caregivers,
18 right? Having had the blessing and burden and
19 ensuring that those who are aging in place and the
20 family members who then have to respond to a
21 multitude of issues that the older adult may face as
22 life circumstances changes, we have to invest in
23 caregiving and ensuring that services are as enriched
24 as possible where people live. So that's part of the

2 vision for us overall as an agency. But I'll pause
3 for NYCHA if there's anything additional to add.

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I think you
5 covered it pretty well, Ryan. But for us, as you
6 know, our resident association and NYCHA staff
7 ourselves are very invested in our senior centers.
8 We used to run the majority of them, and I know how
9 important they are for our residents to have a safe
10 place to attend and meet with their peers, talk about
11 issues, and participate in many activities. So we
12 want to support Aging and continue to provide a safe,
13 clean space for seniors to gather and their share
14 their issues, their concerns, and work together to
15 resolve them. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Can you
17 describe the process for opening and operating an OAC
18 located on NYCHA property? So who makes the proposal
19 and to whom, and what is the timeline from proposal
20 to opening?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I'll refer
22 to the competitive process that was in place and that
23 will continue to govern how we select Older Adult
24 Centers that are under direct contract with the
25 Department for the Aging. I'll refer to very briefly

2 the partnership and, you know, with NYCHA and then
3 I'll pause for any follow-up questions you might
4 have. So, like most New York City agencies, we
5 adhere to the Procurement Policy Board rules, right?
6 And where we're putting money on the street for
7 operating a center that is from dollars that the
8 Administration puts out, that is competitive. And so
9 there's a request for proposals process, and the last
10 one we had a few years back resulted in some of the
11 new providers that are in the portfolio now. That
12 process, as you know, is involved and usually
13 includes us talking about, you know, what the
14 services are. We spend a fair amount of time
15 educating communities on what a full-service program
16 should look like. We allow for, given our experience
17 with NYCHA and other communities, a variety of sizes
18 of program. Like, folks may run a smaller Older
19 Adult Center. I'm just going to give a quick number.
20 The team will give me a look. But, you know, let's
21 say it's 25-30 people in that center. It's a little
22 tinier than say a center that is 85 to 100, and there
23 are others that usually might have average daily
24 participation even beyond that, a larger center. So,
25 the numbers matter in terms of obviously the space

2 and accommodation, the staffing that is in place,
3 director, someone helping with case assistance and
4 navigating benefits, people that are activity
5 specialists, but we set that up and we look at
6 geographic areas. So we usually refer to catchment
7 areas. I just say where the programs will be, and we
8 divide up the available dollars in that way. Look--
9 we, on our side from the planning perspective will
10 first consider what the population of older New
11 Yorkers looks like in an area. We-- the census data,
12 right, was released recently, and we also just had
13 our survey, older adult survey-- and thank you to
14 Council for publicizing that-- where we heard back
15 from 9,000 older New Yorkers. Our job is to make
16 sure that the programs are where people-- where the
17 services are needed. We go through the competitive
18 process. People evaluate the proposals, and then we
19 make our selections. There's some negotiation that
20 happens in terms of budget and so on, and then we're
21 off to the races. In terms of where the programs
22 are, as you know, there's 106 that are in NYCHA, but
23 there's, you know, some 200 others that are in
24 community whether its city-owned buildings or it's
25 working with the landlord. Often it's the church in

2 your community. I'm thinking of a few right now just
3 looking at both of you, all three of you. There are
4 churches that will, you know, have a free space
5 available and has historically had that. So, the
6 ability of the proposal to say that they have an
7 agreement for where the program would be, there's a
8 commitment from that community, and then they go
9 through the competitive process and review the
10 proposal, and then we select, and we're off to the
11 award. That's the longer-winded answer, but I wanted
12 to just be really clear about the competitive
13 process. There may also be discretionary funds that
14 the Council puts up, right, where you say I want to
15 expand or run another program down the block because
16 the numbers support it, and that is up to the
17 Council, but where we're getting discretionary
18 dollars, then we of course will educate the provider
19 if they aren't an existing operator of an Older Adult
20 Center on what the standards say, right? And in
21 general we say, you know, like you need a director.
22 You need someone overseeing programs. Here's what a
23 nutritious meal looks like. Here are the standards
24 for recipes. So, when we're involved in those
25 fuller-scale programs that are discretionary funded,

2 we also help to bring oversight and support to the
3 Council dollars and ensure that what you intended in
4 your districts is actually happening. So, that's how
5 the programs come to be.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.
7 You know, for these hearings we appreciate the long-
8 winded answers. So, no worries there. As the older
9 adult population in New York City grows
10 exponentially, are there any plans for expanding the
11 number of Older Adult Centers within NYCHA
12 facilities? If yes, where? If not, why not?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Not there
14 yet.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And so this
17 is the short answer now. When we get to the point
18 where we're talking about a request for a proposal,
19 we're actively looking at those data-- that
20 population data now. So, you know, numbers that I
21 saw about hot zones and cold zones in the city where
22 people-- but the numbers might be different, right?
23 I would want to have the opportunity to come back to
24 you around what that plan would look like, but I
25 can't affirmatively say right now that we absolutely

2 have a plan to expand in NYCHA. What I want to
3 confirm is that one, facilities are there, the
4 interest is there, because it may also be near to
5 NYCHA, right? It might be down the block at a
6 privately-run facility or a building that is owned.
7 Our commitment, however, is that services are where
8 older adults need services, that folks can go from
9 program to program easily, and that's why we invest
10 in transportation and other things. That is our
11 commitment. But in terms of absolutely saying we
12 will expand to increase the number in NYCHA, we're
13 not prepared to say that today, but we will go
14 through a planning process.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Is it fair for you
16 to say we absolutely will expand facilities across
17 the City?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: If the older
19 adult population continues to grow as we--

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] I mean,
21 it's--

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY:
23 [interposing] We--

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] It's
25 growing.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We
3 anticipate it to be and it is growing as you said.
4 We have to respond to those needs.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I guess--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY:

7 [interposing] Now, what--

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Yeah,
9 go ahead.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: [inaudible]
11 yet. Is it--

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Go for
13 it.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We will ex--
15 our plan is to fight for the resources to expand
16 services where they're needed. That is our plan.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. So, I just
18 hope that and encourage you all to think about the
19 plan being more proactive than reactive, but what so
20 ha-- what so often happens, particularly with
21 government, is that bureaucracy gets in the way, and
22 the population already increase. It's already boomed.
23 It's already here, and then we say, oh gosh, we have
24 to catch up. Let's put in some OACs and it's kind of
25 already too late. So I just want to make sure, and

2 you know, I'm just going to continue beating the dead
3 horse that I always beat at all of these hearings,
4 because it is almost unconscionable to me that as a
5 city, and this is not just you all, but broadly as a
6 city we are not really planning for the population
7 boom that we all know is already happening. So I
8 what I don't want to happen is that we are not
9 prepared. We're already not prepared. We're under-
10 prepared, but I'm hoping that through these hearings
11 and other conversations and through the advocacy of
12 so many of our partners that the city will be, you
13 know, better prepared to address the needs of the
14 older adult population.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Agree with
16 you. We're not-- the world, the country, the city,
17 we're not prepared and we need to be, and the data
18 says that we should be. You helped to open a
19 conference recently last December that was called
20 Boom, which was acknowledging that the last of the
21 Baby Boomers turn 60, and everybody forgets about the
22 forgotten generation, the Generation X folks, and
23 then millennials and others, right? Like, we're all
24 aging and rapidly and committed to the City, so we've
25 got to plan as such. I agree with you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. What
3 metrics or evaluation processes are in place to
4 assess the impact of OACs on the overall wellbeing of
5 older adults in NYCHA housing? Just turn on your
6 mic.

7 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Oh, sorry. So,
8 currently NYCHA doesn't capture the metrics for older
9 adults. That falls under Aging. So, Ryan, I don't
10 know if you want to talk about that.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Let me just--
12 - I heard your question, and it was overall impact at
13 NYCHA, yes? Something like that?

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What metrics or
15 evaluation processes are in place to assess the
16 impact of OACs on the overall wellbeing of older
17 adults in NYCHA housing?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yeah. So
19 what we as NYC Aging can speak to is the impact on
20 the older adults who participate in the programs,
21 right? I think-- and that's a distinction versus the
22 overall development. so, earlier I gave some numbers
23 in testimony about the number of individuals who
24 participate in programs that are located at OACs,
25 just another important distinction that it's not a

2 program that only is for the individuals who are in--
3 live in that development. Individuals from the
4 community, as you heard, because the number was like
5 40-something thousand, and 14,000 were from NYCHA.
6 They're hubs for the community as a whole, and so
7 what we looks at in terms of our metrics is
8 participation. It is looking-- I mean, there's the
9 usual satisfaction I call it, the happy face
10 evaluation. Do you like it here? And then there's
11 more nuanced things that might be happening in terms
12 of case assistance and responsiveness, food quality
13 and making sure that meals are delivered. Those are
14 the kinds of things we track. So it's-- are services
15 being delivered as contracted? And there's a fair
16 amount of time spent by our program officers getting
17 out there to talk to residents and get their feedback
18 beyond happy face about the quality of the program
19 and if it's meeting their needs. The other thing
20 that we do is we take that information and that helps
21 to evolve what we're doing as an agency. Talent is
22 timeless wasn't just a bright idea. That came from
23 the farm, as we say, but it was-- folks want to be
24 better-connected to other programs and have that be a
25 thriving thing, right? And I find that these days

2 many older adults aren't just thinking about one
3 program, right? They might be shopping around for
4 different things, different kinds of activities. So,
5 the metrics are about quality. The metrics are about
6 participating of the programs, and then there's
7 direct feedback from the older adults, but it is for
8 us, the program itself, not just the NYCHA building.
9 There are cases where-- I can think of one or two
10 where if we've received feedback that conflicts with--
11 - and to your point we want to be more proactive
12 here-- conflicts with what we understand of a
13 particular program. then NYCHA's team-- Audrey
14 sitting over here as well-- Ukah-- then they actually
15 do a more comprehensive building survey to confirm
16 whether or not the building itself is maximizing the
17 services that are offered with EOAC, and then if
18 there's other things that NYCHA should be doing. But
19 those aren't full building-wide survey by default.
20 Those are a bit more reactive.

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: What Ryan was
22 speaking about, there are incidents where our
23 resident leaders may complain about the program being
24 offered at the location, and so we took it upon
25 ourselves with Ryan's team support create a survey to

2 survey residents who are participating in the
3 program. How are they responding to the services, if
4 it's adequate? Or if there are older adults that are
5 not participating, why and what would bring them to
6 the program, and we use that data to share it with
7 Aging so we can increase recruitment for those
8 programs initiative. And we have done two within the
9 last few months, and the resident leaders are very
10 happy with the results and love the fact that we're
11 being proactive about their needs.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's great. I
13 mean, I would also make the argument that an OAC
14 present in a NYCHA can only benefit, you know, all
15 residents in that building, and that as people
16 receive information in the OACs they're I'm sure
17 sharing it with their neighbors and friends and
18 family members. So, even if they aren't themselves
19 not visiting the OAC, they're still benefitting from
20 it being there. So I think could at least benefit us
21 all to at least ask the question of residents in
22 terms of, you know, their positive or perhaps
23 negative, but their overall opinions of the centers.
24 I do want to acknowledge that we've been joined--

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]
3 Sorry.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: by Council Member
5 Avilés. It's all good.

6 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sorry, and then
7 when Aging surveyed those 9,000 residents that
8 respond-- I mean, New York City residents that
9 responded, we were very proactive in NYCHA
10 developments as well and ensured that our seniors
11 were responding, older adults were responding to the
12 survey. Whether those are programs that we run
13 directly, encouraging the older adults to submit that
14 survey.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And then in
16 the spirit of partnership this year, Chair and
17 Council Members, one of the things that in proactive
18 land, we want to get out there and spend more time
19 with our Advisory Councils. So I mentioned earlier
20 that every OAC is required to have an Advisory
21 Council, so folks who go to the program and are-- by
22 their members, you are the representative. I want to
23 meet with folks, and I want to do that with you. So
24 I will obviously be reaching out to each of you and
25 others in the Council starting with these committees

2 to spend more time in community over the next few
3 months.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Sounds good. We
5 look forward to it. How does NYC Aging collect
6 feedback from older adult residents about the quality
7 and variety of the programs offered at these centers,
8 and what about feedback regarding the facilities? I
9 know you just shared a little bit about that, but
10 facilities as well?

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Sure.
12 So, one of our standards for all of our Older Adult
13 Centers is to survey participants. I believe that's
14 twice a year, and as we talked about also, they have
15 Advisory Councils. So that is made up of Older Adult
16 Center members. They-- most programs also have
17 general meetings, and that's another opportunity for
18 the entire membership to attend, share feedback.
19 Sorry about that. we also are-- so, as I mentioned,
20 it's one of our standards to survey members, and we
21 are working on also standardizing that so that we can
22 assist programs to really take that information and
23 have it readily available. Not everybody has the
24 same, you know, capacity with technology. Some are
25 still on paper. So we are working on improving that

2 process as well so that can be available. And then
3 another thing we are piloting right now is actually
4 kiosks. So as Ryan mentioned like the happy or-- you
5 know, you go to a bathroom in the airport and it's
6 like how do-- so it's not exactly that, but we are
7 piloting with a few sites to get reactions for the
8 meals right now, because as I'm sure a lot of you
9 have heard about the plant-based meals and the
10 feedback on that exactly. So, but we--

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] where
12 are those sites, do you know?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Oh,
14 gosh, off the top of my head.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: No, for the pilot.

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: No, no--
17 the ones with the kiosk. It's a pilot. We're
18 rotating. So actually we're about to do another. So
19 I think there's about five kiosks. So, what-- the
20 plan is to have them there for about a month and then
21 to move them to other centers.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: If you could just
23 let us know where--

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
25 [interposing] Yeah, absolutely.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: where they're
3 starting or at least, you know, where they're
4 planning to go next.

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yes.
6 Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And just make sure
8 we can have a little input if you're open to it.

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: We have
10 one on site, if you want to-- if you come to our
11 office.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: We can
14 show you. It's just a few questions. the idea is
15 that everybody after a meal-- it's more real-time
16 feedback so that we can see responses and eventually
17 we will move on to other-- we'll move on to other--

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Just
19 make sure you get one of those kiosks in Council
20 Member Brewer's district.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah.
22 But yes, so, anyway. So that's another way we're
23 trying to get real-time feedback, and we have the
24 ability to change the questions depending on the

2 need. So, again, right now we're looking at meals,
3 but we can incorporate different types of topics.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Great. Thank you.

5 And then are there any staffing shortages or
6 challenges in retaining qualified staff to work at
7 centers in NYCHA facilities as opposed to other OACs?

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: You
9 know, overall it's difficult I think for social
10 service programs to hire staff. That is a struggle
11 that we've seen across the network, not just Older
12 Adult Centers. So, it's not necessarily a bigger
13 issue in NYCHA OACs, but it is something that we are,
14 you know, always concerned about and looking into how
15 do we get more, you know, more people interested in
16 working with older adults. Really, I think that's the
17 bigger issue we face.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And I just
19 want to say thank you again, Council, for your
20 support of the workforce, right? The COLA, the cost
21 of living adjustment, and all the workforce
22 enhancement initiatives and those things that we've
23 been fighting for years and years and years, beyond
24 this current administration, those things re
25 important to the human services sector as a whole.

2 And this has to be more attractive. I started in
3 nonprofits making nothing, and that still shouldn't
4 be the case 25 years later, right? So, thank you for
5 that partnership. Our goal is to make sure all those
6 dollars are getting where they need to be and
7 continue to lift the-- lift up our human services
8 workers, because they're the ones doing the work.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Well, I will not
10 miss an opportunity to say that the Council will
11 always deliver the investments that are absolutely
12 needed and that are best for the city and including
13 its workers. So thank you for saying that. I'm going
14 to move over to Chair Banks for some questions, and
15 then I'll be back.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Chair
17 Hudson. We spoke about community engagement, and I
18 just want to touch back on that. Can you describe
19 the outreach efforts to engage older adults in NYCHA,
20 the Older Adult Centers?

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sure. Thank you
22 for that question, Council Member. We start with--
23 we-- our [inaudible] team resident participate in
24 resident services partnership and initiative delivers
25 a monthly newsletter to every household with an email

2 address, and we will list all the program
3 opportunity. Sure, we also canvas the developments,
4 knock on doors for various initiatives, ensure those
5 flyers are new-- and programs [inaudible] with
6 resident leaders. And I mean, when we're canvassing
7 we ensure those pamphlets are shared with households.
8 In addition to that, we send weekly updates to over
9 218 resident leaders across the board on new
10 initiatives, programs, opportunities. If necessary,
11 at times, we will table at a development to launch
12 new initiative if we have a cohort, a specific cohort
13 and we need additional residents to participates, and
14 during our Family Day events we really like to launch
15 new initiatives and table again and these resources
16 out.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Are you
18 door knocking? And is there any collaboration with
19 the Department of Aging or the particular CBO that's
20 in the center?

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: There are times
22 where CBOs may come to us requesting mailing lists
23 since they want outreach for a specific program, or
24 if it's a new provider on the ground they may want to
25 introduce themselves to residents and we are able to

2 share those mailing lists without any PI, no names,
3 just address and they can mail a flyer to residents
4 introducing themselves. When we're canvassing for
5 other initiatives we could include program flyer for
6 specific older adults if necessary at a development.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Well, how
8 does these efforts address the mental health needs of
9 these older adults, particularly in the light of
10 increased isolation during the pandemic? How are you
11 dealing with that?

12 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, during the
13 pandemic we were fortunate that we received some
14 funding to distribute over 10,000 tablets to older
15 adults, and we worked with OTI to distribute those
16 tablets to seniors. So it helped where-- if Aging
17 was conducting a workshop or training our seniors,
18 older adults, at the time could have access to those
19 programming. Post-pandemic, the start-up for those
20 centers were very slow. Recruitment was-- residents
21 were not returning. There was still a fear of going
22 and congregating in open spaces. So we had to really
23 partner with Aging to get the word out that the
24 centers are open--

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And now
3 after the pandemic, what is there--

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, it took a
5 slow start, but I think centers are building up to
6 the numbers that they're--

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Okay.

8 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: they used to
9 serve pre-pandemic, but Ryan could confirm that.

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah, I
11 can add a little more. Actually, just this morning I
12 was talking to providers about, you know, if they're
13 having trouble reaching out to residents that we've
14 had a lot of luck I think especially with resident
15 leaders. A lot of time they have their pulse. So, you
16 know, I've said so many times that could be your best
17 friend if your work with them to get information
18 about. But as far as mental health, another program
19 that we have embedded into a lot of our Older Adult
20 Centers is Geriatric Mental Health Services, and
21 that's open to any older adults. They don't have to
22 be part of that site. They don't have to be-- they
23 can live anywhere. They can go wherever they're
24 comfortable, but that is something that we have in a
25 large portion of Older Adult Centers, including some

2 of our NYCHA sites, and so that's been a wonderful
3 program.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I know this
5 probably not a NYCHA-based question, but for those
6 seniors who are not residing in NYCHA-- so I guess
7 this would be more directed to the Department of
8 Aging. What's the outreach when it comes to mental
9 health? How do you monitor them? Because I have a
10 particular senior who resides in Meadow Wood [sic]
11 who's a-- it's a condominium. It used to be a
12 Mitchell-Lama back in the day. And she has a major
13 hoarding [sic] issue that we're now trying to
14 address, but it seems like it went over the CBOs head
15 or the center that she attends. So, you know, if we
16 can-- this is also an outcry to also have-- to work
17 together, to collaborate to see how we can help this
18 particular senior that attends the-- I think she
19 attends the Penn-Wortman senior center which I
20 believe the sponsor is Millennium Development.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We-- happy
22 to support you with the case that you're referring
23 to. More broadly, obviously mental health thankfully
24 we can now have this conversation, right, about
25 mental health being a part of health and being

2 important for all of us and not just in moments of
3 crisis or based on a particular mental illness. So,
4 we-- as Anya said, we have collocated programs with
5 our Older Adult Centers. There are 88 geriatric
6 mental health programs. That was expanded in this
7 administration up from 20-something from the prior.
8 There's so much more to be done there as part of the
9 cabinet work. We are currently working with the
10 Parks Department for example to make sure-- the
11 theory here is go where people are. The centers are
12 one. As opposed to waiting for people to go to the
13 clinic where the clinician is and can offer services,
14 right? Culturally, also, in many communities talking
15 about how you're feeling and thinking and what you
16 might be struggling with, hoarding or other kinds of
17 things, is still a barrier and we've only gotten
18 recently to the place where we can have these
19 conversations. So, for folks who are older, there's
20 so much work that needs to be done there. So, one,
21 happy to work on this case with you. Two, we're
22 always looking to collocate and site and so on.
23 There's a whole office of mental health process
24 around what is appropriate to expand and when for
25 licensure, but we need to do more, and I think I want

2 to-- if this is an area you want to work on, happy to
3 bring you in.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And my last question
5 on this particular topic when it comes to outreach
6 and particularly when we talk about mental health,
7 are there adequate case workers in the centers, Older
8 Adult Centers, to assist? Because we constantly see
9 where directors are having to take on that
10 responsibility and, you know, that definitely puts a
11 stress on a director. So, are there adequate case
12 workers in the centers?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah, I
14 think-- so obviously-- again, every center is
15 different, and the providers determine what their
16 structure looks like. It's-- you know, I don't know
17 off the top of my head what the vacancies look like
18 at those programs. However, you know-- and needs
19 change. I think that what happens especially with
20 more serious mental health issues is sometimes staff--
21 - it is more than an Older Adult Center should be
22 handling, and so that's why we have this part-- you
23 know, the partnership with the geriatric mental
24 health program, but as far as we are aware, it's not--
25 - they're not-- we don't hear complaints that there's

2 not enough staff to do case assistance. However,
3 what the Older Adult Centers should be doing is
4 really more kind of basic assistance and then usually
5 bigger needs are referred out. Obviously, it's-- you
6 know, it's also education, I think, to ensure that
7 those people providing those services know all the
8 resources, and that is something we-- it is in our
9 standards that programs have that available, but you
10 know, it's-- I think it's different in every case,
11 and sometimes these are more challenging situations,
12 so we're always here to support.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. I now want
14 to move on to RAD/PACT, particularly-- and I think
15 this-- these-- this line of questioning just can be
16 answered by either, but I guess it would be more for
17 the Authority. We've heard previously that the
18 division of responsibility for repairs between NYCHA
19 and New York City Aging at a hearing, I believe,--
20 hearing before the Aging Committee back on April
21 2024, the New York City Aging Commissioner Vasquez
22 testified that New York City's Aging policy is to
23 incorporate the same division of responsibility to
24 the licensing agreements for the RAD/PACT managers
25 when facilities were converted. Is this still the

2 New York City Department for Aging's policy with
3 regards to the OACs and facilities that are converted
4 to RAD/PACT?

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes, I'm happy
6 to report we work Aging to finalize an agreement that
7 can be used for all--

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And it's
9 been final, okay.

10 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah, it's been
11 finalized and it's in place. So, any converted site
12 will sign this agreement delineating who's
13 responsible for repairs in the Older Adult Centers.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And when it
15 comes to-- can we see that agreement?

16 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sure. I think we
17 can send.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Thank you.
19 When it comes--

20 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]
21 Template, right? It's a template.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: It's a temp?

23 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right, because it's--
25 okay. You can provide that. We definitely

2 appreciate. When it comes to the Older Adult Centers
3 who provider submit tickets to RAD/PACT managers,
4 does NYCHA track the status of the ticket or conduct
5 any follow-up to ensure that these issues are
6 resolved?

7 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: NYCHA doesn't
8 track those tickets. It's with the property manager,
9 the new operator. And it should-- because we now
10 have an agreement, it should delineate who was
11 responsible for what aspect of repairs. If there are
12 issues, then-- where the providers-- I mean, the
13 property manager is not responsive, they can escalate
14 to NYCHA or to Aging.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, NYCHA just plays
16 a role when it's escalated.

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: When it's
18 escalated, absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are there-- are you
20 aware of any issues that the older adult providers
21 have faced getting repairs from RAD/PACT managers?

22 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Currently, I'm
23 not aware of any outstanding issues. Since I-- I
24 think the agreement is very clear and the roles are
25 really defined in that agreement.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: In most of the
3 RAD/PACT converted developments where the-- most of
4 the centers are being rehabbed, right?

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Am I correct?

7 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We know-- and I know
9 this from experience and from complaints from some of
10 the CBOs that are in those particular developments,
11 those particular centers, there's been issues with
12 repairs or the rehab not being complete in parts of
13 the building and it's just been an ongoing back and
14 forth with the RAD/PACT management to get those
15 repairs done. And I guess these are particularly in
16 those particular centers that are shared either do a
17 cornerstone or shared by another senior pro-- shared
18 by a senior program, is NYCHA involved in those--
19 when those controversies arise?

20 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: If it's
21 escalated to NYCHA, we will get involved and work
22 with our RAD department to address those with the
23 property manager. So, if we need to get to the table
24 and discuss what the concerns are, we're willing to
25 do that.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And again, you're not
3 tracking anything.

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We're not
5 tracking, unless--

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] So,
7 nothing is-- there's no system put in place where
8 NYCHA can go in and check to see if repairs are
9 needed?

10 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: No, not at this
11 time.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When a NYCHA
13 facility with an Older Adult Center is converted to
14 RAD/PACT, how does that conversion affect the status
15 or operation of the OAC, and how does that conversion
16 affect the services offered by the OAC?

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: It should not
18 affect the services at all. The program transitioned
19 with the conversion and we ensure that the provider
20 are introduced to the new property manager there at
21 the table. Now they're required to sign a lease
22 agreement and the program continues as normal.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And Boulevard Houses,
24 we have a situation where there's a rehab being done
25 to the center that's shared by I believe CAMBA and

2 Fort Greene Senior Services. The seniors have been
3 out of home for close to a year or so, and we've been
4 waiting and waiting for that center to be opened up.
5 I believe-- and I say total disregard to the seniors.
6 The seniors have been placed at an apartment, and I
7 visited that apartment plenty of times, and it's no
8 place you would want to put seniors to be able to
9 have programs or activities, and I believe that the
10 activities are very limited because we're constantly
11 getting complaints from the seniors about the lack
12 there of services and programs that they're not being
13 offered. So, what's being done particularly in that
14 situation?

15 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I'm not familiar
16 with that situation, Council Member, but I can follow
17 up.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, and that's why
19 it goes back to the broader issues of NYCHA being
20 engaged, especially when it comes to the RAD/PACT
21 conversions and the need for oversight, because
22 they're not-- they're not there, and that's something
23 that I think NYCHA-- we brought it to their
24 attention, but it seems like nothing has been being
25 done, and we're constantly-- the seniors are losing

2 valuable time, and hopefully this conversation today
3 will hopefully move the RAD/PACT converted management
4 team or developers or management team to finally
5 finish rehabbing that center so the seniors can get
6 back in there, and also CAMBA can get back to the
7 services that they're providing.

8 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I know some of
9 our facilities have critical infrastructure issues.
10 So, we'll just follow up on the timeline to restore.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yeah, okay. Thank
12 you. I appreciate that. After a conversion, does
13 NYCHA monitor the OACs to ensure that the level of
14 service provided under RAD/PACT matches the level of
15 service provided when the facility was under Section
16 8?

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, NYCHA
18 doesn't monitor the OAC, but I think Aging will
19 ensure that the providers are following through in
20 terms of the program.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Why is it that you
22 don't monitor the services?

23 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: In terms of
24 delivery of services? So if we have--

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing]

3 [inaudible] services, I mean.

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: They have a
5 contract with Aging and Aging is responsible to
6 ensure that the program is delivering on that. if,
7 for instance, our resident leader has flagged that
8 the services provided is not adequate compared to
9 pre-conversion, then we of course will get to the
10 table, and--

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] How do
12 you know that if you're not engaged?

13 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: If the resident
14 leader will-- we still stay in touch with our
15 resident leaders post-conversion, and they'll bring
16 some issues to us, we--

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I invite
18 you to come out to Boulevard and Linden Houses.

19 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I know we're
20 working on [inaudible] right now.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yeah. You're working
22 on [inaudible] Boulevard Houses, correct?

23 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes, yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Where there's no TA
25 to advocate for the residents or the-- well, the

2 residents and particularly the seniors in that
3 particular facility. What extra attention is being
4 paid by NYCHA to make sure that, you know, these
5 particular management companies are providing the
6 services or keeping their commitments?

7 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Right. So, we
8 have a post-conversion team at NYCHA who will visit
9 the location-- yes-- and if there are residents that--
10 -

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] That's
12 interesting.

13 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah. If the
14 residents are not satisfied with the services, they
15 may bring it to our attention, and we'll follow up.
16 We also have surveyed post-converted sites and use
17 that data to address any deficiencies.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: well, can you provide
19 that data to us?

20 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sure. That's--

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] We would
22 love--

23 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [inaudible] but
24 other developments, yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Other developments,
3 but we would love-- I would definitely love to see
4 that, to see how that-- how that's informing you.

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Absolute, we can
6 do-- we can do-- present that [inaudible] you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Look
8 forward to that information. How does NYCHA ensure
9 that older residents are aware of their rights
10 leading up to and during the conversion process?

11 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sure. So, we
12 have info sessions throughout and engage residents
13 and ensure all that information regarding their
14 rights--

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Have you
16 attended any of those engagement sessions?

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I have in-- not
18 recently, but in the past.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How long ago?

20 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: At least four
21 years.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Four years.

23 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I have a team
24 that does that.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The engagement
3 sessions that I've actually been to for Boulevard,
4 Linden, for the developments that have gone RAD/PACT
5 in my district are not friendly to seniors,
6 particularly-- and these particular ones that I've
7 been to. What is being done to better those
8 engagement-- you know, those engagement opportunities
9 for NYCHA residents, particularly when it comes to
10 seniors are-- coming-- I just-- some of these
11 conversions took place during COVID and are taking
12 place now as we speak.

13 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, we do share
14 information. Our team also may have office hours at
15 the locations where residents, especially our older
16 population who may not have access to internet
17 requesting additional information, could go to our
18 staff who's on the ground during the hours that we're
19 there available to them to answer any questions
20 regarding the conversion. We -- they also have
21 access to legal aid if they choose to use that
22 avenue.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, you know for sure
24 that the-- when a senior has to sign a-- sign over
25

2 from a Section 9 lease to a Section 8 lease, there
3 are services to assist those seniors?

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

6 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Legal Aid is
7 available to help.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And they-- and what
9 are those particular organizations?

10 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: There's Legal
11 Aid.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Legal Aid is one.

13 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah, that's the
14 one that we--

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] That's
16 the only one.

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: And resident
18 leaders can also bring other partners to support the
19 residents.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Resident leaders can
21 bring on--

22 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing] If
23 they need additional resources.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And can you
25 give me a scenario? [inaudible] development where

2 conversion is taking place where resident leaders are
3 given the opportunity to bring in other agents?

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: There have been
5 occasion where resident leaders may want to--

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Do you
7 know any specific developments is the question.

8 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: retain an
9 attorney. I know this is happening currently at Riis
10 Houses.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: At Riis, okay.

12 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah, we're
13 engaging and the residents, they want to have an
14 attorney representing.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Community
16 engagement and education, what outreach does NYCHA
17 conduct to inform older residents about Older Adult
18 Centers, the services they offer?

19 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: so, again, I
20 previously spoke about our newsletter that we share.
21 We may table at a development, and we encourage the
22 older adult provider to attend resident association
23 meetings, to share information on the programs that
24 they're offering. In the Older Adult Centers, as
25 Ryan spoke to, some of our resident leaders are

1 COMMITTEE ON AGING WITH COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING 75
2 playing key roles in the Advisory Board at the Older
3 Adult Centers--

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And
5 when--

6 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: to get
7 information.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And when
9 controversies arise, when it comes to repair issues,
10 not being clear on documents that the senior may be
11 signing, what-- is that the-- is that something that
12 they would bring to the senior center or the Older
13 Adult Center? How does NYCHA step in, or where is
14 NYCHA at in these conversations, or when a situation
15 like that comes up?

16 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Are you talking
17 specifically about leases, or?

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yeah, when it--

19 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Or anything?

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Correct, when a
21 senior is not sure. I mean, multiple times I've got-
22 - my office has received calls about re-
23 certifications. You know, that's something that
24 constantly takes place under the RAD/PACTs, which to
25 me doesn't make any sense. But when it comes too

2 recertifications, that's something that's constantly
3 being done, and you're constantly hearing seniors
4 have to do recertifications when their incomes are
5 not changing. What is--

6 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: They do have to
7 have to recertify. Our team, you know, as we spoke
8 earlier about the elderly Safe at Home program, we
9 have that at about-- at 14 locations. They will
10 support seniors--

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Yeah.

12 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: completing those
13 recertifications. We have trained--

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I hear
15 about that program a lot, but I just don't see them--
16 - I don't see them on the ground. So maybe you can--

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing] I
18 can share the list of--

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] There's
20 a disconnect somewhere.

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Share the list
22 of developers where they are. We help to train our
23 CBO partners to assist with recertification.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, the CBOs that's
25 overseeing the--

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]
3 The Older Adult Center.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: the Older Adult
5 Center is trained. Okay.

6 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes, we have
7 trained as requested, yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright.

9 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Maybe Council Chair, I
10 could also speak to-- you brought the history about
11 repairs. So, any time we're engaging in capital
12 project, we're upgrading a center, we have our
13 standard operating procedure which is for community
14 engagement.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

16 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: So we're working both
17 with the center operators with their CBO. We're
18 working with our resident leadership and residents.
19 So if there are seniors as part of that, we're
20 working with them to scope that-- to scope the
21 project and make sure they're involved in the process
22 of the repairs both in the design, so they actually
23 have input about the needed repairs and upgrades, and
24 also throughout the construction process with regular
25 updates.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright. Does the
3 OAC service continue even when all residents have
4 signed onto the new PAC lease? It continues?

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: The Older Adult
6 Centers will continue to operate.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When it comes
8 to enforcement and transparency, Local Law 75 of 2021
9 created a liaison position for the New York City
10 Aging to coordinate with NYCHA and make
11 recommendations to New York City aging about how to
12 better service NYCHA residents. Who is the current
13 liaison or liaisons, and how has the liaisons been
14 received by NYCHA residents, and what recommendations
15 has the liaisons made to the NYCHA Aging Commissioner
16 so far?

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: so, the lead
18 liaison is Marlene Shallow [sp?] and she also
19 directed of older adults, senior director of older
20 adult services at Aging, but I think I would ask Ryan
21 to respond to these particular question.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, Council
23 Member, I spoke to this a little bit earlier when we
24 were talking about what is needed on the ground to
25 have a thriving experience and not just the typical,

2 you know, kind of transactional. Like, this thing
3 needs to be fixed or whatever. So, the liaison role
4 was created to-- as a point of accountability. The
5 reality for us is we have 103 Older Adult Centers,
6 and so our senior directors share the portfolio. One
7 is designated as our liaison and spends a lot of time
8 with our NYCHA partners here. We do have biweekly--
9 so, practically speaking, we have biweekly meeting
10 where issues that are escalated to us and need to be
11 resolved between the parties, some of the day-to-day
12 things. [inaudible] will literally go into tickets
13 all day. I'm not on all the emails, but they're all
14 happening right now--

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: around
17 emerging issues around-- for particular sites. I'm
18 sure the team is already looking into two of the
19 cases that you flagged earlier during this session.
20 So, the liaison is making sure that it's-- think of
21 it as project management in some way-- across the
22 different program officers. Our structure is such
23 that we have our senior directors and we have our--
24 we have Anya who oversees the entire older adult
25 operation, and then we have a associate program

2 officer, program officer, and we have an operations
3 infrastructure around that. That rolls up to me
4 along with any-- if there are other issues that need
5 to be integrated. For example, we had a hearing
6 recently on the scams, right in the Aging Committee
7 with the NYPD, the Public Safety Committee. That,
8 for example, our team that is the-- they're called
9 the Elder Justice Crime Resource Victims Group, for
10 folks who are survivors of issues. Their job is to
11 be-- take intake folks who have been victims of
12 crime. One of the things that became important is to
13 do more education on the ground at Older Adult
14 Centers in general, and some targeted ones with our
15 NYCHA facilities. So that's another example,
16 thriving programs response to scams and other things.
17 Those are two concrete ones that we put through our
18 programs. But the liaison exists, and it's Marlene
19 Shallow.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How is the-- how
21 does-- what does that education look like? Are these
22 workshops?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: sure. Yes,
24 there are workshops that happen where folks go out.
25 It might be an hour long workshop. It also is-- over

2 the last, the holiday period, if anybody follows NYC
3 Aging, our social media had a ton of content in
4 partnership with NYPD, educating around things from
5 the jewelry scam to the grandparent scam where
6 somebody's calling to say send me money now, because
7 I'm in trouble. So there's a lot of education that
8 happens, whether it's in social media where some
9 older-- many older adults are, or it's proper use of
10 social media tools and how not to get in trouble.
11 But on the ground there are workshops, an hour 90
12 minutes. They're often done with the older adult
13 liaison as well, and our team is directly doing that
14 and we have provides whoa are in our portfolio who
15 are also participants.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright, thank you.
17 I'm going to conclude in a few minutes. And when it
18 comes to policy improvement and future plans, what
19 capital improvements are currently planned for the
20 OACs on NYCHA campuses, and how long are these
21 improvements expected to take, and what is needed to
22 streamline these projects.

23 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Thank you, Chair.
24 Those are great questions. So, we just completed
25 four OACs this past year in 2024 at a cost of roughly

2 \$1.7 million, and thank you to Council by in large
3 who's provided the funding. We have another 15
4 projects that are in various stages of design,
5 procurement and construction. That's a total of
6 roughly \$26 million, and that constitutes roughly 25
7 percent of our overall community center portfolio.
8 So that's a big piece of the portfolio. So it's a
9 big focus for us, and like I shared before, it
10 typically takes four to five years to complete these
11 capital renovations. The challenges there are quite
12 extensive. I think you outlined and some of the
13 other Council Members outlined through their
14 questions some of the challenges. We're often
15 renovating places that have deferred maintenance over
16 a long period of time.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

18 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: So, the renovations
19 are very extensive. It constitutes in many cases
20 exterior work. So, we're talking about roofs,
21 windows, façade work, access, not to mention plumbing
22 work which is extensive. In some cases, they're part
23 of our buildings and so it connects to larger
24 building infrastructure issues. In other cases
25 they're separate, but as much as possible we try to

2 do the work without relocating these OACs, because we
3 understand the impact of community, if we relocate
4 them. So that means that the work is generally
5 phased over a longer period of time. So, we're
6 trying to work in sections to not displace the entire
7 population there, and that means it does take us
8 longer. The other challenges that we run into is at
9 the tail end of work we have to close that out, and
10 in some cases the changes to the use means that the
11 certificate of occupancy needs to be updated and
12 corrected. So we have to work with our other partner
13 agencies in order to remedy that, and that sometimes
14 can take more time than we would like.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright. And just
16 want to point it towards the two centers in my
17 district, the Vandalia Senior Center which is one
18 that is in disrepair, in bad need of-- just a
19 complete overhaul, and they have bathroom issues,
20 plumbing issues that have been ongoing for years.
21 And that's one of the NYCHA developments that's not--
22 it's only a senior development. So that particular
23 senior center is a jewel to those seniors in that
24 development. Also, the Rosetta Gaston Senior Center
25 which is also a senior center there that is in bad

2 disrepair, and also the Pink Houses Senior Center.

3 The first two centers I mentioned are only senior-

4 only centers that are only occupied by seniors. The

5 Pink Houses Community Center is actually shared by

6 two different program, the senior program and I

7 believe CAMBA the youth program. What is being done?

8 Are they in the pipeline? Are they going to get any

9 relief, any help or assistance on the capital side?

10 It seems like, you know, they're being left out there

11 to starve. Good programs. Fort Greene Senior

12 Services does an amazing job and Millennium

13 Development does an amazing job, and the Wayside

14 [sic] does an okay-- pretty good, decent job. But

15 what is being done on the capital side? Are they in

16 the pipeline? Will they ever see the day of light?

17 Will they ever?

18 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: So, we can come back

19 to you on the particulars for those, but currently

20 the funding we have is the funding that-- that's the

21 pipeline. So that's the challenge we run into.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

23 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: You know, the priority

24 for funding really is towards the residents in the

25 buildings and building infrastructure. So, most of

2 the funding on the capital side for upgrades has come
3 through discretionary funding.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright. Well, I'm
5 hoping in this budget we can work together on those
6 particular centers. Madam Chair, thank you, and I'll
7 come back.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: thank you, Chair
9 Banks. I'd like to share that we've also been joined
10 by Council Members Mealy and Bottcher, and I'm going
11 to go to our colleagues for questions, and I'll wrap
12 up. So, starting with Council Member Brewer followed
13 by Avilés.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
15 much. Just on the RAD/PACT, it's my understanding
16 that some of the initial discussion are virtual, and
17 those seniors can't turn on that damn computer. So,
18 can we cut the virtual and just do it in-person.
19 They cannot do the virtual. How are we going to do
20 that?

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, we do--
22 Council Member, we also have--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] And
24 we like you, Ukah, just so you know. We like you a
25 lot.

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We do have in-
3 person meetings as well, and what we-- whatever we're
4 discussing we deliver that package of all the
5 information to the resident door and serve--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I
7 know all that. I'm just saying-- I'm being honest.
8 You got to really. They can't read it. They need to
9 understand it. It's got to be in-person. You really
10 do, because it's not fair to them. And I wonder
11 just, you know, in curiosity, as you are converting
12 do you know how many-- most of your buildings even
13 though they're family buildings, you know, in the
14 general sense, not a family building, are senior
15 buildings. There are so many seniors living in your
16 NYCHA buildings right now, as you know. So, when
17 you're converting you've got a lot of seniors who are
18 a part of this process. They are just-- they cannot
19 turn it on. It just doesn't work. So, I would say
20 please-- really, it's not fair to them. So, I'm
21 begging you to use that opportunity to do it in-
22 person.

23 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We will, and--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I'm
25 not going to mention buildings. You know which ones

2 I'm talking about, and you got Cynthia who's going to
3 be all over you if you don't do it. Number two is
4 scratch cooking. I am not a plan of plant-based
5 because it's processed food half the time. I can't
6 stand it. So, do you know in your senior-- where you
7 have your senior programs, how many of them are
8 scratch cooking? Plant-based was horrible, but it's
9 even worse if it's not scratch cooked.

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: We-- I
11 don't have an exact number. We do-- we really value
12 that, and actually we have one of the programs, Lenox
13 Hill, actually--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
15 That's the only one that's high-quality. That's it.

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: I think
17 there's more, but they do training actually, and so
18 we work with them to get--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I
20 know. I know.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: training
22 for other programs.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know all that.

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: But our-

25 -

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]

3 Could you get us-- could you get us-- could you get
4 that information to us, how many--

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:

6 [interposing] How many are scratch cooking?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: of the senior
8 programs--

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:

10 [interposing] Sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Lenox Hill is the
12 gold seal, but it kind of goes downhill from there.
13 I've been to all the meetings.

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: I do
15 want to share we don't allow processed meats because
16 that is concern with plant-based.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Not just meats,
18 other kinds of stuff--

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:

20 [interposing] We're not--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
22 coming out of cans.

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Sorry, I
24 mean, for plant-based. It's not-- it cannot be
25 processed.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: It's still
3 horrible.

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
5 [inaudible] be like a veggie burger.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We need fresh
7 fruits and vegetables if we're going to do plant-
8 based.

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
10 Absolutely.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. That's--
12 I'm not going to get into that. They know I hate it.
13 Number two, how many of your senior programs have
14 NORCs [sic]? Just out of cur-- I know you had-- the
15 Chairs had hearings on this before, but since I was
16 one of the founders of NORCs, I'm kind of curious how
17 many of your senior programs?

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: How many
19 NORCs are there?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes.

21 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: So, we
22 fund 36 and then I believe there's 22 that are
23 discretionary. Thirty-six total. We can get back to
24 you about how many discretionary, but we fund 36.
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and--
3 because the mental health issues could be handled
4 that way. In other words, many of them have found
5 and been able to address mental health issues. So,
6 my-- I'm just wondering how many more do you think
7 should be in your programs? Because there are lots
8 of programs in the world. NORC is phenomenal. And
9 then having been there, seen that, done that with
10 mental health, it's frightening how many mental
11 health challenges exists and are addressed
12 wonderfully by the NORCs. So, do you-- like, do you
13 have plans to do more? What's the status, etcetera?
14 Because you talk about mental health, just put a NORC
15 in, it's addressed.

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Well,
17 thank you. That's a very-- that's very kind. I
18 think--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] It's
20 not kind, it just-- it's like how it works. Go
21 ahead. I'm sorry.

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: No, I
23 was going to say, I think back to what Ryan was
24 saying earlier about planning for Older Adult
25 Centers. So we actually, the RFP that we did last

2 time and that we-- and when we bring new contracts.
3 When we re-RFP, we do always see [inaudible] and
4 NORCs together. So,-- because they are more or less
5 similar programs. So, as we plan for that, we are
6 looking at statistics of where older adults are
7 needed, where-- you know, we-- our goal is to
8 obviously have as many programs to reach as many
9 older adults as possible. So we are in the planning
10 phases of seeing what the needs are. So we don't
11 have that number right now, but we are looking into
12 it.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: what's the timing
14 on that for more NORC potentially?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: That
16 would be in the next RFP, but I don't think we have
17 a-- we don't have a timeline just yet.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I think the
19 answer I can give you is that our planning process
20 and looking at the older adult survey and all the
21 things we just did, this year I think will be a year
22 for us to-- Council, us, everybody to have real good
23 conversations about what is needed for the future of
24 older adult services, period.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Which would
3 include NORCs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I would just
5 [inaudible] ones and do the NORCs.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Heard.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The other-- I
8 mean, it works. So, why try something else if they
9 work? Finally, just on database and tracking, so
10 obviously some buildings have-- we know them. You
11 know which ones they are. They got the heat. They
12 got the heat problems, the elevator problems,
13 etcetera in the senior buildings, particularly. So,
14 how do you-- do you track those? Do you focus on
15 them, prioritize them? I call, you know, 24 hours a
16 day, seven days a week for Ukah and everybody else.
17 But in other words, how are you-- are they improving
18 these statistics on the heat, the elevator and the
19 grab bars? Grab bars take a month apparently to get.
20 Go ahead.

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sure. So, in
22 terms of elevator outages, if someone has to call in
23 the ticket, the ticket agent will self-confirm if
24 it's an older adult, especially if they have an
25 impairment or they're in a wheelchair waiting for the

2 elevator to be restored. So, those would be
3 prioritized for-- and it's, you know, if it's off-
4 hours it's also flagged for the emergency response
5 team, and we'll address it--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] I
7 know, but then long-term, it's going to break down
8 again. So, is that elevator prioritized for more
9 repairs? Because it is a senior building.

10 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, again, if it
11 comes-- we have to replace the elevator, that's a
12 long-term capital project.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And how about the
14 heat?

15 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Heat outages,
16 again, if it's called in as a ticket--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
18 Okay.

19 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: if it's an older
20 adult we will--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]
22 Okay. And how long do grab bars take to be
23 installed?

24 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: It does--
25 probably take a month like you said. It's a

2 reasonable accommodation request, and it's addressed
3 by our property management as they receive the work
4 order.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, alright.
6 Thank you. I do think that you guys are working hard,
7 programs are good. It's the buildings that are
8 collapsing around them. That's the problem, not the
9 great programs. So, I don't know if you got to--
10 it's got to be fixed somehow. Alright, thank you.

11 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you, Council
13 Member Brewer. Council Member Avilés?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you,
15 Chairs. Thank you for your work and certainly your
16 testimony. I'm sorry if I'm asking a question you
17 already answered as I got here after the hearing
18 started, but-- and I feel like I should know this
19 answer, but I do not. Does NYCHA keep track of the
20 older adult population across its development?

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes, we have
22 data on our older adult population.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So, how much of
24 the older adult populations are being served by these
25 centers?

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I think the
3 numbers-- Ryan, if you could talk about the numbers.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Earlier, I
5 talked about 14,000, 12,000, 12,686 NYCHA residents
6 who are being served by the centers. I contrasted
7 that with the number of individuals who actually go
8 to the centers, because they're hubs, yes, for
9 residents, but they're hubs for the community more
10 broadly, and there's some 42,000 individuals who are
11 served by those centers.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: How many older
13 adults does NYCHA house currently? So, I'm trying to
14 get a sense of-- are we serving five percent, 10
15 percent, 15 percent? Because my center doesn't allow
16 older adult non-members, and it's for older adults.
17 Like, the youngins [sic] are not coming to the senior
18 center to hang out.

19 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, there are
20 76,042 seniors ages 62 and over, and 64,710 seniors
21 65 and older at NYCHA. They represent about 25 to 22
22 percent of the population, respectively.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Got it. So, 25
24 percent potentially being served by-- and others.
25 Because I'm sure the centers are very different. So,

2 we have a long way to go. How do we-- how do we
3 assess? Like, I represent the community of Red Hook.
4 I would love to know how many older adults we have in
5 Red Hook and the mechanism to be able to touch base
6 with them, because we know a good number of seniors,
7 certainly after the pandemic, never returned to the
8 centers and are still-- some in instances homebound,
9 some instances just kind of changed. So, I'd love to
10 know like what other outreach mechanism-- I mean, not
11 outreach mechanisms, but what other efforts are being
12 made to make sure that we meet a certain metric of
13 being able to get beyond kind of a baseline support
14 if that makes any sense. So, how does NYCHA assess,
15 or is there a metric let's say per development that
16 NYCHA's looking at in terms of how many touches it
17 has with older adults?

18 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: so, we have
19 several programs that may touch households. We don't
20 have a mechanism per say to capture all the touch
21 points with NYCHA, with residents. We're building
22 towards that. We are in the process of establishing
23 a CRMS [sic] system. Overall, hauling all of NYCHA's
24 systems into one, and it could-- eventually we can
25 run a report where we have all the touch points with

2 NYCHA residents. We're right-- specifically, we can
3 pull the data on the number of households that have a
4 senior and then share that with you. We proactively
5 work with all the CBO stakeholders on the grounds, so
6 provide services to the residents.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah. I'll wrap
8 up, Chairs. Yeah, I'd like-- I'm going to follow up
9 with you offline, particularly in Red Hook, because
10 we love our Older Adult Center that's there, but we
11 know it is literally scratching the surface, quite
12 literally. And there's so many other adults that are
13 not connected, and that center does not have the
14 capacity to do canvassing and outreach. I've never
15 seen anyone doing canvassing and outreach for these
16 kinds of services. So, I'd love to dig in there
17 more. Just really quickly, in speaking of Red Hook
18 and that Older Adult Center. We're in a current
19 situation when NYCHA's decided to pull out the gates
20 that were surrounding the center. We have been on
21 calls with the Department of Aging with DFTA and
22 NYCHA, and now we are in a ping-pong because each
23 agency thinks the other is responsible for this
24 capital that needs to be done. And--

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]
3 Happy to report, Council Member. Don't mean to
4 interrupt you. We have resolved that. We will be
5 putting up the fences and working on the roll-down
6 gates. I think the first one was installed again,

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: [interposing]
8 Great, because--

9 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: and addressing
10 the doors.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I can't get the
12 gates down and so the seniors and staff, it's
13 impossible. So I'm delighted to hear that we have
14 resolved it. I thank you for that. It's not
15 something you hear often, so I'll take it on that
16 note, and I'll follow up with you. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.
18 I'm going to ask a few questions on behalf of Council
19 Member Sanchez who's with us online, but
20 unfortunately can't ask the questions because we
21 don't have quorum in-person. So I'll start with a
22 couple and then follow up. What specific actions
23 have been taken since the closure of Rain Bailey OAC
24 in 2019 to address the flooding, mold, and asbestos
25 issues?

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Right now, that
3 facility is in the process of being converted. I can
4 get back to you in terms of what-- NYCHA doesn't have
5 the funding at this point to fully rehab that space,
6 and after the conversion, the developer will rehab.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You mean they're in
8 a RAD/PACT conversion?

9 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. So, let me
11 just ask--

12 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]
13 [inaudible] I just want to confirm it's [inaudible].

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It's what? You want
15 to confirm it's what?

16 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: If it's Fort
17 Independence Senior Center.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Oh, Fourth
19 Independence. It's Rain Bailey.

20 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Oh, Rain Bailey.
21 Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yeah. But let me
23 just ask a question. So, for RAD/PACT conversions,
24 what is the process for OACs in those sites? Are
25 they all shut down, or do they remain? Like, do they

2 receive the same upgrades that the residential units
3 receive? Like what does that process look like as
4 far as OACs are concerned?

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, if-- when
6 the center is converted, it remains open with the
7 same provider. We don't swap them out. Aging
8 continues to fund that provider to operate the
9 program. If there are infrastructure issues, then we
10 have to close for renovation, then we will, and the
11 developer will address those repairs. Yeah, similar
12 to the apartments.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Are there any
14 projected timelines for completing the necessary
15 remediation and repairs to make this facility safe
16 and operational again?

17 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I don't have
18 that timeline, but we can get back to you.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. What are the
20 current barriers to setting such a timeline?

21 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Funding and
22 we're waiting for it to be converted, if it's the
23 Fort Independence. I just need to confirm the site.
24 So, I can get back to you on that one.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, do you think
3 you might be able to get back to me before we leave
4 today, or?

5 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Hold on.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What I don't
8 understand is the-- initially with the early
9 community engagement with a lot of the RAD/PACTs,
10 there were timelines given when the rehabs were being
11 done on the apartments, especially for those
12 developments that did like gut rehabs or in-place
13 rehabs, and I know there were some developments that
14 got-- were gutted, completely gutted, and there were
15 some developments that did in-place rehabs. The
16 timeline was given for the apartments. Why wasn't
17 there a timeline given for the community centers?
18 And also, even-- I know in Boulevard Houses we had a
19 situation where the Boulevard Nursey which was around
20 since over 60 years was shut down and they were
21 basically-- they were in jeopardy of losing their
22 licensing. We had to fight hard with the
23 administration just to get them back open, and it
24 was-- it wasn't to their own doing. It was because
25 the center needed-- was in bad disrepair. So why

2 isn't there a timeline set and pressure put on these
3 management companies to do the rehab and move it, you
4 know, expeditiously knowing that we're dealing with a
5 population of seniors or older adults who, you know,
6 when you move them and you take them out of familiar
7 places it can be a death sentence for them. I mean--

8 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]

9 Well, Council Member, I don't have those timelines or
10 information, but the Red [sic] Team [sic], our real
11 estate development team will provide those responses.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I hope so one day.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Just
14 continuing with Council Member Sanchez's line of
15 questioning. I want to be little bit more specific.
16 So NYC Aging said that there was an RFP coming for
17 this particular site, and Council Member Sanchez was
18 told the following criteria would need to be met by
19 centers. The center must show a daily attendance of
20 at least 75 daily attendees. This attendance must be
21 demonstrated historically over a two-year period and
22 with insufficient lunch funds and higher rent, the
23 center attendance numbers will plummet over time, and
24 given that this site Rain Bailey has been closed due
25 to building conditions since 2019, they will

2 obviously be unable to meet these criteria. Would
3 you consider them anyway given the circumstances for
4 the RFP?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: If there's an
6 RFP coming up, we would lay the criteria out. Earlier
7 I made reference to allowing for sites of various
8 sizes and participation. That would be one of the
9 things that would be laid out in the RFP for folks to
10 propose to. I don't want to get ahead of the actual
11 criteria because there's not an RFP and mislead
12 anyone, but in the last RFP, for example, we allowed
13 for various sizes of programs based on geography and
14 what they proposed. So, not sure where that specific
15 feedback may have come from, but happy to speak to
16 the Rain folks yet again, and walk through what the
17 RFP process is and how we approach it.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I think the
19 general concern obviously is that, you know, if the
20 center is closed and they have all of these, you
21 know, rehabs that need to be done on the physical
22 space, then they're presumably not going to be able
23 to meet the criteria, and we wouldn't want that to
24 preclude them from-- especially if there will be
25 funding coming we don't want to, you know, leave them

2 out and keep this community without the services for
3 much longer.

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Of
5 course, and I just want to add in the last RFP that
6 there were new sites that opened, so they didn't have
7 historical data on how many people attended.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right, okay.

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: What
10 they do is predict and explain why-- you know, how
11 they-- there's an older-- you know, there's a senior
12 building there and that serves-- or that, you know,
13 so many people live in. So they could provide
14 information like that. That's-- we definitely-- I
15 cannot imagine we would ever not allow them to apply
16 because they didn't exist previously or were closed
17 for a long time.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And in
19 general, what steps are taken to ensure that older
20 adults in the community of these closed centers have
21 access to alternative resources or temporary
22 accommodations specifically with regards to food.
23 The Council Member is telling me that people are
24 going hungry now. They're getting turned away and
25

2 they depend on the Rain Bailey and Tolentine food.

3 So, what can be done?

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Sure.

5 So I do believe that Baily is actually a

6 discretionary site. we will-- I can-- will double-

7 check that, but in general when a center has to

8 relocate for any reason or close, we always look at

9 what are the nearest centers and make sure that the

10 programs are sharing that information so they know

11 what's available around them, whether that's the same

12 sponsor or different, it doesn't matter. We-- our

13 goal is always that older adults have meals, right?

14 That's a primary service that we offer at Older Adult

15 Centers. As much as we can we work with them to

16 either send older adults nearby or find a temporary

17 location like the Fort Greene site. Sometimes it's

18 not ideal, but we do our best to ensure that they can

19 provide services in one way or another. If-- we will

20 also work with programs to provide transportation as

21 much as possible. So, some programs have

22 transportation funded through their Older Adult

23 Centers, so that's one option. If not, we will work

24 with our stand alone transportation providers to also

2 provide that as an option for older adults who maybe
3 can't get-- you know, it depends how close the--

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Yeah.

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: other
6 centers might be, or where-- if there's a possible
7 relocation site.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. If NYC Aging
9 had the necessary funds, would it fulfill the needs
10 of the center, the physical site needs of this center
11 in terms of--

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: In the
13 NYCHA site? I think we would work together to
14 determine what-- which parts would be our
15 responsibility and which-- there's a lot of different
16 things, right? The facilities, like roofs and things
17 usually NYCHA, but sometimes there's stoves or
18 different-- you know, depending on-- there's kitchen
19 things internal--

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Well,
21 with this I think it's flooding, mold, and asbestos.
22 So, if--

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: That's
24 NYCHA.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It's all NYCHA,
3 okay. I guess is there a possibility or-- to
4 revisit, perhaps, the agreement in the physical
5 spaces of the OACs? Because it seems like if NYC
6 Aging was able to get the funding to make some of
7 these capital improvements and much-needed upgrades,
8 it might be a faster process than having to wait on
9 the money from NYCHA and going through the typical
10 NYCHA process. so I'm just wondering, you know, if
11 that's something that you all would be open to,
12 number one, and then number two, if then NYC Aging
13 had the funding, would it then be willing to invest
14 in some of these NYCHA properties if, you know, the
15 agreements perhaps were changed or adjusted?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Bottom line
17 for us is we want quality centers that are great to
18 go to. How we get there, if there's the money
19 available, happy to figure out the best way to get it
20 to the ground and have things be addressed. The
21 challenge we always will think about together is it
22 is a NYCHA facility, and therefore, something that
23 might seem faster for us to do, we still might need
24 to do a significant amount of coordination with NYCHA
25 and there might be many-- I'm looking at the team

2 here-- many other things that need to be addressed.

3 So, if it's a funding mechanics and there are
4 pathways for that to actually make all the centers
5 amazing, I'm happy to have that conversation. That's
6 the short answer. How that actually plays out in
7 terms of, you know, executing, I think that's been
8 the place where we spend time talking a lot.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Fair enough.

10 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Maybe just add to
11 that. I mean, that's the strength of the
12 partnership. For us it's really how can we maximize
13 investment and how can we do or execute projects as
14 quickly as possible. So, we're certainly open to
15 other avenues, but as much as possible, we do try to
16 expedite for the reasons we shared before. You know,
17 we have to work with the centers, and so if there's
18 additional funding, we'd love to work in partnership.
19 But as shared, you know, many of these are in
20 existing residential buildings so there are
21 infrastructural issues that connect to the broader
22 buildings which make them necessarily complex from a
23 coordination perspective.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Are all OACs
25 on NYCHA campuses ADA compliant and easily accessible

2 for residents with mobility or other physical
3 challenges?

4 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: No. All OACs are on
5 NYCHA campuses are not all ADA accessible. But
6 whenever we can conduct renovation or capital
7 upgrade, that's always within our base scope of work.
8 so that's a big focus for us is making sure we have
9 funding in place for those residents so that anyone
10 that has mobility impairments is able to access the
11 centers. Typically, we upgrade the ramps or entrances
12 to the buildings. We're also looking at upgrades for
13 accessible bathrooms, facilities, and we'll make sure
14 that there's an adequate turnaround radius, that the
15 fixtures meet ADA compliance, and then some of our
16 centers are more than one story so in those we would
17 advocate for additional funding for a dedicated lift
18 or for upgrades to our elevators.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: What number
20 percentage proportion of the total OACs in NYCHA
21 facilities are ADA accessible?

22 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: I'd have to get back
23 to you with a number for that.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

2 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Any-- as I said, if
3 we're conducting a full upgrade, then we're adding
4 ADA accessibility.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right. I'd just
6 like to know if it's like half of them.

7 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Or [inaudible]

9 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: I understand.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thanks. What
11 resources are needed to make all facilities
12 accessible? Is there a number?

13 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: No, there isn't a
14 number. It's really a case-by-case basis. So, any
15 time we're working on the scoping we want to look at
16 the existing conditions. We want to look at access
17 and ability to get equipment into the space as a
18 prime consideration. So, you know, that can vary
19 from a relatively small dollar to a significant
20 investment, particularly if we're talking about a
21 lift for two stories.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Has there been any
23 progress since the last hearing in November 2023 to
24 your knowledge? So, like, has the number of

2 accessible OACs in NYCHA facilities increased since
3 November of 2023?

4 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: I'd have to get back
5 to you, but yes, for the projects that we've
6 completed, we've added accessibility for those. So
7 we have increased the numbers since 23.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you.
9 Can you describe the process that OAC staff must go
10 through to report a facility or maintenance issue in
11 a NYCHA facility?

12 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: The OAC staff
13 will call in a ticket. So, our CCC [sic] and given a
14 number with an appointment date, and if the property
15 management will address those repairs. If for any
16 reason the repair is not addressed on the appointment
17 date, then they can escalating it to Aging who meets
18 biweekly with our Office of Public Private
19 Partnership staff and we will address it with the
20 property management, and if necessary, bump it up to
21 our neighborhood administrator and VP.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: That's sounds--
23 sounds like a long process.

24 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Usually it's
25 handled at the property management level.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

3 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Once we escalate
4 it.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. What determines
6 whether a NYCHA facility-related complaint is logged
7 in the Older Adult Centers Metrics Report as required
8 by Local Law, and are outstanding complaints logged
9 or only resolved complaints and issues?

10 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: So, the
11 ones that are escalated, there's tons of tickets I
12 think-- I'm assuming-- that go in, and many are
13 resolved. So we don't-- we wouldn't log those.
14 However, the ones that are brought to us for
15 escalation are the ones we log and whether they're
16 resolved or not. We would keep-- we have a log of
17 those.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you.
19 OAC staff have reported that they sometimes can spend
20 hours navigating facility requests and are often
21 unsure of which agency is responsible for handling a
22 particular facility issue. Other staff have reported
23 that NYC Aging and NYCHA engage in finger-pointing,
24 seeking to assign responsibility for a repair request
25 to the other agency. Do NYC Aging and NYCHA provide

2 clear instructions to OAC staff on which kinds of
3 repair or facility requests are handled by each
4 respective agency?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: I'd like
6 to think so. Of course, it's-- you know, there--
7 it's not always black and white, but generally
8 speaking I think we've been pretty clear. Things
9 like HVACs, Aging has been handling things that are
10 usually larger facility issues, NYCHA. I think what's
11 happened in the past is there's some property
12 management that have done-- gone above and beyond for
13 things that normally the program handles. And so
14 when then they're told they-- you know, when it
15 becomes their issues I think that's sometimes a
16 challenge, but it's-- generally speaking, we are
17 pretty clear I think on what the program or Aging
18 handles versus NYCHA.

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Are written
20 materials provided to OACs on how to request
21 assistance with facility issues, and which agencies
22 should be contacted for which kinds of issues?
23 Anything in writing?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: No,
25 that's a good question. I think generally speaking

2 anything NYCHA, they are told to-- they should go to
3 NYCHA, and that's usually a discussion between
4 property management and the director. They have a
5 relationship as well. We do have regular meetings
6 with our directors.

7 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: How regular?

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Every
9 month I host a meeting, and so as things come up we
10 will address it and take questions. We can always
11 revisit the process. you know, obviously, staff
12 changes over, but mostly I would say I think people
13 are pretty clear that they can escalate issues to us
14 as needed, but usually the facility issue goes to
15 NYCHA, and I think NYCHA will let them know if it's
16 not something that the-- that they're responsible
17 for. Again, sometimes it's-- the program is
18 responsible, but that's not always clear. So, we can
19 look into or discuss a way to share that information
20 clearly.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Do you have
22 any mechanisms in place to ensure accountability on
23 regular oversight of these OAC operations?

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Oh, yes.
25 We do extensive assessments. That's something--

2 we're always looking at how do we also improve, but
3 yes, we go out twice a year. Our program officers
4 go twice, and then our nutritionists-- nutrition
5 advisors go twice and assess the premises. They also
6 look at records. I mean, they look at everything
7 that's in our standards. So it's a pretty lengthy
8 process. They also provide technical assistance so
9 that the programs are not surprised by anything on
10 the assessments. They should be very, you know,
11 clear what's expected, and so that hopefully they can
12 do well on the assessments.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And what about
14 emergency support that might be needed for vulnerable
15 older residents, how do you coordinate the two
16 agencies? Like if somebody shows up at a OAC and
17 then, you know, they need some type of-- whether it's
18 in their unit or, you know.

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Oh,
20 sorry. Yeah, of course. So then in that case,
21 usually the program staff always assists clients.
22 They don't-- you know, if they don't know they will
23 call some-- they'll call NYCHA, but usually a lot of
24 times our-- the staff at NYCHA sites will help the
25 residents make tickets if they're unable to do that

2 or help coordinate. That's a lot of the work that
3 they do.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, just thinking
5 about, you know, folks that have like medical
6 conditions and then the--

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
8 [interposing] Of course.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: you know. The
10 Department, you know, repairs that are needed might
11 have a direct impact on their health needs and all
12 that. Maybe they're going to the Older Adult Center,
13 you know, for help and assistance.

14 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Or even respite from
16 their place. And so just wondering what that
17 relationship is like.

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah,
19 no, they're-- I think they're wonderful advocates
20 honestly. I think the directors and the staff on the
21 ground will escalate to NYCHA, and of course, they
22 can-- even though our role together is mainly the
23 Older Adult Center, if there is a serious issue with
24 a client we can, of course, work with NYCHA and let
25 them-- make sure they're aware.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: okay. How many OACs
3 located on NYCHA property are currently in operation?
4 And do you have the breakdown by borough?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah. So
6 we have 106 right now throughout the five boroughs,
7 27 in the Bronx, 34 in Brooklyn, 31 in Manhattan,
8 nine in Queens, and five in Staten Island.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: 27 in the Bronx, 24
10 in Brooklyn.

11 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: 31 in
12 Manhattan, nine in Queens, and five Staten Island.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you. Do
14 you know if this number has increased or decreased
15 over the past five and 10 years?

16 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: I'm
17 trying to remember when the last RFP was. What year--
18 I mean, it could have changed with the RFP, but
19 generally--

20 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Are we
21 trending up, trending down?

22 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: With the
23 RFP I believe new sites opened. I don't know we
24 exactly how many were NYCHA sites, but we have
25 opened-- with the last RFP new sites were opened.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

3 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: And we
4 would have that. I just don't have that right here.

5 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. It would be
6 great if you could follow up with that.

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Sure.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And then what kind
9 of assessment if any does NYC Aging undertake to
10 determine whether a NYCHA location might be a good
11 candidate for an OAC?

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: You mean
13 during an RFP process?

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Right.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I think it
16 relates to the RFP criteria overall which is, you
17 know, you've got to show that you've got a
18 population, you've got the outreach, you've got the
19 partnership of the TA President and you've got a
20 people you can work with, you know, possible site
21 control and all the other things. And in terms of
22 quality we pretty much lay out what we expect in
23 terms of a program and what's required in the RFP,
24 the standards for operating a program are attached to
25 the RFPs typically, and it would lay out like what do

2 we mean about food preparation, whether or not
3 they're preparing it or they're catering it? So, our
4 evaluators look at all that information whether it's
5 NYCHA or another site and we'll make a decision
6 based-- we'll score proposals based on what they
7 submit.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, thank you.
9 How many older adults are served by OACs located on
10 NYCHA property? I think you mentioned that number.
11 How many of these older adults typically partake in
12 meal services and mental health counseling?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Have to
14 get back to you on how many are utilizing those
15 services specifically. I do want to just add-- so,
16 well, to your first question. The number we gave is
17 12,686. It is an optional question about to disclose
18 whether it is NYCHA sites. So, this could be under-
19 representing how many are actually NYCHA residents,
20 but we-- we would know-- we know how many
21 participants eat meals and how many use the mental
22 health services, but we can get back to you.

23 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, and is this
24 12,686 number unique individuals?

25 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Thank you.

3 What is the current ratio of staff to OAC members at
4 OACs located on NYCHA campuses?

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: So, that
6 can vary from site to site. Generally speaking,
7 there's always a director level. Every program has
8 different titles as well, but generally we-- there's
9 usually somebody who oversees the program and usually
10 there's also a program assistant or a assistant
11 director, something of that sort. If meals are
12 served, they might have-- or if they cook, of course,
13 there would be at least one cook. Some larger
14 programs will have an assistant cook or other-- or
15 kitchen aide. There's almost-- I think every center
16 has a custodian either fulltime or part-time, and
17 then larger programs might have more staff doing
18 programming. Some will use consultants. So, the way
19 that they structure the programs are little
20 different, but usually there's at minimum there's at
21 least two people kind of running the program.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And how many
23 facility-related complaints were filed by Older Adult
24 Centers and NYCHA buildings over the past year? And
25 do you know how many complaints were resolved by

2 Aging versus NYCHA? Like your-- you know, you're
3 saying you do this part. These are the repairs. You
4 do those repairs. So, how many facility-related
5 complaints were filed, and then how many were
6 resolved by Aging--

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: [interposing]
8 We'll have to get back to you with that concrete
9 number.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Do you have
11 any sense of the number of outstanding complaints
12 there are as of today?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: What I can
14 tell you is the ones that are escalated to the team
15 that we talked about that works--

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Right.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: on a biweekly
18 basis, there are about 15 critical--

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing]
20 Fifteen?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Fifteen
22 issues that are being worked through. That obviously
23 doesn't--

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] And so-

25 -

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: account for
3 like all the ones that are in the broader pipeline--

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Yeah.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: other things.

6 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: The 15 elevated, are
7 they at 15 different sites, or they're a few--

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: [interposing]
9 They're 15 different sites.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Fifteen different
11 sites.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Can you get us the
14 facility list?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Which facilities
17 are-- and do you know the nature, the general nature
18 of these complaints?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: I think
20 that they vary. Every site has different issues, so
21 but leaks are one we see a lot. I think sometimes
22 plumbing issues. I think those are two of the most
23 typical.

24 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Is it true
25 that NYC Aging has \$4 million in expense funds

2 available for non-capitally-eligible improvements
3 divided between cornerstones at DYCD and OACs?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: It is true
5 that the Council worked with us to have \$4 million
6 allocated to repairs. What we have accounted for,
7 there's \$2 million that was already spent. The
8 nature of the things that we spent it on-- you heard
9 Anya earlier talk about we prioritize things like
10 HVAC, especially since we operate cooling centers.
11 During the summer that's a critical operation for us,
12 and then there's \$2 million that is allocated to a
13 variety of things. I'll have to get back to you
14 things that are in the pipeline. So, that's where
15 the \$4 million is right now.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. Okay. Hold
17 on one second. Okay, apologies. At a hearing before
18 the Committee on Aging in April 2024, NYC Aging
19 Commissioner Cortez Vasquez testified that one of the
20 goals borne out of the Cabinet for Older New Yorkers
21 is to create an intergenerational team at each NYCHA
22 facility to support community building. Do you know
23 of the progress that's been made towards this goal,
24 if any?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yeah, so we-
3 - I can probably follow up with you on the
4 intergenerational programs that we've put in place.
5 We gave an example earlier of My New York Story where
6 there are about 100 young people participating in the
7 program with older adults. So that's a very specific
8 step in the right direction. I think it's a vision
9 for us to have intergenerational program everywhere,
10 right? In-- not just in NYCHA, but in all of our
11 programs, and that exists to different extents. But
12 I can get back to you around which developments were
13 involved, but I think Chair, that is-- the goal is to
14 have as much intergenerational programming
15 everywhere, NYCHA, public schools, and all over.
16 That's our default approach and that's I think the
17 spirit of what the Commissioner was getting at.

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great. And
19 sorry, I want to acknowledge that we've also been
20 joined by Council Member Schulman. In your testimony
21 you said that some issues may be addressed later when
22 they do not impede the safe functioning of the center
23 such as repainting needs or light replacement. I
24 would think that light replacements would impede safe
25 functioning of a site, especially when you're talking

2 about older adults not being able to clearly see
3 where they're going, especially if they mobility
4 impairments or use any type of assistance. Can you
5 maybe just address that or maybe commit to ensuring
6 that light--

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: [interposing]
8 Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: replacements are
10 prioritized in the future?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And Council
12 Member, I think the spirit of that is also to
13 indicate like, you know, there's sometimes-- I get a
14 lot of notes on these kind of things. The changing
15 of the type of light, right, to be more up to what is
16 appropriate in buildings now. Like, the light might
17 be there, but you might need to swap it out for--

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] I see.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: something
20 else. That's the spirit of it.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: It may also
23 be in an area where older adults may not frequent.
24 So, yes, of course, lighting is important to feeling
25 safe, seeing what's around you, and where there are

2 those cases that obviously is a priority, but I think
3 the spirit is there are some things that are like
4 change the lights to make it better, and I don't want
5 to get the wrong lighting. I don't want to state on
6 record the wrong fluorescent lighting that is
7 appropriate right now, but swapping those out would
8 be something that is important, but not in critical
9 today.

10 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I appreciate
11 the clarification. I'm going to turn it back to
12 Council Member Banks, Chair Banks.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Chair
14 Hudson. Can-- and this is for NYCHA. Can you
15 confirm that NYCHA's Asset and Capital Management
16 Division portfolio includes capital projects for
17 community centers and the ground enhancements?

18 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: Yes, we can confirm,
19 it does include community centers and ground
20 enhancements.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how much of that
22 funding went towards the Older Adult Centers in 2024?

23 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: In 2024, \$1.7 million
24 had gone toward the OACs specifically.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how much funding
3 has been allocated to the Older Adult Centers on
4 NYCHA property in the current fiscal year, and how
5 does that compare to previous years?

6 DYLAN BAKER-RICE: We have \$26 million
7 currently. That's spread over, obviously the capital
8 project, the life of the capital project, but that's
9 the extent of funding that we currently have.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Just want to
11 circle back on to some of the RAD developments,
12 particularly in-- and I guess this may be on the
13 service side, the social service side of the CBO
14 that's the sponsor of the senior center, or the Older
15 Adult Center. When a senior refuses to sign over to
16 a Section 8 lease-- and I know of situations where
17 seniors have refused to sign and have been
18 intimidated to-- or forced over to have to sign this
19 particular Section 8 lease. What is being done to
20 assist those seniors in a matter like that where a
21 senior is afraid to leave their apartment or attend
22 the senior center, the Older Adult Center, because of
23 this fear that exists, and they're being threatened,
24 you know, that their tenancy is in jeopardy? What's
25 being done to assist those seniors? You're not-- or

2 maybe you may not be aware of any scenarios like
3 that, because you seem confused.

4 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I'm aware of
5 scenarios where residents are refusing to sign the
6 section.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Particularly seniors,
8 that's what I'm talking about, older adults.

9 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Again, we have
10 Legal Aid that support the residents if they needed
11 clarification on why they should sign the leases.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. So, okay.
13 That's-- so then on the social service side, when a
14 senior, or older adult comes to a senior center and
15 you're made aware through the case notes that you're
16 doing in the senior center, what is done? What steps
17 are taken? And what-- is there any communication
18 with NYCHA?

19 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah, so
20 just generally speaking, any time a client comes in
21 and needs help with housing, right, we will-- the
22 staff will assist them either to put them in contact
23 with the right people, or even offer--

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] No, I'm
25 talking about particularly when it comes to a

2 RAD/PACT converted development, and when it comes to
3 a senior being confused or in fear of signing over to
4 a Section 8 lease.

5 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: So, we
6 can-- we can also refer them to legal services. I
7 don't think our staff is qualified to advise on
8 something like that. However, they can help them
9 through the process, make the proper referrals, and
10 you know, kind of assist them with it, but they
11 wouldn't be knowledgeable enough I think to walk them
12 through or to-- you know--

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Is it
14 escalated to NYCHA?

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Oh, yes.
16 I think-- yes. I mean, theoretically they should
17 escalate it to NYCHA or to us. It has not come to my
18 attention that that's been an issue that we're seeing
19 at the centers. I'm not saying it's not. It just has
20 not been raised to this level. I do believe--

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I have a
22 couple of--

23 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
24 [interposing] I'm sure. I'm not denying that it's
25 happening. It's just that it's not been an issue

2 that's been raised to New York City Aging as a
3 concern that they need advice on. So, my assumption
4 that they are--

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] It
6 should be a major concern if it's preventing them--

7 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
8 [interposing] Absolutely.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: because of that fear
10 of losing their apartment. They're not partaking in
11 senior programming.

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
13 Absolutely. We can only know when the clients come
14 to the staff, to the program to say something. A lot
15 of programs do out reach. Of course if somebody's a
16 regular member and they're not coming anymore--

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

18 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: I think
19 a lot of-- it's not a requirement. We don't tell
20 them how to run their programs, but I think many will
21 do that. You know, obviously there's a concern if
22 somebody stops coming. And if that's true, I believe
23 it's being handled at the center level, but it is
24 something we can, you know,--

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Yeah,
3 yeah. Obviously, it needs to be paid attention to.

4 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: Yeah,
5 absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Especially when you
7 have seniors who rely on--

8 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
9 [interposing] Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: the breakfast, the
11 lunch--

12 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
13 [interposing] Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: and the supper--

15 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
16 [interposing] We don't want anyone not coming.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: provided from the
18 center and they're not being able to do that because
19 of this fear, this frustration that their tenancy is
20 in jeopardy. They're afraid-- I know a situation
21 where senior's afraid to go to other door, and she
22 used to be an active member at a particular center,
23 and she just stopped because she refuses to sign a
24 Section 8 lease. That's--

2 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: [interposing]
3 Council Member, I don't if you want to share that
4 information, we can reach out.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We will share that
6 senior situation with you. When it comes to the
7 centers that are being rehabbed under RAD/PACT
8 development, are there inspections that are done by
9 NYCHA? When those senior- when the older adults,
10 when they're moved to another location, is there an
11 inspection being done of that particular location to
12 make sure that it meets the-- it qualifies? And
13 who's is that done by? Is that Department of Aging.
14 Is this collaboration with NYCHA? And these are--
15 this can be a center that I particular-- one
16 particular scenario, this may be a discretionary
17 funded center, probably just became a discretionary-
18 funded center. And I-- to be more pointed, it's
19 actually the Boulevard Center. And I think y'all are
20 aware where of the-- the situation at that particular
21 center is in, but the location-- I think I had
22 mentioned this earlier. The apartment that they're
23 in is-- it's not a place where they should be at.

24 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: So,
25 that's something that we would do. I wasn't sure if

2 you were referring to the apartments or the Older
3 Adult Center. If the Older Adult Center is
4 relocation, we do have staff go out to assess,
5 especially for meals. There are a lot of
6 requirements to serve meals. So our staff will
7 assist the program to make sure that they meet--
8 they're in compliance so that they can continue meal
9 service. I believe I'm familiar the one that you're
10 talking about.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, you would approve
12 of them being placed in like a two-bedroom apartment?

13 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: So,
14 sometimes it's hard-- space is hard to come by in New
15 York City, and so we-- no, of course, I'm sorry.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm aware of that.

17 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME: But we
18 do the best we can. So, the programs-- it's better.
19 Sometimes that's a better option than closing the
20 program altogether. So, of course, if NYCHA has
21 alternate space, and some cases that's been an option
22 where they'll move to those sites. In this case, the
23 program approach us with option, and so because it is
24 temporary, it's not something we would normally want
25 an Older Adult Center to be like, but it's a better

2 solution temporarily than closing it. That's the way
3 we see it, and a way to continue to have some service
4 rather than moving them too far away from where they
5 are, too.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I get the need for
7 continuity of services being be provide, but you
8 know, putting them in a two-bedroom apartment--

9 ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER HERASME:
10 [interposing] Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Where, you know,
12 little sunlight. It seems-- they're distant away
13 from where their old location used to be. The numbers
14 have obviously dropped, and obviously that particular
15 center was dealing with numbers in the-- you know,
16 from the beginning. You know, we go to do better, and
17 that to me is something hopefully that we can-- we
18 don't repeat that, because I do know that there are
19 other developments in the pipeline to be converted to
20 RAD/PACT, and we're hoping that this is not the
21 pattern of NYCHA or those particular development
22 companies that coming in just think that they're the
23 saviors, and they-- you know, they take tenants and
24 residents and some of our CBOs down a rabbit hole.

2 So we're looking forward to working with you on that,
3 and thank you so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you all so
5 much for your time. In just a couple of moments I'm
6 going to open the hearing for public testimony. I do
7 want to take a two-minute break. So we'll come back
8 in two minutes, but thank you all so very much again.
9 We look forward to all the follow-ups.

10 VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: And we'll follow
11 up with Council Member Sanchez.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, great. Thank
13 you so much.

14 [break]

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I now open
16 the hearing for public testimony. I remind members of
17 the public that this is a government proceeding and
18 that decorum shall be observed at all times. As
19 such, members of the public shall remain silent at
20 all times. The witness table is reserved for people
21 who wish to testify. No video recording or
22 photography is allowed from the witness table.
23 Further, members of the public may not present audio
24 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
25 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at

2 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record. If you wish
3 to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an
4 appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms and wait to
5 be recognized. When recognized, you will have two
6 minutes to speak on today's oversight topic of Older
7 Adult Centers at NYCHA facilities. If you have a
8 written statement or additional written testimony you
9 wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy
10 of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. You may
11 also email written testimony to
12 testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this
13 hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be
14 accepted. I'd like to call the first panel to the
15 table. Princess Benn James, Metin Sarsi [sp?], oh,
16 Metin, excuse me, Sarsi, Charles Madray, and Renee
17 Keitt or Keitt or Keft-- Keitt, okay, thank you. We
18 can start on the end here. Is that Ms. Keitt? Okay,
19 and then go down the row. The Sergeants will let you
20 know when to begin.

21 RENEKE KEITT: Ready? Okay. Hello, my
22 name's Renee Keitt. I'm the Resident Association
23 President of the Elliott-Chelsea Houses. In the case
24 of the Elliott-Chelsea house's potential demolition.
25 We're deeply concerned about the impact on our

2 seniors, particularly those slated to be the first
3 moved as part of the process. One of the proposals
4 as-of-right buildings is Chelsea addition. It
5 appears to prioritize relocating seniors. This
6 raises significant issues: isolation and mental
7 health risk. Meetings regarding seniors' relocation
8 are occurring without broader community knowledge,
9 leaving them isolated from key decision-making
10 process. Downsizing seniors and relocating them to
11 other developments is also a possibility. As well as,
12 if you downsize them into our development, we don't
13 have a lot of single-room apartments. We're built
14 for families. If that doesn't happen, they will go to
15 the PAC partners, that's Related or Essence or
16 anywhere they have, or other NYCHA developments
17 throughout the city. That leaves them in social
18 isolation. That is very difficult. That's mental
19 health issues. That's physical issues. That's
20 basically breaking social cohesion. As much as
21 people say this is about making a better community,
22 it leaves our seniors isolated, and of course, all
23 our seniors are not in the senior buildings. I live
24 with my mother as well. Needless to say, the mental
25 health challenges, the worrying about what's going to

2 happen is currently something that occurs to her.
3 One thing we can say, yes, there are Older Adult
4 Center, but Fulton Houses is actually a community
5 center, not just an Older Adult Center. So, that has
6 to be thought and brought in the mix as well, because
7 we also need our teens to be there. This is the
8 middle. You deal with the younger and the children.
9 You deal with the older, but we can't lose our
10 middle. It's very essential. This is the age when
11 things happen and they can end up in jail, and this
12 can begin the process. They need someone to care.
13 They need community programs, so it just can't be
14 used as an Older Adult Center. For Elliott-Chelsea
15 Houses as well, we are actually a center that
16 fulfills the broader community, not just Elliott-
17 Chelsea itself. So both these centers are very
18 essential for our seniors as well who has to go down
19 to Fulton to eat. So we're also dealing with food
20 insecurity as well.

21 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.
22 Next?

23 CHARLES MADRAY: Good afternoon. My name
24 is Charles Madray. I'm the Vice President of Health
25 Service and the community-based programs at Samaritan

2 Daytop Village. At Samaritan Daytop Village we
3 provide services to over 60-- over 30,000 clients per
4 year, and we actually operate the Woodside Older
5 Adult Center. One of the most pressing issues is
6 capital funding. The Woodside Houses are almost 80
7 years old and significant infrastructure needs that
8 our current grant and budget cannot cover. We've
9 been waiting for NYCHA to address the repair of the
10 air conditioner system or the HVAC system which would
11 cost us over \$200,000. This is beyond our financial
12 capacity, but it's critical in creating the
13 comfortable environment for older adults,
14 particularly during the summer. This past summer, we
15 had to opt out of the cooling center for one week due
16 to the system repairs. Without these repairs,
17 attendance will be affected, and the overall
18 experience for older adults will be diminished. Last
19 year, we spent almost \$50,000 in repairs from our
20 operating budget. Our agency has been subsidizing a
21 significant portion of our Older Adult Center budget.
22 Additionally, we face challenges with NYCHA
23 responsiveness. Delays in addressing repairs and
24 maintenance requests often prolong the time it takes
25 to resolve the critical issues, leaving our older

2 adults to cope with inadequate conditions. Better
3 coordination is needed between New York City Aging
4 and NYCHA. We respectfully ask for the Council
5 consider the following priorities: dedicated capital
6 funding, improve coordination, and support for
7 technology enhancement to make the centers more
8 engaging and accessible boosting participation and
9 overall community impact. I want to thank you for
10 allowing us this time to speak, and sincerely
11 appreciate it.

12 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you for your
13 testimony.

14 METIN SARCI: Hello, good afternoon. My
15 name is Metin Sarci. I'm Public Housing Specialist
16 with over 10 years of experience serving NYCHA
17 residents. From January 2023 to January 2024 I
18 designed and implemented the Community Relations
19 Program within NYCHA's Office of Public Private
20 Partnerships, created to facilitate, manage and track
21 over 11,000 repairs at over 400 community centers
22 citywide. The opinions shared in this testimony are
23 based upon my own experience. I do not necessarily
24 represent the views of the Housing Authority. In my
25 opinion, NYCHA's community centers are the city's

2 most valuable resource. They provide locations for
3 communities to vote, to organize, obtain childcare,
4 attend after school programs, and provide recreation
5 for our older adults. However, about 78 percent of
6 NYCHA's community facilities to find lacked upkeep
7 responsibility and no rental cost to support for
8 measures. This disinvestment has created spaces in
9 disrepair which has been spoken about today. This
10 has also interrupted essential services as was just
11 brought up, and it causes instances of partners using
12 their own funding to ensure compliance with city
13 contracts. If facilities with a combined 2.5 million
14 square feet were leased at the NYCHA standard of
15 \$5.50 per square foot, NYCHA would be producing about
16 \$13.75 million annually to meet that demand.

17 However, NYCHA currently operates with a \$8.43
18 million deficit to address any of these issues, and
19 that's after the annual \$2.3 million allocated
20 through the city's budget. I have three
21 recommendations. The first part of it is to leverage
22 partnerships with workforce development partners to
23 replace private vendor repairs. Currently,
24 facilities, a majority of them are repaired through
25 vendors which we've seen through multiple reports

2 what that has led to. If we look to our nonprofit
3 partners, especially those that perform workforce
4 developments, we could reduce the not only capital
5 needs, because we're looking at reducing essentially
6 any sort of capital repair in which there could be a
7 tie-in. And I'll use Council Member Banks' Brook
8 Ellen Center as an example in which we were able to
9 use about \$10-\$15,000 to do tile replacement, and in
10 doing that we were able to free up \$150,000 of
11 capital funding to for example replace the HVAC or
12 perform another capital project. So, it brings about
13 the importance of that. We'd also-- we should be
14 looking at grander scale things. In terms of looking
15 towards our nonprofit partners--

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] Sorry,
17 if you could just wrap up.

18 METIN SARCI: absolutely-- to lead the
19 capital projects, it just expands the net in which
20 we're casting. We've seen examples where Grant Street
21 Settlement over at 85th Street has raised \$20 million
22 to do a complete rehab of a NYCHA building, and we
23 should be looking towards those type of solutions
24 abroad. And the very last thing that I'll say is we
25 really need to look at increasing the contracts with

2 the nonprofits that are being contracted. They
3 barely get enough money as it is to run their
4 programs, and if the original thought process was we
5 weren't going to charge them rent to be in these
6 spaces, again, they're still using their operating
7 funds to handle repairs anyways, and we're not
8 getting anywhere to perform those repairs. So at the
9 end of the day you're only increasing the amount of
10 capital needs by not addressing the operating needs.
11 And because we have an \$8 million deficit, you're now
12 seeing the result of it as you're going through all
13 these tours. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.
15 Thank you all for your testimony. We're now going to
16 move to those who'd like to testify via Zoom.
17 Starting with Jasmine McFarlane followed by Terry
18 Campuzano.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 JASMINE MCFARLANE: Thank you, Council
21 Member Hudson and members of the Committee on Aging
22 and the Committee on Public Housing and everyone in
23 attendance today. My name is Jasmine McFarlane. I
24 am the Deputy Chief Program Officer at Lenox Hill
25 Neighborhood House. Thank you for holding this

2 important overnight meeting. I learned a lot. Lenox
3 Hill Neighborhood House is a 131-year-old settlement
4 house that provides an extensive range of social
5 services that improve the lives of over 15,000 New
6 Yorkers in need each year, ages three to 103. The
7 Neighborhood House serves 5,000 members in our NYC
8 Aging-funded network of Older Adult Centers, one of
9 which is located in a NYCHA building on the Upper
10 East Side that is designated for older adults. Our
11 center at this location provides three nutritious
12 farm-to-table congregate meals seven days a week, a
13 remarkable daily calendar of classes, services and
14 programming, and comprehensive on-site social
15 services. Being on-site, an on-site Older Adult
16 Center in a NYCHA building that houses aging adults
17 has proven to be a lifeline for older-- for low
18 income individuals who are often isolated and on
19 limited income. Our presence within a NYCHA building
20 has proven invaluable to both our clients and the
21 surrounding the community. However, like many of our
22 peers who operate Older Adult Centers in NYCHA
23 buildings, we've encountered various infrastructure
24 challenges that directly impact our programs and
25 services. These include recurring repair issues such

2 as flooding from apartments above the center,
3 unexpected water shut-downs that disrupt programming,
4 and the need for sudden closures due to prolonged
5 leaks and water shut-offs resulting in unusable
6 facilities. While we maintain a positive working
7 relationship with NYCHA staff and handle as much of
8 the maintenance and repairs as we can on our own, a
9 full review of the NYCHA Older Adult Center system's
10 expense and capital needs is required for substantial
11 and sustained improvements. The overall budget for
12 our aging programs already poses challenges to
13 operators, but even more--

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time has
15 expired. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can--

17 JASMINE MCFARLANE: I'm sorry?

18 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: You can finish up.

19 JASMINE MCFARLANE: Okay. Thank you.

20 But even more to those at sites with major capital
21 needs. New funding which demonstrates a
22 prioritization of NYCHA Older Adult Centers and
23 accompanying investment in capital improvements will
24 be welcomed. In closing, Older Adult Centers are a
25 safe haven for numerous vulnerable older adults

2 including residents in the NYCHA building above our
3 site. As we face fiscal uncertainty in Washington, we
4 urge local stakeholders to prioritize investments in
5 these vital center to ensure that they remain a
6 cornerstone of support for our city's aging
7 population. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you so much.
9 Terry Campuzano?

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Terry Campuzano?

12 Okay, we'll move on to Julie Sharpton.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Julie Sharpton, are
15 you still there? Sheila Glover? Terry Campuzano,
16 are you prepared to provide your testimony? You're
17 muted.

18 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Am I unmuted now?

19 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Yes, you are. Are
20 you prepared to give your testimony?

21 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Okay,--

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: [interposing] You
23 have two minutes. Please wait for the Sergeant at
24 Arms to call your time.

25 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Okay.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time now.

3 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Okay. The only thing
4 that I could think of was that when they're saying--
5 when the Department of Aging says that they're
6 working with the TA Presidents, that's not true in my
7 case. Everybody at NYCHA knows how unhappy I am with
8 University Street Settlement that we have, Hernandez
9 has, and I think Seward Park and what's the other
10 one-- Cobo's [sp?]. And it seems like, you know, if
11 you come to-- if you go to 189 Hernandez and then you
12 come over to Meltzer, you'll see the drastic
13 difference. There's absolutely nothing going on
14 here, and I've been trying-- even if I could NYCHA
15 back in here I'd appreciate it. They-- NYCHA, when
16 they left, they had 10 desktop computers here. When
17 University took over they threw all of those
18 computers out. They never replaced them, even though
19 that they're a nonprofit corporation. I told them, I
20 says, you can't-- the best way to teach the seniors
21 is on a desktop, not on a little-- what do you call
22 it, a little tablet. So, and somebody else mentioned
23 that you can't do virtual, because they aren't
24 taught. Oh no, that was me. Somebody was mentioning
25 about that, the seniors can't do the virtual, and I'm

2 saying to myself they can't do the virtual because
3 they're not taught. I have asked constantly for
4 University Street to get us desktop computers so they
5 could train the seniors. Another thing, I have
6 spoken to Marlene Shallow and she put me off several
7 times and I have complained to her what's going on
8 over here at Meltzer and how unhappy I am. Nobody
9 has ever contacted the TA about what's going on here.
10 I had found out that they just had signed new
11 contracts, and we were totally unaware of this,
12 because I've been working with another lady from
13 resident engagement, Leticia Garcia--

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time's
15 expired. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, Terry, do you
17 want to wrap up your statement or are you finished?

18 TERRY CAMPUZANO: No. Well, I would like
19 to know how I could-- what I could do, if I could get
20 another organization, even NYCHA. I would like
21 anybody to take over that spot.

22 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay, we will look
23 into it and get back to you, okay?

24 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Okay, thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Thank you. Thank
3 you so much. Now we're going to turn to Sheila
4 Glover, and before we do so I'd like to share that
5 we've been joined by Council Member Lee. Sheila
6 Glover, are you prepared to testify?

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Sheila Glover?

9 Okay, we're going to move on to Dana Elden.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: And we're going to
12 move on to Myrna Jefferson.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. And Rafael
15 Jaquez?

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: Okay. I'm going to
18 do a last call for Jasmine McFarlane. Last call for
19 Julia Sharpton. Last call for Sheila Glover. Last
20 call for Dana Elden. Last call for Myrna Jefferson.
21 And last call for Rafael Jaquez. Is there anyone
22 else in-person or on Zoom who would like to testify
23 who did not have their name called? Seeing no hands,
24 I would like to thank everyone including Chair Banks

1 COMMITTEE ON AGING WITH COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING 150

2 for attending this hearing and providing testimony,

3 and we will adjourn. Thank you.

4 [gavel]

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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 February 2, 2025