

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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January 31, 2023
Start: 10:10 a.m.
Recess: 1:00 p.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Alexis Aviles, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Ayala
Charles Barron
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Chi A. Osse
Lincoln Restler
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Julia Won
Joann Ariola

A P P E A R A N C E S

Jinet Tavarez (with translator)

Aixa Torres, President Alfred E. Smith Resident
Association

Crystal Glover

Eva Trimble, Chief Operating Officer New York
City Housing Authority

Sylvia Aude, Senior Vice President Public
Housing Tenancy Administration

Dana Elden, President Saint Mary's Park Houses
Resident Association

Alexandra Dougherty, Senior Staff Attorney and
Policy Counsel at the Civil Justice Practice at
Brooklyn Defender Services

Lucy Newman, Staff Attorney at the Legal Aid
Society

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a sound check
3 for the Committee on Public Housing. Today's date is
4 January 31, 2023. Being recorded by Danny Huong in
5 the Committee Room.

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

9 At this time, we ask that you silence
10 cell phones and electronic devices.

11 If you have testimony you wish to submit
12 for the record, you may do so via email at
13 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that is
14 testimony@council.nyc.gov. We thank you for your
15 cooperation.

16 Chair, we are ready to begin.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: [GAVEL] This meeting
18 is coming to order. Good morning, everyone, and
19 welcome to the hearing of the Committee on Public
20 Housing. I am Council Member Alexis Aviles, and I
21 Chair the Committee on Public Housing.

22 I'd like to thank you all for attending
23 this oversight hearing to examine the causes of
24 vacancies in the New York City Housing Authority
25 properties. This hearing was prompted by the

2 noticeable increase in vacant apartments across NYCHA
3 properties during 2022. From publicly available data
4 on the NYCHA website, at the beginning of 2022, NYCHA
5 had just under 500 apartments labeled as vacant. By
6 December 2022, that number had increased to 3,300
7 units. At the same time, unsurprisingly, there was
8 also an uptick in how many days it takes NYCHA to
9 turn over an apartment or to get a vacant apartment
10 ready for a new tenant going from an average of 120
11 days to 260 days. These numbers have real impacts on
12 current NYCHA tenants waiting for transfers or living
13 in buildings with vacant apartments as well as the
14 more than 250,000 New Yorkers on the NYCHA waiting
15 list. When any entity cares to do an assessment of
16 the wants and needs of New Yorkers and the housing
17 conditions they need and look for, despite all the
18 challenges and ever-consistent news coverage of the
19 issues affecting NYCHA residents across New York
20 City, more than a quarter of a million people are
21 still waiting to secure low-income housing, social
22 housing. This is the type of housing that our city
23 desperately needs, not more luxury market-rate units
24 at 3,000 or 4,000 dollars a month rent. It is this
25 kind of housing that will keep working class New

2 Yorkers rooted in the city that they built and the
3 city that they love.

4 An analysis done by the Council found
5 that this growth was not isolated to a single or set
6 of developments or in any particular borough but was
7 throughout NYCHA's portfolio. To show the widespread
8 nature of the growth, in December 2021, there were
9 151 developments with no vacant units, but in
10 December 2022, there were only 36 developments with
11 no vacancies. While these vacant apartments have real
12 impacts on those tenants waiting to move in, it will
13 also have an effect on NYCHA's budget. These vacant
14 apartments mean less rent collection and could
15 possibly have an effect on other funding sources.
16 This, in turn, would make it harder for NYCHA to turn
17 around and re-rent future vacant apartments which, in
18 turn, further exacerbates NYCHA's budget issues.

19 Today, I am interested to learn more from
20 NYCHA about the current number of vacancies and what
21 caused them. I want to learn about what NYCHA is
22 doing to turn around and re-rent as many of these
23 vacancies as quickly and efficiently as possible. I
24 also want to know how NYCHA tracks and manages vacant
25 apartments and other unoccupied units in their

2 developments. I would like to learn what the
3 communications protocols are in relation to vacancies
4 and how tenants and prospective tenants are actually
5 communicated with. Finally, I'd like to know how RAD
6 and PACT conversion and the impending NYCHA Trust
7 process effects and will effect vacant apartments now
8 and in the future.

9 I would like to thank my Staff, Christina
10 Bottego, Edward Cerna, James Neimeister along with
11 the Public Housing Committee Staff, Connor Mealey,
12 Jose Conde, Ricky Chawla, Dan Kroop, Rose Martinez,
13 Julia Fredenburg, James Wu, and Rachel Avram for all
14 the work that they've put into the hearing. It is
15 true that team work makes the dream work so I am
16 honored to work with you all, and I also want to
17 thank the residents who are fighting for their homes,
18 for a just and rational process, and have also
19 graciously shared their direct experience and
20 expertise on this matter.

21 In keeping with the tradition of this
22 Committee, before we hear from NYCHA, we will first
23 hear from a panel of residents, and I will turn it
24 over to Committee Counsel to call up the witnesses,
25 and, before we do that, we'd like to acknowledge we

2 are being joined by Council Member Barron. Thank you
3 for being here, Council Member.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll call Miss Aixa
5 Torres and Miss Jinet Tavarez. Please come up to the
6 table upfront.

7 Miss Tavarez, if you'd like to start with
8 any statement and then the Chair will follow up with
9 any questions.

10 JANIT TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

11 TRANSLATOR: I would like to tell my story
12 about how the NYCHA waiting affected me. My name is
13 Jinet Tavarez. I have three children. The oldest one
14 is 15 years old. He is bipolar and has different
15 mental disorders. My second girl is 10 years old. She
16 has asthma and dyslexia. My third one has autism.
17 With all the difficulties I had with NYCHA, I as in
18 two shelters, which is very difficult with my
19 children, and the oldest one was admitted in the
20 hospital in Four Winds in Westchester. I had to work,
21 but it was very difficult because there's no one to
22 come into the shelter and take care of your children
23 so practically you're in the street crying because
24 you can't find anyone to help you. Only waiting,
25 waiting for NYCHA, calling and calling, and all

2 they'll tell you is continue calling until one day I
3 went to Council Member Alexis Aviles, and I went in
4 and I told my story. Some people took really good
5 care of me, and they said that they would help me,
6 and I gave them the documents that stated that I had
7 already an apartment assigned to me. In spite of
8 that, they had me waiting, and the Council Member's
9 office kept sending emails and emails so there was
10 always a reason for them to say why they weren't
11 handing me the apartment, either it was lead or they
12 had to clean it, there was always a reason. The last
13 time, because there was just no more excuses of why
14 they weren't giving it to me, the Council Member had
15 to get in contact with them. If it weren't for her
16 and her staff of people, I would still be on the
17 streets. It is very sad that other people are going
18 through the same situation as me. Then the result is
19 that I'm suffering from depression, I have to take
20 medications, I'm doing therapy, but the problem is
21 this leads you marked for a long time and your
22 children as well. Thank you for everything and to
23 you, Council Member, for the work you do.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: (Speaking Spanish)

25 Thank you for your testimony, and I'm going to speak

2 in English, and I'll allow you to translate just for
3 the other listeners as well.

4 Thank you for sharing your story and for
5 your patience and your courage. I'm sorry that you
6 had, and we are working very hard. Thankfully you are
7 in an apartment now. Can you clearly for the record
8 tell us how long did you wait until you were placed
9 in the apartment?

10 JINET TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

11 TRANSLATOR: Even once the apartment was
12 assigned, it was on March 1, 2021, and they gave it
13 to me in September 2022. The other Council Member was
14 working with me while I was waiting (INAUDIBLE) and
15 they said that no, the apartment had not been
16 assigned yet.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Who called you? From
18 NYCHA?

19 JINET TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

20 TRANSLATOR: The shelter called NYCHA to
21 confirm because I kept saying I already had an
22 apartment assigned. They called to confirm, and they
23 said that it wasn't true that I had an apartment in
24 that building, which for me was very frustrating
25 because I as in waiting of that apartment so the

2 Council Member had to call with her team. They called
3 NYCHA to see why they had done that, but they gave no
4 explanations.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Did NYCHA ever send
6 you a letter or did they proactively call you around
7 updates on the apartment?

8 JINET TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

9 TRANSLATOR: No.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How many times do you
11 think over that period of time you called NYCHA to
12 get updates?

13 JINET TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

14 TRANSLATOR: I called every week, every
15 week.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Did you ever get an
17 explanation about why or why something changed?

18 JINET TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

19 TRANSLATOR: No, just to wait and that if
20 I didn't get the apartment then I would have to
21 recertify.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. (Speaking
23 Spanish) Thank you so much for your testimony.

24 JINET TAVAREZ: (Speaking Spanish)

25 TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Miss Torres, if you'd
3 like to give your testimony.

4 AIXA TORRES: Good morning, Council Woman
5 Aviles and the Council Members. Thank you for giving
6 residents in public housing the opportunity to speak
7 on issues that affect us on a daily basis. This issue
8 of having empty apartments not only affects residents
9 who are on waiting lists to get an apartment but also
10 residents who are waiting to be upgraded. I do have a
11 resident who has been waiting for over a year who
12 needs to be upgraded to an apartment, and the excuse
13 has to be the lead abatement. I'm now being told by
14 Friday that they're going to give her the keys, but
15 she's been waiting over a year and a half, and this
16 is a family of five, a working family, who really
17 needs to be in an apartment so that the children and
18 the parents are comfortable and their quality of life
19 is not put to a stress, especially during these times
20 of pandemics when you're supposed to have separation
21 and young children are getting sick, and they are the
22 most contagious. I can tell you as a former worker,
23 employee of the Department of Education I never got
24 that sick until I worked in a school building.
25 Children carry everything, and they call these

2 childhood diseases and rightfully so. When an adult
3 gets it, it can literally kill you. The other concern
4 we have with all these empty apartments and the rules
5 that need to be applied is that anybody that's coming
6 in from a shelter needs to be screened just like I
7 was screened or anybody else because today if there
8 is a grievance process when people have died and I've
9 had a lot of that in Smith, the next person who's
10 going to be the head of household has to be screened.
11 We have families that have a lot of issues, and they
12 need service. We cannot continue to take on everybody
13 without having the support services in our
14 developments to help those families. Sunday, I spent
15 a good 30 minutes looking out the window. I had four
16 police and ambulance, three phone calls from the
17 building across from me because someone was having a
18 spiral, and this is very common in Smith, and I'll
19 talk about Smith, but also we have mental health
20 issues across our district and I'll speak for
21 Manhattan South as the Chair of Manhattan South
22 District Council Presidents, I've had TA Presidents
23 that have had actually been physically assaulted, and
24 so yes, we have empty apartments but maybe some of
25 those apartments should be used by social services in

2 our buildings to help these families. We're not
3 asking people to be evicted. I know what it's like to
4 be homeless, and so no, we need support, we need
5 help, and I don't think that seven social workers in
6 all of NYCHA can really service the amount of
7 families that we have, and I would say that not
8 having these apartments with residents in it doesn't
9 it help the situation either because of the homeless
10 situation. Sometimes they'll break into the
11 apartments, take over the apartments, and people
12 think that people are living there, but they're
13 really not, and we've had those kinds of situations
14 across the board. I thank you for this time. The last
15 piece of this is that believe it or not for resident
16 associations, councils to function, these apartments
17 not being rented do affect the budget of the Resident
18 Council. I know for a fact that Smith Houses has 54
19 empty apartments, and they're different sizes, but I
20 also have families that have been waiting in Smith to
21 be upgraded, downgraded, and that has not happened,
22 and some families have asked, they have four or six
23 rooms, they've asked to move to one room, and that
24 has not happened, so I think that in the process,
25 there has to be a conversation with management and

2 with the resident association of how do we work this
3 out so that everyone gets to live in a decent
4 apartment, not withstanding the repairs that need to
5 be done in our buildings, but that people have a safe
6 shelter where they can live, and I thank you for your
7 time and for the respect that you have shown the
8 residents in public housing.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much,
10 Miss Torres. I have a couple of followup questions if
11 you would indulge us.

12 Under your long tenure as a TA President
13 in public housing, can you describe how the
14 information of vacancies is conveyed to you, the
15 frequency, what is the information that is conveyed
16 to you?

17 AIXA TORRES: It's not really conveyed. I
18 just happen to know because when my TPA funds, I got
19 the number, I said this is wrong, and then I was
20 informed. This is not a conversation that management
21 has. We have requested of NYCHA as a CCOP, now I
22 speak as a member of CCOP, to have every manager read
23 the 964, and if necessary have training because one
24 of the things the 964 to my surprise said that we,
25 the Residents Councils have to be included from

2 conception. I would say that sometimes that's a pick
3 and choose on managers, no reflection on mine
4 personally. I'm just saying. I did have a
5 relationship with my previous, may she rest in peace,
6 manager where we truly had a team and a respect. We
7 always didn't agree, but there was a respect, and she
8 understood the 964 because I truly printed it for her
9 and put it on her desk, and I think that made a
10 difference in how we proceeded after that, but that
11 doesn't happen.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In terms of the
13 communication that you've seen NYCHA provide to
14 tenants who are waiting to be right-sized up or down
15 or even tenants who are waiting for their units, can
16 you describe the type of communication that you've
17 seen under your long tenure?

18 AIXA TORRES: They have to constantly
19 call. Getting through is very hard. Depending on the
20 development, some of the managers, some of the
21 assistant managers are polite and professional,
22 others are just rude. There's a lapse of
23 understanding that we have a right to ask. Putting
24 aside confidentiality, giving me numbers does not
25 break anybody's confidentiality. I, as an advocate

2 for residents, when I go in with a resident, I will
3 make sure that the story is told and at a given point
4 I might step out, I might stay depending on how the
5 resident feels to give them that kind of privacy
6 because I think everybody's story is different and
7 some people get embarrassed. Even though I tell my
8 residents all the time, we all have crystal walls,
9 nobody has concrete walls. When you have a family,
10 listen, unless you're Jesus Christ, I don't know
11 anybody's that perfect, and so people have to know
12 what they want to share and not share.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Miss Torres, you
14 mentioned you notice because you monitor the TPU
15 funds that you depend on for the activities and you
16 notice the movement up and down, when you inquire
17 about why maybe your funding has decreased, do you
18 receive an adequate explanation about what's
19 happening?

20 AIXA TORRES: No, I was told that I have
21 54 apartments that are not in service because they
22 need to be lead or mold.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: That's it.

24 AIXA TORRES: That's it, and they're only
25 allowed to give us the funds based on the fact of

2 only the ones that are rented, and I said okay, I
3 understand that, but what I did not know was that it
4 was 54. That was not my impression.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: From the
6 communication, essentially 100 percent of the
7 apartments from what you were told at Smith are out
8 of line because of lead and mold. Is that ever
9 provided in writing to you?

10 AIXA TORRES: No. As I said, the young
11 lady that I have, she's been waiting for over a year
12 and a half. She has a family too. She's a lovely
13 young lady. It's a nice family, and she's been
14 waiting. She's come to the TA room crying because
15 she's been waiting for this apartment, and she was
16 shown the apartment that she was supposed to go into,
17 number one. Number two, it needed to be repaired, and
18 I'm not quite sure but I'm almost sure she even put a
19 deposit on it, I'm not sure, I have to clarify that,
20 I'm just looking at my notes, but the reality of it
21 is the apartment that she was shown, she said well do
22 you have a second one and then she was told no, you
23 have to take this one or don't take any, because it's
24 a high floor and she has three small children and she
25 wanted a lower one. There is one vacant on her floor

2 right now that would suit her which would mean that
3 NYCHA would probably save 300 dollars to help her
4 move or whatever, but it would save money and time
5 because she would just move from one apt to the
6 other. Historically, we used to do that where people
7 downsized, upsized on the same floor with their
8 neighbors so you kept your same neighbors and you
9 were allowed. The excuse that's used is the TPAC, but
10 the reality of it is that when NYCHA wants to bring
11 somebody in on an emergency or anything else, that
12 flies out the window, the computer system, which I
13 have reservations about, so it's important that these
14 apartments first the residents who live already there
15 are placed properly within the apartment that they're
16 supposed to when they asked for the transfers and
17 then when they bring in residents who might have
18 issues that they come in with support and not just
19 thrown into a community that then everybody has to
20 deal with the issues and the problems that they bring
21 with them.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Last question and
23 thank you. In your estimation, when you've seen
24 vacant apartments, I assume you're checking in
25 apartments. I've seen a few that residents have said

2 oh, it's been locked with all the stuff inside of it
3 for years including infestation of rats and other fun
4 pests. Have you seen that in your development,
5 apartments that have just been sitting vacant for
6 years?

7 AIXA TORRES: We have apartments that have
8 been vacant for years, but I will say this much for
9 the staff in Smith. When there is a vacancy, they
10 really go in and they clean the apartments. The issue
11 becomes if that apartment is empty too long,
12 especially with the homeless situation and anything
13 like that, people breaking the housing lock, going
14 in, and nobody knows, and sometimes people just think
15 that that apartment is rented and that somebody has
16 moved in and so who's living there, and that becomes
17 the issue, but in Smith I can say in terms of the
18 maintenance staff, any apartments that we have that
19 are over-filled is because the resident who lives
20 there hordes and that's an issue and sometimes if you
21 call management they'll try to call in social
22 service, but, as I said, right now as far as I know,
23 what I was told was that NYCHA only has seven
24 certified social workers for all of NYCHA. How in
25 God's name are seven people supposed to handle half a

2 million people? I was literally shocked. You have I
3 guess a supervisor and then one for each borough.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much,
5 Miss Torres. Thank you for the work you do.

6 Before you jump into your questions, I'd
7 like to acknowledge the Colleagues who have joined
8 us. Council Member Sanchez, Council Member De La
9 Rosa, Council Member Chi Osse, and Council Member
10 Lincoln Restler, and Council Member Won is also on
11 Zoom. Thank you and Council Member Barron.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you for your
13 testimony. I wanted to know because I'm sure we'll be
14 questioning NYCHA when they come up here, but you
15 said 54 in Smith. In my District, about seven or
16 eight developments, in 2021 we had like eight
17 vacancies and by 2022 it went up to 138 vacancies. I
18 wanted to know the increase in the Smith Houses, and
19 you said the family was out for a year and a half.
20 What reason did NYCHA give you for that year and a
21 half wait? Did they give you a reason, and was there
22 any discussion on why the increase in vacancies?

23 AIXA TORRES: I'll answer the second part
24 first because the other is really emotional for me.
25 The year and a half has been on lead abatement. They

2 haven't done a lead abatement on the apartment needed
3 to. Smith Houses is as old as I am. I'm 70 years old
4 so you know that when those apartments were made,
5 that development was built, there were no rules,
6 there were no codes so I know for a fact that on the
7 floors we have asbestos, definitely lead, and so the
8 apartment has to be put up-to-date and all of that,
9 but it's taken a year and a half to get the trades to
10 come in first to do the lead abatement then whatever
11 else they find that needs to be fixed and they still
12 to date, right now because I texted the young woman,
13 they have yet to get their apartment or the keys for
14 the apartment.

15 The growth in vacant apartments is at
16 least in Smith is because of COVID. I had double
17 funerals in Smith on COVID, and because I have an
18 alarming, alarming rate of 9/11 cancer, and I blame
19 the contractors that didn't do their job of cleaning
20 Smith when it should've been done. It's alarming that
21 in one week I had, five years ago, four women come up
22 to me. Since then, it's now grown to seven women that
23 I know who have 9/11 cancer. One of my board members
24 died of 9/11 cancer. She lasted 30 days from the time
25 that she was diagnosed, and for five years I have

2 been saying, so my anger is real, that the dirt and
3 the debris of 9/11 has been disturbed by the roofs
4 that were fixed, by the dirt that was never changed,
5 and it is killing us, and it's gone in one ear, gone
6 out the other. Eight years ago, I had open heart
7 surgery. My doctors feel that part of it is probably
8 9/11 because my heart at the age of 62 was like, my
9 mother was 89 years old when she died, and my heart
10 condition was the same as my mother which is 20 years
11 more, and so those are the effects. We were told it
12 was safe, but Smith, being the only development in
13 Ground Zero, has experience so I know that some of
14 those 54 apartments are apartments that residents who
15 have died from COVID or from 9/11 cancer. I mean it's
16 alarming, but it's a reality, and when you look at
17 those numbers you say oh my god, but it is that. I
18 know that, and I can tell you because we had a week,
19 my board, where we actually had to decide what
20 funerals we were going to, and we divvied them, and
21 so, yeah, that's part of it.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: First of all, my
23 condolences and you are to be highly appreciated for
24 your commitment in spite of the emotional trauma that
25 you have to be going through and I'm sure there's a

2 story like that in just about every development in
3 the city.

4 AIXA TORRES: Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I grew up on the
6 Lower East Side. I grew up in the Lillian Wald
7 Houses.

8 AIXA TORRES: I have family who live there
9 still.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right. It's not
11 far from Smith. We used to go up to Smith to play
12 ball and all of that so I'm very familiar with the
13 Smith Houses, and you just continue your commitment
14 and I'm sure we're going to get as much support as
15 possible from the City Council, but I want to thank
16 you for your testimony and then thank you for your
17 commitment to the residents of NYCHA.

18 AIXA TORRES: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Council Member
20 Restler.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
22 much, Chair Aviles. I really just want to echo the
23 sentiments of Council Member Barron. Miss Torres,
24 you've been an exceptional Tenant Association
25 President at Smith Houses. I see you everywhere. You

2 are always fighting for your community, and it's hard
3 work, and I feel the very real pain that you are
4 communicating to us today. I think about the many
5 tenants that I've lost in my NYCHA developments
6 during this pandemic, the funerals that I've
7 attended. It's been a lot, and we are very fortunate
8 as a city, the residents of public housing are
9 fortunate to have you as such an engaged and capable
10 and dynamic champion for public housing and improving
11 the conditions in public housing so I really want to
12 thank you for being with us today, but more
13 importantly thank you for the work you do day in and
14 day out, year in and year out on behalf of Smith.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much,
17 Miss Torres.

18 AIXA TORRES: Thank you very much for your
19 time and your respect.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: At this point, we'd
21 like to call the representatives of NYCHA.

22 We'll have the chance for more testimony
23 after the Administration goes.

24 Miss Glover, you can come up. Thank you
25 so much.

2 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Thank you very much for
3 letting me speak. I wasn't originally going to
4 testify, but I'll be quick. When I heard that this
5 was a hearing to examine the vacancies in NYCHA at
6 Washington Houses Tenant Association meeting on last
7 week, I put it in a chat that this hearing was going
8 to be taking place because I want the tenants to know
9 what's going on. Not only am I a former TA President,
10 but my mother was a TA President in the '70s so I got
11 to see how it works. Back then, management did their
12 job. You throw stuff out the window, whatever you
13 did, there was a penalty so the tenants didn't have
14 to have a TA back then. Management took care of
15 everything. Then crack came so that just blew
16 everything out the window. Our laundry rooms went.
17 You name it, it all went. These people were able to
18 sell crack in these developments, long lines I used
19 to hear about, long lines in these developments, but
20 anyway, getting back to the situation at hand. I
21 think you need to have some housecleaning here at
22 these City Hall meetings. Let me tell you what I
23 mean. When I watch you on the channel, 74, a lot of
24 times you can't hear the testimonies, a lot of times
25 you can't hear when the Council is speaking. It's

2 extremely low. I put it all the way up to 100. Now,
3 maybe my tv's just cheap, I don't know, but it goes
4 up to 100, and it's like you can't even hear it. This
5 is 2013 (sic). This is not the stone age so I think
6 y'all need to tweak it, whatever y'all need to do in
7 City Hall, do it because there's people who can't get
8 to these meetings physically so that's your
9 housekeeping homework. When you had the hearing for
10 resident engagement, I was hear. I didn't have my
11 paper with me. I emailed it to you. I never got a
12 response from you, and that was major stuff because
13 resident engagement has moved over to participating
14 residents in civic engagement and all this
15 (INAUDIBLE) they're just shuffling along and singing
16 a song, and so I try to come to these meetings so I
17 can know what time it is, what's going on, and I tell
18 the tenants, I share with them, I'm constantly
19 sharing with them, but I'm learning a lot by being a
20 sharer. They don't like that, so there's been some
21 foul crap going on, and it's going to be dealt with.
22 I can guarantee you that.

23 One of the last things I'd like to say.
24 Most people like Alicka Samuels and different ones,
25 when they hosted their hearings, they used to have

2 their opening statement on paper so I would
3 appreciate it if you could put it on paper maybe
4 before, because I can hang around to get a copy of
5 that. I liked it. That was an awesome statement you
6 gave, and it needs to be on paper so that those of us
7 that came can have a copy of it.

8 As far as vacancies go, I'm not the TA,
9 but I can guarantee you, sister, you look on this
10 room and see how many people are here that are
11 actually presidents, board members, and stuff, it's
12 empty. Not one person. Alicka (INAUDIBLE) Sanders
13 (INAUDIBLE) that's one person out of how many Tenant
14 Associations? This is what's going on. They're not
15 sharing information. That CCOP that she's talking
16 about, it needs to be eliminated. It needs to be
17 eliminated because it's not effective. It's a waste
18 of money. If I can get here, granted you've got
19 tenants that work, we got that, you've got tenants
20 getting SSI, tenants getting welfare, I don't care
21 what you're getting, you're a human being, you're a
22 United States citizen. I can sit here all day and
23 tell you the illegitimacy of what's going on at NYCHA
24 because we want to sit here and blame these people,
25 but guess what, the authority I was told that the

2 City Council's, they can question the authority, they
3 can have hearings to the authority, but they can't go
4 kick their doors in and tell them you have to get
5 out, we're going to drag you to prison because you're
6 not doing your job. Y'all don't have the capacity to
7 do that, and that's what we need.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Miss Glover, first,
9 thank you. Of course, my apologies around the last
10 hearing. I heard you. We dropped the ball there. We
11 will do better.

12 Thank you for the suggestions around
13 hearing testimony volume. That's important. The
14 opening statements, getting those on paper for the
15 residents, very important, and the communication
16 improvement, absolutely. We all have to do better.

17 The hearings are about accountability,
18 and certainly we know there are jurisdictional
19 challenges. NYCHA is a state authority that receives
20 a good portion of federal money. We have very limited
21 oversight powers over the agency, but obviously our
22 role here is to get as much information, both so that
23 we can improve the conditions of what we know is
24 happening on the ground. It's not to beat the agency
25 who is working on a daily basis. There are in many

2 ways some improvements. In other ways, there are
3 things that really need to get done, and we need to
4 do a much better job in so I really appreciate your
5 observations. We have to do better to get Tenant
6 Association Presidents and residents here. There's a
7 structural issue. We're having this hearing at 10
8 a.m. when people are working.

9 CRYSTAL GLOVER: I can guarantee there's a
10 lot of tenants that don't work.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: We as a City Council,
12 this is a structural problem for people that are
13 working in general. We have hearings during the day..

14 CRYSTAL GLOVER: As I said, I don't care
15 if they're on welfare, SSI, SSD, I wouldn't care what
16 kind of income they have, the information has to get
17 to the tenants. Can I say one more thing?

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Absolutely.

19 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Your opening statement,
20 can I have a copy of it before I leave?

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: For sure. Happy to do
22 that.

23 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Thank you.
24
25

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: My team will follow
3 up with you, but thank you and I guess with that we
4 will move to the agency.

5 CRYSTAL GLOVER: No questions from
6 anybody.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: The person that can
8 hold NYCHA accountable and really fire some people or
9 put some new people in place is a man named Mayor
10 Eric Adams so we should look into calling that office
11 and applying some pressure on the administration.

12 CRYSTAL GLOVER: First of all, I know that
13 you probably work very hard, but the fact that you're
14 chewing while talking to me shows me what this
15 Council is about, and on that note I'll be waiting
16 for a copy of your opening statement. Thank you so
17 much.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much and
19 now we'll move to the NYCHA team.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you could raise
21 your right hand?

22 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
23 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
24 testimony before this Committee and to respond
25 honestly to Council Member questions?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

3 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Yes.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Good

5 morning, Chair Alexa Aviles, Members of the Committee
6 on Public Housing, other distinguished Members of the
7 City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates,
8 and members of the public. I am Eva Trimble, NYCHA's
9 Chief Operating Officer. I am pleased to be joined
10 today by Sylvia Aude, Senior Vice President of Public
11 Housing Tenancy Administration, and other members of
12 NYCHA's team. Thank you for this opportunity to
13 discuss the status of vacancies in NYCHA
14 developments. NYCHA is a critical affordable housing
15 resource, and our goal is to get New Yorkers into
16 available homes as quickly as possible without
17 compromising the safety or quality of the home.

18 My Colleagues and I are using every
19 resource available to improve the quality of life for
20 NYCHA residents. In this vital mission and in
21 compliance with the 2019 HUD Agreement, we have been
22 focusing intensely on addressing the areas that are
23 of the highest concern for residents, including lead-
24 based paint, mold, heat and elevator service, and
25 pest and waste management. As part of this crucial

2 work, over the past few years we have been performing
3 extensive and required environmental work in every
4 apartment once they become unoccupied. Considering
5 that residents stay in their NYCHA apartments for an
6 average of 25 years, this is a key opportunity to
7 complete critical health and safety work in these
8 apartments. The amount of work we must do to get
9 these apartments ready for the next family is
10 represented by the immense capital repair needs of
11 our buildings, 40 billion across the portfolio, an
12 astonishing figure that continues to grow by about a
13 billion dollars each year.

14 I'd like to give you a few examples of
15 the essential work we are performing. Since December
16 2021, we have been working diligently to ensure that
17 all apartments are made lead-free under the City's
18 new stringent lead-based paint standard of 0.5
19 milligrams per square centimeter. Since 2004, Local
20 Law 1 has required landlords to perform lead
21 abatement of certain components upon apartment
22 turnover. NYCHA's policy is to abate all components
23 to make an apartment lead-free for the new resident.
24 In 2019, the City Council enacted new legislation
25 that reduced the lead paint standard in New York City

2 from 1.0 milligrams per square centimeter to 0.5
3 milligrams per square centimeter. The new lead
4 standard took effect in December 2021, and NYCHA
5 immediately began testing and fully abating vacant
6 apartments to meet the new standard. When an
7 apartment turns over, our Healthy Homes team conducts
8 a lead inspection using this new standard. If lead
9 paint is identified, the apartment is scheduled for
10 abatement. From December 2021 through January 19,
11 2023, Healthy Homes has cleared nearly 4,500
12 apartments at the new stringent standard with about a
13 quarter of those requiring abatement. On average, it
14 takes four to six months to complete lead work during
15 turnover. Once a work order is created for lead
16 testing, Healthy Homes schedules the inspection with
17 a certified vendor, conducts a quality assurance
18 review of the lead inspection report, and provides
19 the results, also known as a lead disclosure, to the
20 development. This process takes about four months to
21 complete. If the apartment is negative, this is the
22 end of the process. If the apartment tests positive,
23 it takes an average of an additional two and a half
24 months to have a lead-certified contractor fully
25 abate the apartment. In 2023, Healthy Homes is taking

2 steps to shorten this timeline, including adding more
3 resources to review testing reports, adding new
4 abatement vendors, and, most importantly, proactively
5 testing tens of thousands of apartments at the 0.5
6 milligrams per square centimeter standard so that
7 they do not need to be tested again at apartment
8 turnover. Since December 2021, NYCHA has proactively
9 tested approximately 30,000 apartments at the 0.5
10 milligrams per square centimeter standard and expects
11 to test an additional 40,000 before June 2024.

12 While the practice of eliminating lead
13 paint adds additional time to the apartment turnover
14 process, it also means that every resident will move
15 into a new apartment that is free of this
16 environmental hazard. Our work in this area is
17 transformative, an accomplishment that addresses a
18 long-entrenched issue and dramatically benefits
19 residents.

20 We are also required to ensure that vinyl
21 asbestos floor tiles are properly abated during the
22 turnover process. Asbestos work is performed whenever
23 there are broken or damaged asbestos floor tiles in
24 an apartment. We abate around 30 vacant apartments
25 each week to meet these requirements. Since December

2 2021, we have abated asbestos floor tiles in more
3 than 2,000 unoccupied apartments. On average, it
4 takes 55 days to perform the asbestos investigation
5 and 29 additional days to conduct the asbestos
6 abatement if the apartment tests positive. Notably,
7 Healthy Homes coordinates the lead and asbestos work
8 as much as possible to ensure those times occur at
9 the same time. It costs approximately between 28,000
10 to 63,000 to complete lead and asbestos testing and
11 remediation work, if necessary, in an apartment.

12 In 2022, it took an average of 236 days
13 to get an apartment ready, including the time to
14 complete any required lead paint work and asbestos
15 work. Considering that our average residency is 25
16 years, many apartments also require extensive general
17 repairs from years of wear and tear, for example,
18 painting and cabinets. This also factors into the
19 turnaround time, and along with staff and funding
20 constraints, it means that we are not turning over
21 apartments as quickly as we would like.

22 However, I am proud to be able to say
23 that anyone moving into a NYCHA apartment will be
24 safe from lead and asbestos. As noted, this extensive
25 cleaning process, along with the general repairs

2 performed, contributes to slower turnaround times and
3 longer waits for many families. NYCHA is a critical
4 affordable housing resource for New York City, and we
5 understand the implications of this delay. The
6 previous practice was to match prospective tenants
7 with apartments as soon as the apartment was vacated.
8 This left many families waiting far too long, often
9 many months, before they could move into the
10 apartment. Therefore, last spring we instituted a
11 policy change to no longer match prospective tenants
12 to apartments until the homes are turnkey ready. This
13 reduces the amount of time between when residents are
14 matched to apartments and when they can move in.

15 As of January 16, 2023, there are 5,964
16 unoccupied apartments out of 161,585 apartments
17 available for occupancy. This is a 3.7 percent
18 vacancy rate. This includes 1,662 apartments that are
19 matched to households. To place this in context, the
20 city's overall vacancy rate is 4.5 percent and 3
21 percent for rent-regulated housing, and NYCHA's
22 vacancy rate is lower than the national public
23 housing vacancy rate of 5.4 percent. Please note that
24 another approximately 1,000 apartments are
25 permanently off the rent roll and not considered

2 rentable. For example, they are used for NYCHA
3 property management and maintenance offices or
4 partner facilities such as resident association
5 spaces. To be clear, these apartments that are off
6 the rent roll are not counted as vacant.

7 NYCHA works with partners in all levels
8 of government to use every available resource to get
9 New Yorkers into our deeply affordable apartments. We
10 are grateful for the City's ongoing support,
11 including through funding for the Vacant Unit
12 Readiness program. In the current fiscal year, the
13 City has made 78 million available to NYCHA for this
14 program for rehabilitation work associated with
15 expediting apartment turnover. Additional funding is
16 also available in the following fiscal years.

17 While we understand that it may be
18 frustrating for prospective tenants to wait for a new
19 apartment, the work we are doing is essential to
20 providing a decent home for the quality of life for
21 their families as well as for generations to come.

22 We are always eager to collaborate with
23 the Council and other partners on how we can improve
24 service to residents and continue our progress as an
25 organization.

2 Thank you and we are happy to answer any
3 questions you may have.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much.
5 I'd like to acknowledge Council Member Ayala who has
6 joined us. Thank you for being here, Council Member.

7 I'm going to start with a couple of
8 questions that'll review a little bit of stuff that's
9 in your testimony for the record to make sure that we
10 are clear, and then I'll hand it over to Council
11 Colleagues who I know have to go and we can resume
12 our general questions.

13 To start with, it would be helpful to
14 understand the definitions NYCHA uses for unoccupied
15 apartments. On the NYCHA Metrics website, there are
16 three categories for unoccupied units, Vacant, Non-
17 Dwelling, Move-In/Selected. Can you define each of
18 these categories and describe who makes the
19 assessment to determine when an apartment changes
20 from one category to the other?

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
22 you for that question, Council Member. I do apologize
23 that I've been using different terminology here in my
24 testimony today than what is on our website so let me
25 explain how they relate to each other.

2 On our website, we use the term Non-
3 Dwelling Units, and that is what I'm referring to as
4 off the rent roll. We have two categories of off the
5 rent roll units, temporarily off the rent roll and
6 permanently off the rent roll. As I mentioned in my
7 testimony, we have about 1,000 units that are
8 permanently off the rent roll for non-residential
9 uses such as resident association space or NYCHA
10 office space, and those we don't count as vacant
11 units any longer. We have about 1,000, 992 to be
12 exact, units temporarily off the rent roll, and
13 they're temporarily off the rent roll due to major
14 repair needs more than what a typical repair would
15 entail, more like a capital improvement, as well as
16 units that we're using as hospitality units to
17 facilitate temporary relocations.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Could you repeat the
19 number one more time?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: 992.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: 992 that are
22 temporarily off the rent rolls.

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Correct.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And these are
25 hospitality units?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:

3 Hospitality, units that require major rehab, other
4 units that are held for major repairs so it's a
5 variety of reasons that we put it temporarily off the
6 rent roll as they await a change in status.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Could you provide the
8 Council with a breakdown of all these sub-categories
9 and...

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:

11 Absolutely, we can...

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And both the
13 temporary and also in the permanent how many are for
14 TA, what are the various uses and how many units are
15 for each use?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Happy to
17 follow up with that information for you.

18 That leaves with about 3,310 units that
19 are vacant units, and the vacant units are units
20 available for occupancy. In addition, I used the term
21 matched in my testimony, and in the metrics page we
22 use the term Move-In or Selected. Those are
23 comparable, and so, as I mentioned, previously we had
24 matched prospective tenants with apartments as soon
25 as that apartment became vacant, and now we are

2 waiting until the apartment is turnkey ready to make
3 those matches. Right now, we have 1,662 prospective
4 tenants that are matched to apartments, and that is
5 very near the Move-In/Selected data on our metrics
6 page. Also, please note that our metrics page is only
7 updated once a month so the numbers you're seeing
8 there are from December, and the numbers I'm using in
9 my testimony today are from January 16, 2023.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is there a reason why
11 it's only updated once a month?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I can
13 confirm that and check, but we expect the updates to
14 be available the first week in February.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I'd encourage
16 frequent updating. If not, what's the point of the
17 website? In terms of Matched, can you explain what
18 Matched means and if there are various categories
19 within which people fall into Matched?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: For that
21 question, I will hand it off to my Colleague, Senior
22 Vice President Sylvia Aude.

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Thank you.
24 Good morning, everyone. When an applicant is selected
25 for an apartment, we consider that Matched. There

2 aren't subcategories, but people can be in different
3 stages of that Matched process. They could be at the
4 point where they've received an apartment selection
5 letter, and they've been made aware that an apartment
6 is available, or they could be at the point where
7 they've scheduled an apartment viewing and are having
8 an rental interview with the property management
9 staff at the development where they were selected, or
10 they could be awaiting based on the previous policy
11 the apartment to be move-in ready.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: When does NYCHA
13 receive a deposit? What stage is a person in when
14 they provide a deposit to NYCHA?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Sure. Usually
16 that occurs at the apartment viewing and rental
17 interview if they accept the apartment. Property
18 management and the prospective tenant will agree to a
19 timeframe to provide the security deposit and other
20 rental fees.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What's the general
22 timeframe between each of these phases? Is that
23 tracked?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We'll have to
25 get back to you on the exact details of those

2 timeframes, but the apartment selection letter and
3 the apartment viewing is coordinated between property
4 management and the prospective tenant, and usually
5 that is coordinated with their schedules. It's
6 usually two to four weeks between the apartment
7 viewing and the security deposit and rental fees
8 being submitted.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: When a prospective
10 tenant provides a deposit, at that stage, what's
11 generally the timeframe between actually moving in or
12 receiving the keys?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Given
14 that we just changed this policy in March, we hope to
15 have that timeframe drastically shortened because the
16 apartment will be turnkey ready at the time of
17 viewing, but right now for 2022 our turnaround time
18 was 236 days.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The 236 is from the
20 viewing to moving in?

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No,
22 that's the total time...

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: That's the total
24 time.

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: To turn
3 around the apartment. Unfortunately, people were
4 matched at the time the apartment became vacant and
5 then had to wait through our repair process until
6 they could move in, and now we have changed that in
7 order to dramatically reduce that wait time.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I think we're
9 probably going to return to this because we've had a
10 good number of instances where people have provided
11 deposits and have waited an inordinate, more than a
12 year. Much of our staff time has been calling NYCHA
13 to find out why are there delays with no explanation.

14 I'm going to move on and just ask a few
15 more and then I'm going to turn it over to my
16 Colleagues. Thank you for your patience.

17 We went through the Vacant, the Non-
18 Dwelling, and the Move-In/Selected. Are there other
19 internal categories for unoccupied apartments that
20 NYCHA uses, and can you define them and provide any
21 other numbers that may be related to those
22 categories?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We have
24 no other categories other than the temporary and
25 permanent off rent roll as I mentioned and then the

2 general vacant unit status, and we'll provide you
3 those details.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is there a reason why
5 the terminologies are different from what is used
6 internally and what is provided on the website for
7 public consumption?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'd have
9 to go back and doublecheck on that, but we'll let you
10 know.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: As of today, how many
12 units in NYCHA are currently vacant?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: 5,964.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I think I know the
15 answer to this, but I'm going to indulge the question
16 just for the record. We just reviewed this, but if a
17 unit has been reserved for a tenant, they've been
18 matched, who has paid a deposit, is that still part
19 of the vacant unit count?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes, and
21 we have 1,662 out of that 5,964 that are matched. I
22 don't know if all of those matches have been to the
23 stage of security deposit, but 662 (sic) are matched
24 to an apartment so they have a letter that says they
25 have an apartment.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How many apartments
3 have been vacant for more than a year?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Out of
5 the 5,964, the 3,310 have been vacant for 233 days on
6 average, and 98 percent of the units have been vacant
7 for less than three years so the temporary off rent
8 roll which we have 992 units in that category have
9 been vacant the longest because they are in an off
10 rent roll status awaiting major rehabs or being used
11 for hospitality suites, and those are vacant on
12 average 537 days so that's average.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I'm so sorry. I'm
14 going to ask you to repeat that. I got lost in the
15 back and forth if you wouldn't mind.

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure.
17 Out of the 5,964, the average time they've been
18 vacant is 350 days, and that average of 350, you see
19 the range from 233 days on average for a vacant unit
20 and 537 days average for the temporary off rent roll.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay, I think we're
22 probably going to get back to these numbers because...

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure,
24 and we can provide the details. After the hearing, we
25 can send you that information offline.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Right. I think I'm a
3 little stumped by the 537 days that are off rent, why
4 are they vacant? What is happening there?

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
6 temporary off rent roll, we are using them for
7 hospitality suites to facilitate emergency
8 relocations. They are awaiting major rehab, usually
9 capital improvements. Some of them have been fire
10 damaged, and therefore require more extensive rehab
11 or awaiting Fire Marshall determination that we can
12 proceed so there are other aspects of the temporary
13 off rent roll that we will share with you.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. I guess with
15 that I will turn it over to my Colleagues. Council
16 Member De La Rosa.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you,
18 Chair, for this important hearing. I have questions
19 around transfers. We often get calls from
20 constituents about transfers, sometimes they're
21 safety transfers, sometimes they're transfers related
22 to health, the presence of mold, for example if
23 someone is ill. Can you walk us through the process
24 for transferring and how the vacancies play into
25 those decisions?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Thank you for
3 that question. Apartment selections are governed by
4 NYCHA Tenant Selection Assignment Plan. We call it
5 TSAP. It was designed to ensure that NYCHA process,
6 all of our housing applications, so applicants and
7 transfers, in a fair, objective, and non-
8 discriminatory way in accordance with applicable
9 federal, state, and local laws. Emergency transfers
10 and reasonable accommodations, so the medical-related
11 transfers, are a higher priority than other types of
12 transfers, there's some exceptions, but they fall
13 into a rotation with applicants so when an apartment
14 becomes vacant our Tenant Selection Assignment Plan
15 will make a match based on household composition and
16 the designation preference for that family based on
17 location and needs, and that's how the match occurs.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: What about in
19 instances where there, for example, is a fire? We've
20 had several unfortunately, one deadly one in Dyckman
21 Houses, when there is a fire and a family is
22 displaced, what is the transfer process?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: For a fire,
24 it falls outside of that process. For a fire, we
25 relocate a family to a hospitality unit temporarily

2 until the repairs can be made in their original
3 apartment. In instances where, as Eva mentioned,
4 there are extensive repairs that are needed and there
5 isn't a reasonable timeframe to return that family to
6 that unit, we may make a permanent transfer to where
7 they were relocated or another unit of their
8 preference.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you. It
10 sounds seamless, but I know from experience that it's
11 not a seamless process so I just want to put that out
12 into the universe that we hear complaints from
13 tenants who either are waiting for transfer or have
14 been given the runaround in that process and so I
15 want to encourage us in this discussion to think
16 about how we make that more efficient and fluent for
17 tenants.

18 I also have a question about rightsizing.
19 Can you sort of walk us through the process for
20 rightsizing and how it is determined that the
21 composition of the family has changed to the point
22 where they need to rightsize and how that process
23 works in terms of communicating to families that they
24 have to rightsize or they're in the process of
25 needing to rightsize. A lot of our families are

2 nontraditional. You have grandparents raising
3 grandchildren. You have children that are in the
4 foster care system. You have so many different
5 realities that these families face, and sometimes
6 when folks are asked to rightsize or downsize it can
7 cause chaos, especially when there isn't a lot of
8 information as to where they're supposed to go. Can
9 you walk us through that process? Thank you, Chair.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: I'll start
11 with the household composition piece. It's very
12 important for the household to report to NYCHA any
13 changes in their household composition through an
14 annual recertification or an interim recertification,
15 and that includes children coming into the household
16 or adults being added, most importantly for health
17 and safety reasons but also for appropriate apartment
18 sizes. In instances in the scenario that you
19 explained, a grandparent taking on a grandchild as a
20 guardian, if they, for instance, are in a senior
21 building and they no longer qualify to be a senior
22 building because there are children or younger adults
23 in the household, that would fall into a transfer
24 request for no eligible to be in a senior building
25 and that has a specific priority for a transfer. In

2 instances where the bedroom size of the apartment,
3 let's say they've only reported two adults in a
4 three-bedroom apartment, that's over-occupied, so in
5 that instance, property management will have a
6 conversation with the tenant to say you are required
7 to rightsize, but if there are other household
8 members that NYCHA is not aware of, it's difficult
9 for NYCHA to say you don't need to do that unless we
10 are aware of the additional household members so it
11 is very important and also a requirement for the
12 households to report the proper household
13 composition.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Just one quick
15 followup. I've had cases, for example, where a family
16 has two children, they grow, they're not 17, it's a
17 boy and a girl, and they don't want them to be in the
18 same room, how is that situation considered when a
19 unit becomes vacant in the development, in the
20 complex, would that family be eligible for a
21 transfer?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: They have to
23 request it. NYCHA will not proactively reach out to
24 the household to propose a transfer to a larger
25 apartment. They can request for a transfer to a

2 larger apartment. There are several different
3 priorities for all the different transfer types. That
4 doesn't fall higher than a safety or emergency
5 transfer or a medical transfer.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council
7 Member. I'd like to just ask one quick followup
8 question on this notion of emergency transfers or
9 priority list. There's a specific case where we have
10 a one-bedroom apartment, three disabled seniors,
11 clearly it's an overcrowded unit. The unit has been
12 without gas for months. Does NYCHA consider this
13 situation to be an emergency?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: It doesn't
15 fall under our Established Tenant Selection
16 Assignment Plan, but in that situation without
17 knowing additional details, if escalated, that's
18 something that we would look to relocate the family
19 temporarily while any issues in the apartment were
20 addressed. If there's a medical need, there would
21 definitely be a reasonable accommodation transfer
22 that could be created for that family to get them
23 rightsized into the proper apartment.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So this is an actual
25 case that we've been dealing with for well over a

2 year. The requests for transfer go in. They sit on
3 it. They were offered an apartment in a building that
4 the resident just did not want to entertain because
5 of a whole host of reasons but still stuck in a
6 waiting pattern. There are medical issues clearly
7 with three disabled adults in an apartment that is
8 overcrowded where they don't have access to the
9 things that they need and without gas for months and
10 months on end.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Council
12 Member, I'd appreciate it after this hearing we
13 follow up specifically on that case and see what we
14 can do to accommodate that household.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Absolutely. We have a
16 long train of communication with NYCHA on this
17 particular case. I'd like to pass it over to Council
18 Member Chi Osse.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Thank you, Chair
20 Aviles, and hello to members of the administration.

21 I guess the first question I want to ask
22 is aside from RAD/PACT and lead abatement, are there
23 any other reasons in which there are vacancies within
24 these NYCHA developments, and what are some of those
25 reasons?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: In
3 addition to lead and asbestos work, the apartments
4 still need significant general repairs so, as I
5 mentioned, many of the apartments had been occupied
6 for 25 years, experienced significant wear and tear
7 that many of our apartments have, and so they still
8 need repairs from many of the skilled trades,
9 painting, plastering, carpentry, sometimes new
10 cabinets, and that work is performed mostly by NYCHA
11 staff, and that work competes with work in occupied
12 units so we understand the need to fill these
13 vacancies as fast as possible and so we are working
14 as fast as we can with the resources that we have.
15 Overall, we're turning over between 150 and 200 units
16 a month at the pace that we're working right now.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: What is the
18 headcount at NYCHA for personnel working on
19 reoccupying these units, doing all of these repairs,
20 including staff who are enrolling formerly homeless
21 people into the NYCHA system and those tackling the
22 NYCHA waitlist?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: There's
24 no one unit that's handling that. Most of that work
25 is being done by the individual properties. We have

2 138 different property management offices across the
3 five boroughs, and the skilled trades report within
4 their neighborhood or within their development so
5 that work is performed by all of our operations staff
6 as needed.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Would you think that
8 if there was a unit that particularly focused on
9 filling on those vacancies that there would be a more
10 efficient way of getting folks into those apartments?

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: What we
12 have started doing to address that concern is we have
13 used the Vacant Readiness Program, which is funding
14 provided by the City to hire vendors to help approach
15 this a little bit more efficiently so most of the
16 work performed under the Vacant Readiness Program has
17 been through vendors that have come in to do that
18 general repair work, and that has been able to allow
19 us to keep our skilled trades working on occupied
20 apartment rehabs.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Okay, and I have
22 some District-specific questions as well. According
23 to the data, there was a jump in vacancies at Marcy
24 Houses where there were less than six vacancies for
25 six months in 2022 to then having a jump in vacancies

2 starting in July 2022 with Marcy now having 24 vacant
3 units. We are also seeing similar trends in Albany,
4 Sumner, and Tompkins where the vacancies were in the
5 single digits and then jumped into the double digits
6 in the later or latter half of the year. What is the
7 explanation behind that and why are units becoming
8 more vacant at the back end of the year?

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: In 2022,
10 we did see an increase in the number of vacant units
11 across many of our developments as the Council Member
12 mentioned in her opening statement so it's not just
13 specific just to yours though we will follow up on
14 your specific cases. Most of that was due to the fact
15 that starting in 2022 following the December 2021
16 change in the lead requirement, we had to retest and
17 start working at the new 0.5 level for lead, and that
18 is the first step in our process. That testing also
19 required for us to rework with all of our vendors so
20 they were prepared to do that work. We required new
21 XRF machines to do the lead testing so as we were
22 gearing up, it was a slow start in 2022 that then
23 picked up at the end of the year. In addition, we
24 changed our policy so 2022 was a different year for
25 us for department turnovers as we were adapting to

2 the new lead standard and then we did get the money
3 from the City for the Vacant Readiness in order to
4 have those contractors come on board, but we still
5 needed to go through the (INAUDIBLE) process, get
6 those contractors on board, in hopes of catching up,
7 and I think, as I said, now as we're doing 150 to 200
8 units a month, we are starting to catch up on that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: All right. I have
10 one more question, Chair. Is that okay? Obviously, I
11 represent a rapidly gentrifying community, and NYCHA
12 is one of the only forms of affordable housing for
13 many of the residents that are trying to stay within
14 the community, and I wanted to ask how is the agency
15 selecting tenants for these units that have been
16 repaired, have been through the lead abatement, do
17 residents of a neighborhood get first consideration
18 or is it through the regular process in terms of how
19 tenants become tenants?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: As I
21 mentioned, NYCHA uses the Tenant Selection Assignment
22 Plan to match vacant units to folks that are on the
23 waitlist.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Okay. Thanks.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council
3 Member Osse. We'd like to recognize we've been joined
4 by Council Member Rafael Salamanca. Thank you,
5 Council Member. Now, Council Member Restler.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
7 much, Chair Aviles. I have to say you consistently
8 hold hearings on exactly the topics we need to be
9 engaging on, and I really appreciate your leadership.
10 I will just first also say, Chief Operating Officer
11 Trimble, greatly appreciate your many years of
12 service to our city and have enormous empathy for the
13 team at NYCHA who face extraordinary challenges. You
14 mentioned the 40 billion dollar physical needs
15 assessment and the capital needs that we know so
16 well, but it's an agency that has suffered from
17 decade upon decade of profound underfunding and folks
18 are trying, which I appreciate, but at the end of the
19 day it's our job to provide oversight on the outcomes
20 and when I look through this math and I like to make
21 it as simple as I can for myself with this data I am
22 outraged. To see the vacancy rate increase sixfold in
23 Mayor Adams' first year in office, to see the number
24 of units that are in the under renovation/non-
25 dwelling category increase by 60 percent, to see the

2 number of apartments where we've even just identified
3 a family for move in decrease by a third in just one
4 year is profoundly troubling, and I'm going to quote
5 the Mayor, some which he did at his preliminary
6 budget statement, he said "some will argue that
7 Vacancy Reduction results in agencies not being able
8 to do their jobs. Don't believe them." I believe
9 them. I believe them. I know they are right. If you
10 want to tell the 70,000 people who are in shelter who
11 are desperately in need of these NYCHA apartments, I
12 believe they are right. If you want to talk about the
13 tens of thousands of people that are desperately
14 waiting for decades on the NYCHA waiting list, I
15 believe them. They are right. Our inability to
16 properly staff NYCHA is hurting families who need
17 housing. We could move 10,000 people out of our
18 homeless shelters immediately if we fixed up these
19 apartments and got this work done so for me the focus
20 is the failure of NYCHA to hire, the failure of every
21 agency in this administration to hire. We cannot do
22 our jobs, we are failing the people who depend on
23 these services the most. You gave thoughtful answers
24 and explanations on shifts in lead paint policy and
25 shifts in how you're linking new families to

2 apartments, but to me the critical question is NYCHA
3 staffing so could you give us some insight, how many
4 people are working at NYCHA today overall?

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'd have
6 to get back to you with the exact numbers. I don't
7 want to misspeak. I believe our current headcount is
8 in the range of 12,000, but we will follow up with
9 the exact number for you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'd like to
11 follow up on the total headcount and the headcount
12 that work on turnover and the units for turnover. We
13 in the past in the de Blasio administration had
14 dedicated specialized teams that focused on turnover
15 to fix up apartments so that we could avoid these
16 unacceptable and egregious delays, and if NYCHA
17 doesn't have the internal capacity because of the
18 gazillion challenges you all face, then HPD and DOB
19 and FDNY and DCAS and every city agency should be
20 lending capacity and focusing resources on fixing up
21 NYCHA apartments so that 10,000 people can move out
22 of homeless shelters instead of, as you explained, a
23 13-month delay before the 3,300 apartments that are
24 currently vacant are going to be fully brought online
25 because you're doing it at 250 units a month so we

2 have 3,300 units offline, fixing them up at 250 a
3 month, March of 2024 I will be a 40-year-old, and
4 while I'm looking forward to that birthday, we
5 shouldn't have to wait that long.

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I don't
7 disagree with some of your sentiments there, Council
8 Member, and if you were to do the math on our average
9 cost of 45,000 a unit in the Vacant Readiness
10 Program, which we are using the contractors
11 specialized and focused for this, it would cost about
12 260 million dollars to fix these units.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Help me for a
14 second. Capital spending or non-capital spending.

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Non-
16 capital spending.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: This is expense.
18 And how much per unit?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We're
20 averaging 45,000.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 45,000?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: It
23 ranges from 20,000 to 60,000.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I realize that
25 that's a big number, but do you know what else is a

2 big number? We spend a comparable amount to keep a
3 family in homeless shelters every single year so to
4 spend that same amount of money to keep people stuck
5 in a homeless shelter in often unacceptable
6 conditions versus providing them with a permanent
7 home, I'd rather fix up the apartments and provide
8 permanent housing.

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I would
10 agree with you, and I'd appreciate the support. We've
11 had a tremendous relationship with this Council as
12 well with the administration and the partner agencies
13 including OMB to focus on this priority.

14 I also want to add there are some
15 nuances...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I don't believe
17 it. I hear from every single agency that they are
18 blocked at every turn by OMB when it comes to hiring
19 so we want to see a breakdown not just of where you
20 are today but what the trajectory is that you've
21 experienced on this hiring over the past years. I
22 know that DOB and HPD have no staff to spare right
23 now. The former resources that when you were in a
24 leadership role at HPD, you could provide support and
25 lend and help NYCHA so that they would have resources

2 to fix up these apartments, they don't have any extra
3 staff. They've been cut to the bone so we need to
4 understand the trajectory of NYCHA staffing and the
5 folks that work on these projects so that we can
6 provide the rigorous oversight and we can fight in
7 this budget to make sure that these apartments are
8 brought online because this is a crisis that is
9 created by this administration and their failure to
10 fix up the apartments. It is absolutely unacceptable
11 that in just 12 months under Mayor Adams' leadership
12 we have seen a sixfold increase in the number of
13 vacant apartments in New York City public housing. It
14 is unacceptable. We should fix it in this budget.
15 Thank you.

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
17 you. I appreciate your advocacy on our behalf.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council
19 Member. Next, Council Member Ayala.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I don't know that I
21 want to follow that. I don't have the same level of
22 enthusiasm. I only had one cup of coffee this
23 morning.

24 Kind of piggybacking off of what Council
25 Member Restler was saying, in the preliminary budget

2 we saw that there was a cut to the unit that is
3 tasked with repairing vacant units and making them
4 habitable, rentable. Is that going to slow down your
5 ability to rent those units?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We don't
7 believe we're going to see any impact in this Fiscal
8 Year. We are on target to turn over 2,283 apartments
9 as part of the Vacant Readiness Program for this
10 Fiscal Year regardless of any cuts in the budget.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay. Out of those
12 2,280 units, you mentioned you had 5,900 vacancies?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: A little bit over
15 5,900 vacancies. Can you explain, I'm a little bit
16 confused and a little bit concerned about what's
17 going to happen with the Trust because my
18 understanding is that differently than how we have
19 been PACT and RAD where the repairs are made with a
20 family still in place that through the Trust plan,
21 families are going to be required to move out of
22 their units anywhere between eight months and five
23 years. We have 2,500 units that have been approved so
24 far. How is NYCHA preparing to move those families
25 over when the vacancy rate is so low?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Our goal
3 is to keep families in their community as much as
4 possible so the goal would be to use vacant units
5 within the developments that vote into the Trust to
6 facilitate those relocations and keep them close to
7 their current communities.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I'm looking at the
9 vacancy rates in my District, and I don't see how
10 NYCHA would be able to do that. These numbers are
11 relatively low in terms of the number of vacant
12 units.

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We still have
14 to see the developments that choose to go through the
15 Trust, and we're happy to talk more with you about
16 that process as we get closer. Obviously, we're
17 waiting to see who votes into the Trust, and we'll
18 work with those developments and those families to
19 keep them in their communities as part of the process
20 as much as possible.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Is NYCHA starting
22 to reserve units as of now in preparation for the
23 Trust?

24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We're
25 evaluating all of our vacancies right now obviously

2 with these competing demands to house everyone, and
3 we also are talking to many residents and resident
4 leaders across the city about their interest in the
5 Trust so we have to see who in the end will vote in.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I'm not in any way,
7 shape, or form saying that I approve of the Trust. I
8 want to make that very clear. I'm just curious
9 because looking at the vacancy rate and comparing
10 that to the number of units that had been approved,
11 it seems to me like we're going to probably run into
12 a brick wall at some point.

13 My final question is, I think you
14 answered that question which is what was the number
15 of estimated new applicant move-ins which you said
16 250 a year move-ins?

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We're
18 turning over units at about 150 to 200 a month.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, so do you
20 know what the estimated number of new applicant move-
21 ins is per year?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: In 2022,
23 we moved in approximately 1,880 households.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: 1,880 households?
25 That's great. Last question. Sorry. I've been

1 thinking about this. The eligibility for individuals
2 living in shelter, they used to have first priority
3 then under the Bloomberg administration that policy
4 shifted so that they would have some priority but
5 basically they were priority 8, which meant they were
6 never going to get called. Has that changed and has
7 there been any conversation about changing that to
8 ensure that families that are in shelter get first
9 priority for those vacant units?
10

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: The priority
12 did not change under the de Blasio administration. I
13 mean it wasn't reduced; it was elevated so..

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: No, it was under
15 Bloomberg that it was..

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Under de
17 Blasio in 2014, the Families Experiencing
18 Homelessness priority as referred by DHS have an N0
19 priority or a W0 priority if they're a working
20 family, and they have the highest priority along with
21 other city-referred referrals and so for the
22 applicant list, they maintain the highest priority
23 still.
24
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I was told that
3 that only happened if a social worker or a city
4 agency was referring that individual to NYCHA.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: That's
6 correct. The referral...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So not every person
8 that is living in shelter that applies for public
9 housing is getting that level priority.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: That's
11 correct. It has to be city-referred by DHS.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I think that that's
13 my question is, is there any conversation about
14 changing that and reverting back to the original rule
15 which automatically made shelter residents eligible
16 and gave them a first priority?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We can take
18 that into consideration and explore that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate it.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Deputy
22 Speaker. Next, we'll call Council Member Salamanca.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you,
24 Madam Chair. I was having a conversation with my
25 Colleague because when I look at these numbers, I

2 mean look, in 2021 my vacancies were 36 and in 2022
3 my vacancies are 153. It's extremely high, but I just
4 find it unfair to blame this current administration
5 when the past administration was there for eight
6 years and knew the failures of NYCHA and it was
7 through their Fair Policies and kicking the can down
8 the road that we're here today with all these capital
9 needs in our NYCHA developments. My question here is
10 pre-pandemic I read that NYCHA had a 90 percent or
11 higher rate of collecting rent. Am I correct?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I
13 believe so, but I don't have the rent figures..

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: And then that
15 rate, when the pandemic hit, it decreased, correct?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: All right.
18 These vacancies, are they due to evictions that NYCHA
19 has performed now that you are collecting rent? Are
20 you evicting NYCHA residents who are not paying rent
21 now?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I don't
23 believe we're doing any evictions right now, but I
24 can't speak for our law department on that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I just don't
3 understand how in 2021 Adam Houses had zero vacancies
4 and in 2022 they have 29. How is that even possible?
5 So 29 families just moved out?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'm not
7 familiar with the data that you're presenting so I'm
8 happy to follow up with you separately to talk about
9 the vacancies in your developments.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I just don't
11 understand how in Jackson Houses in 2021 there were
12 four vacancies and in 2022 there were 18. In Saint
13 Mary's Houses, in 2021 there were 19 and a year later
14 there are 41. It just doesn't make sense. Why are
15 these apartments becoming vacant? Are families moving
16 out or is NYCHA evicting them?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We, as all
18 other landlords in New York City, were under
19 moratorium, we are not evicting. The vacancy rates
20 are not because of evictions. However, our law
21 department has restarted some limited non-payment
22 cases, very limited, but as Eva said we can't speak
23 to the law department's procedures...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Is the law
25 department here?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: No, but we
3 can follow up with you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I'm sorry. I
5 have limited time, and I want to ask my questions.
6 How do you get from 36 vacancies in one year to 153
7 the next year? It just doesn't make sense. Where are
8 these families going?

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We do
10 have some turnover. We have a vacancy rate of 3.7
11 percent which means some families do leave NYCHA...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: We're talking
13 about a difference of 117 units. I just don't
14 understand what's happening here.

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We will
16 follow up on your development-specific questions.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I'm sorry.

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We will
19 follow up separately on your development-specific
20 questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I think, Madam
22 Chair, I think in the future when we have these
23 hearings, we should request that NYCHA come with the
24 appropriate individuals to answer our questions. Many
25 city agencies tend to do that, say we're going to

2 follow up because they purposefully do not bring the
3 appropriate parties to answer questions because they
4 don't want to answer the right question and in return
5 they say they'll follow up and they never follow up.

6 Finally, I just want to point out and
7 we've had many conversations about warehousing
8 throughout the City of New York, I've had many
9 conversations with developers, with property owners,
10 and their frustration is, and this is something that
11 I think we as a Council should take up and maybe
12 speak to our State, the frustration is there's a
13 rent-stabilized apartment, you have individuals that
14 have lived there for 10, 15 years, those apartments
15 when they move out need many repairs. Many repairs
16 can lead up to 50,000, 60,000 dollars. They feel that
17 their investment is not worth their investment
18 spending 50,000, 60,000 dollars when they're going to
19 get 1,800 dollars or 2,000 dollars in rent, and so
20 they choose, because many of them, I've spoke to
21 developers who are smaller developers, they feel that
22 they just cannot afford it, and so it's just
23 frustrating to hear that in the private sector and
24 it's frustrating to hear that in the public sector as
25 well when we're talking about units that may need

2 repairs of 20,000 to 63,000 dollars and because NYCHA
3 feels that they do not have those funds they choose
4 to leave those apartments vacancy. With that, I yield
5 my time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council
7 Member, and we have been adamant around following up
8 on information that is outstanding at the hearings
9 and making sure that becomes publicly available to
10 folks so thank you and yes, we do require and want
11 agency representation to come fully prepared to
12 answer questions. I appreciate you. Thank you,
13 Council Member.

14 With that, I think we will resume into
15 some of the other questions that we had. Some of them
16 are moving back to setting baseline and getting
17 clarity on the specific information.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Chair, can I ask one
19 thing really quickly on the last note that you
20 brought up?

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Before we move on, I
22 will pass it along to Council Member Osse.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Thank you so much.
24 It would be really helpful if questions that were not
25 answered in hearings were not only responded to our

2 offices but maybe posted on a public notice board,
3 whether it's your website, your Twitter, your social
4 media of questions that are asked in these hearings
5 so that people, not only us, can view the responses
6 of them. I think that level of accountability would
7 be great between both the Council and the
8 administration and also would be helpful for NYCHA
9 residents and folks that care to know about what we
10 are questioning within these hearings. Just a ask.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yes, and that's
12 something actually we are working with Counsel on to
13 make sure it's publicly noticed, which hasn't been
14 done in the past so thank you, Council Member.

15 Back to some clarity on the non-dwelling
16 category, back to that. Can you tell us how many of
17 the NYCHA apartments in this category are labeled due
18 to renovations and which ones are due to non-
19 residential use?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Any
21 apartment that is being used for non-residential use
22 is in the permanent off rent roll category. The
23 temporary off rent roll use are intended for
24 residential use and in the case of hospitality units
25 are being used as active residential apartments.

2 However, the rest of the category includes issues of
3 apartments awaiting major capital repairs or have
4 other hazardous conditions that we are working to
5 abate.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Right, and so we are
7 going to get the breakdown of those two distinctions?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes,
9 we'll send that on to you.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: We covered that
11 earlier. Thank you. How often are these apartments
12 inspected, and how often is the status reviewed and
13 updated across the three categories?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
15 distinction of putting an apartment on or off the
16 rent roll is conducted by property management
17 depending on the needs of the apartment, and that is
18 then reviewed centrally by our tenancy department
19 underneath Miss Aude.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How often does that
21 happen?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: When it
23 gets designated into that category.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Once the units are
25 designated, they don't receive another inspection?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'd have
3 to check on the inspection status, but once they're
4 in that category, we do review all vacancy units with
5 our property management teams to determine next steps
6 so, for example, apartments awaiting major capital
7 repairs would be evaluated for their capital
8 timelines and other such needs.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is there a second
10 opinion on those? How do you manage varied assessment
11 on a unit?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
13 second opinion would be the approval of the tenancy
14 department, and it's started by property management
15 and then reviewed by tenancy department.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is the tenancy
17 department actually conducting inspections or are
18 they reviewing the paperwork that was submitted and
19 making determinations based on that.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We review the
21 paperwork or the memo submitted with the request.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. Since
23 December 2021, in Red Hook, the development I
24 represent, an additional nine units in Red Hook West
25 and 29 units in Red Hook East have been deemed non-

2 dwelling. Why does this number continue to increase
3 in Red Hook?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'd have
5 to check on those specific designations for those
6 developments and get back to you.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Could you tell us why
8 theoretically there would be such a dramatic increase
9 in non-dwelling units? What could be the litany of
10 reasons for that?

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Again,
12 for the temporary off rent roll, I would assume that
13 these are going to the temporary off rent roll
14 category, not permanent, so that they're not being
15 used for non-residential uses, but without speaking
16 specifically to your case in Red Hook East and West,
17 that could happen if the repairs in the apartment are
18 so significant that they need some form of major
19 capital rehab as opposed to the skilled trades repair
20 work that a typical apartment gets as part of the
21 turnover.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. We'll follow
23 up on that case. In terms of the Mayor's publication
24 from just last year, Housing our Neighbors: A
25 Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness, the Mayor

2 outlines five key pillars to address the housing
3 crisis in New York City, the first of which is to
4 transform NYCHA. Transforming NYCHA, then, gets
5 broken down into a few components which includes
6 transforming how NYCHA delivers services to its
7 residents. Can you help us understand who does NYCHA
8 define as a resident?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Residents are
10 any authorized household member within a public
11 housing unit.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Does a resident
13 include a tenant who's placed a deposit on a vacancy
14 unit but has not been able to move into that unit due
15 to delays within NYCHA?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: They may be a
17 resident if they are a transferee, if they are
18 transferring from another location. If they are an
19 applicant, we still consider them an applicant.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: With regards to
21 getting residents moved into vacancy units since
22 Housing our Neighbors was published, how has NYCHA
23 made strides towards transforming service delivery in
24 that area?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The main
3 changes that have happened in the past year, as I've
4 mentioned, are obviously complying with the City's
5 new 0.5 standard for lead testing and lead abatement
6 and making that standard throughout all of our
7 turnover process, but, in addition, working through
8 the Vacancy Readiness Program with the funding we
9 receive from the administration, we have brought on
10 vendors to work primarily in turning over apartments,
11 recognizing that we needed some form of dedicated
12 resource to do this work. The Vacancy Readiness
13 Program is targeting just over 2,200 units through
14 the end of June to complete turnover.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. In terms of
16 the Mayor's Blueprint, it also seeks to address
17 interagency collaboration. Knowing that vacant units
18 can sit waiting for inspection from different
19 agencies, what new measures have been put into place
20 in order to help speed up that interagency
21 cooperation?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'm
23 sorry, Council Member. I don't want to misspeak, and
24 I don't have that information with us today, but we
25

2 will definitely follow up separately with that
3 information.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. Let's move on
5 to the Vacancy Readiness Program. Can you tell us how
6 many people are employed by the Vacancy Readiness
7 Program?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: There
9 are no employees dedicated to the Vacancy Readiness
10 Program on a funding payroll sense. The Vacancy
11 Readiness Program uses primarily vendors in addition
12 to some NYCHA staff that are already working at the
13 properties and in our skilled trades department to
14 finish the turnover process, but this program was
15 conceived to again hire vendors in order to
16 supplement and expand our capacity to turn over
17 units.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Who oversees the
19 Readiness Program?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
21 Readiness Program is overseen partially by my office
22 to track the work towards the 2,200 units, and then
23 the work is split between Healthy Homes, which does
24 the lead and asbestos testing and abatement work, and
25

2 the Department of Management and Planning which
3 houses the vendors to do the general repair work.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In Fiscal '23, it
5 looks like NYCHA suffered a 31.2 billion pass-through
6 deduction to its Vacancy Readiness Program. Can you
7 tell us the impact this had on the program?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I
9 believe those numbers are for the Five-year Financial
10 Plan, and we don't see any impact for the 2023 goals
11 that we've set forth for the 2,200 units.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What was the total
13 cost of the program in Fiscal '23?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We're
15 expecting 78 million dollars in 2023 for the Vacancy
16 Readiness Program.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is that 78, that's
18 the Fiscal '23 total cost?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And that is after the
21 31.2 million cut or before?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: That is
23 after.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So the program was a
25 100-million-dollar program?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
3 Five-year Financial Plan as of the November Financial
4 Plan is a 250-million-dollar program.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Right, but in terms
6 of Fiscal '23, the total was 100 million if 78 is
7 after the cut.

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
9 numbers I have for the program was that it did have
10 85 million originally scheduled in Fiscal Year '23,
11 and then as part of the November plan it is now 78
12 million. The other important thing to remember with
13 the Vacancy Readiness Program is that I believe it
14 was originally budgeted with the assumption that
15 every unit would have to undergo both lead and
16 asbestos abatement and that would mean the high end
17 of 63,000 dollars a unit, but not every unit is
18 testing positive for both of those conditions.
19 Therefore, we do have an average of 45,000 per unit,
20 and that is why we don't expect to see any change in
21 our ability to deliver the target of 2,200 units for
22 this Fiscal Year.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. We understand
24 that the total PEG represents 10 percent of the
25 overall budget for the Vacancy Readiness Program. Do

2 you still feel that this PEG will have no impact on
3 the ability to turn over vacant units?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We are
5 working closely with OMB on this program, and we
6 provide them with real-time actual costs, and we're
7 confident that we'll be able to continue turning over
8 units with the funding that we have.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In the November
10 financial plan, the most recent preliminary budget
11 documents released this month for Fiscal '24, we see
12 NYCHA incurring OTPS cuts of 7.4 million in '23 and a
13 total of 28.5 million in the outyears. How will this
14 impact NYCHA service delivery and more specifically
15 as it relates to turning over units?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We are
17 continuing to work with OMB on the units that we're
18 turning over. We'll have to see what our funding
19 situation is next year, but we are staying the course
20 with looking to turn over 150 to 200 units a year and
21 using the city funding to have the vendors to
22 supplement our work.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I feel like I'm
24 hearing you say we're going to try our best and we

2 don't know without saying a cut in funding means a
3 cut in vendors means a cut in service delivery.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
5 truth is it's hard to say again because of the level
6 of lead and asbestos. We have to see how many of the
7 units will test positive and need the more funding
8 versus not. OMB right now has committed to funding
9 out actual costs, and we've been able to make that
10 work.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Of the 5,900 units,
12 have they all be tested?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No, they
14 have not all be tested yet.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I know in your
16 earlier testimony you noted how many units had been
17 tested over the last Fiscal Year. Why are these
18 vacant units not being tested?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We're
20 working through testing every vacant unit, but we're
21 testing about 50 to 60 testings a week for lead and
22 we're slowly working through that entire list.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How does the list get
24 prioritized?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: It's a
3 combination of both, and the numbers I quoted in the
4 testimony were just vacant units, but overall our
5 lead testing program is both vacant and occupied
6 apartments. We're obviously looking at apartments
7 with children under six, but for the vacant units we
8 have identified the 2,200 in the Vacancy Readiness
9 Program that we are focusing on emergency transfers
10 and families experiencing homelessness and so we are
11 focusing on apartments that have been matched to
12 those prospective tenants in order to get them
13 housed.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Can you provide the
15 Council with that priority criteria that you use?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. What's the
18 impact of vacant apartments on federal state funding?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Right
20 now, we have not seen any impact on our funding
21 formulas from HUD based on our vacant units. The
22 funding formula for HUD does have a component of
23 vacant unit, but NYCHA has never had any funding
24 withheld because of vacant units. The vacant unit
25 calculation that HUD uses in their formula is quite

2 complicated, and it's not a straightforward vacancy
3 rate like we are reporting now. It's more nuanced to
4 include factors such as the length of time a unit has
5 been vacant, and it's also specific to the individual
6 development and so they use those two factors within
7 their formula and so it's a different formula than a
8 straightforward vacancy rate. In addition, vacancy is
9 just one component of the overall HUD funding formula
10 as part of their appropriations.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it, but it
12 definitely seems like the residents see the impact of
13 this in terms of their TPU funds since that's tracked
14 so.

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: On the
16 TPU funds, there is an impact.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How about in terms of
18 state funding?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: There is
20 no set formula for state funding.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. In terms of,
22 has the growth in vacancies over the last year pushed
23 NYCHA near any thresholds that would impact any
24 potential federal funding?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'm
3 sorry. Can you repeat the question?

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yeah. I think you
5 covered this in your prior response, but I just want
6 to make sure. Has the growth in vacancies which has
7 been significant over the last year, does it push
8 NYCHA to any thresholds that would potentially impact
9 the federal funding?

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No. We
11 don't believe we're near any of those thresholds. Our
12 finance department does run those formulas and they
13 monitor that, but we are not anywhere near any
14 threshold. In addition, we do work with HUD on vacant
15 unit management. For example, the permanent off rent
16 roll categories actually need to be approved by HUD
17 and are regulated by HUD and so we work very closely
18 with them for that, both permanent and in some cases
19 the temporary off rent roll as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In terms of we just
21 noted how resident association with the tenant
22 participation activity funds are directly impacted by
23 vacancies in funding and we heard from the Tenant
24 President that they are not systematically provided
25 with clear information. Can you talk to us about how

2 the information is provided to TA Presidents and what
3 is provided?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: In
5 regards to the TPA funds?

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yes.

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I can't
8 speak, but I'm happy to follow up on the TPA fund
9 communities. I do believe that the formula is done at
10 a single point in time, and HUD determines that point
11 in time where that vacant unit count is determined
12 and sets the funding formula from that point in time.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is there a specific
14 reason why the summary statements that are provided
15 to the resident associations don't specify whether
16 vacancies are a Section 8 or a Section 9, and can
17 NYCHA provide in terms of the 5,900 apartments, what
18 percentage of them are Section 8 and what percentage
19 are Section 9?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We can
21 follow up with that information.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Could we explore
23 providing tenants with more specific and meaningful
24 information around vacancies?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes,
3 we're happy to work with the Council and this
4 Committee to talk about communication improvements.
5 Always happy to hear your suggestions from what
6 you're hearing from your constituents and to improve
7 our process.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Do you have a
9 mechanism that you receive communications from TA
10 representation on residents in general around this?

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We
12 receive communication in all forms. I've received
13 many of these same phone calls from residents
14 directly calling my number to talk about how long
15 they've been waiting for apartments, and it's
16 absolutely unfortunate. It's not something we're
17 happy about, but we are reiterating that this is
18 extremely important work that we're doing to make
19 sure that the apartments lead-free and asbestos-safe,
20 but I know we have more work to do on the general
21 repair side, but we take all of those phone calls,
22 all of those complaints, and if you or your other
23 Council Members have those as well, please escalate
24 them up so we can address them as needed.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I smile when I asked
3 that question because I know NYCHA tenants are
4 incredibly vocal and will ensure that we have heard
5 what they have to say so it is not for want of NYCHA
6 residents not being vocal but how their feedback is
7 truly integrated and turned into responsive action.

8 What conversations has NYCHA had with the
9 Governor's office and other State-electeds to help
10 fund NYCHA's capital and maintenance needs, and I'll
11 include operational needs as well?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We are
13 having ongoing conversations with both the Assembly
14 and the Senate as well as the Governor's office on
15 our ongoing capital needs as well as expense needs.
16 We have a very open line of communication, and those
17 conversations are ongoing.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What's been the
19 specific asks?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'd have
21 to get back to you on the specific asks, although I
22 know Brian Honan is up in Albany right now as we
23 speak so we will follow up with you on that.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I'm sure he's not
3 asking for as much money as he should be, but we'll
4 talk to Brian when he returns.

5 In terms of the physical needs
6 assessment, we know this is an accounting of the
7 short- and long-term capital needs for each of the
8 developments. The last assessment was done in 2017.
9 We know it's performed every five years. Has NYCHA
10 completed the new physical needs assessment and when
11 does NYCHA plan to release this information?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Our
13 Asset and Capital Management Division is leading the
14 efforts to update and produce a new physical needs
15 assessment. I can't speak to the status of their
16 work, but we'll definitely follow up with you on
17 that.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great, and I now
19 there have been some clearly articulated shortcomings
20 and how those assessments have been done in the past
21 and I'd love to see how the Asset and Capital
22 Department has incorporated that specific feedback in
23 their work so we look forward to hearing back from
24 them on this issue.

2 I'm going to take a pause and hand it
3 over to Council Member Restler who would like to ask
4 a followup question.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you. I
6 promise to be nicer. There were two questions I
7 wanted to ask you about. Firstly, I realize that the
8 purpose of this hearing is to highlight the increased
9 vacancies across the NYCHA portfolio. In my District
10 in particular, NYCHA is supposed to be holding vacant
11 apartments to facilitate renovations at Gowanus and
12 Wyckoff Gardens, and it's really important that we
13 have vacant units available or the entire Comp Mod
14 budget is going to go up in smoke on hotel rooms and
15 other things that lead to no long-term improvements
16 for NYCHA residents and so I have to say I've been
17 told for many months that every available unit in
18 Gowanus and Wycoff and that you're starting to
19 prioritize surrounding developments are being held
20 for tenants to be able to move upon renovations and
21 to see that there are only two vacant units across
22 Gowanus and Wycoff according to December 2022 in the
23 paper that we've been provided by this Committee is
24 really disappointing. Do you have any insight or

2 should I take this up with the Comp Mod team? I'm on
3 the phone with them in 18 minutes.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I will
5 provide you updated information because that does not
6 sound correct. We have been actively holding units at
7 Gowanus, Wyckoff, and the surrounding developments to
8 facilitate Comp Mod.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, good.

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: And I'm
11 confident we're going to have those units available
12 as I mentioned to Council Member Ayala. Our goal is
13 to keep all families in their community during a
14 comprehensive modernization or a Trust or any type of
15 work that we're doing in the development and so that
16 is our goal. We have been working with those
17 developments to hold units available. Those units are
18 in our temporary off rent roll category because they
19 are being held for that major renovation work.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, so perhaps...

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We will
22 provide you with updated information.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: If you could, and
24 I think it will be helpful for our office, and I'll
25 follow up with Michelle and their team but to get

2 consistent updates on the status of how many units
3 are being held.

4 The second piece was just following up on
5 Council Member De La Rosa's questions. I have to
6 admit my staff has had an extremely challenging time
7 in getting attention on emergency and safety
8 transfers. I could share heartbreaking stories with
9 you about a woman who was attacked when she was nine-
10 months' pregnant in April of last year. Her kids are
11 being threatened. She is unsafe. It's been nine
12 months, and we can't get the transfer. There are DV
13 cases. There are safety cases that are really
14 serious. We bring it to the staff, my staff knows how
15 much of a pain in the ass I am so they follow up
16 constantly, and we're not getting attention or
17 results, and so I appreciate you laid out the process
18 for (INAUDIBLE) well, but it's not happening when at
19 least our offices, my office, is reaching out to get
20 attention on this. What should we do? What should I
21 do to get these emergency transfers properly
22 addressed?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: First,
24 I'll say we understand the unfortunate situation that
25 many of these transfer residents are waiting far too

2 long for their transfers, and many of them are in
3 dire needs, whether it's domestic violence or health-
4 related issues or other situations. The transfer
5 process, as we've said, can still take a long time.
6 If there is someone in a very specific and
7 significant need, please flag that to us, and, if
8 necessary, we could facilitate an emergency
9 relocation and that's a temporary transfer in order
10 to protect someone for life or health safety reason,
11 but otherwise we're happy to follow up on any other
12 cases offline and provide specifics as we can.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. It's really
14 apparent that this process isn't working well enough,
15 and so I know you have your hands more than more than
16 more than full in the number of challenges you have
17 to address in this role as Chief Operating Officer of
18 Housing Authority and I genuinely appreciate your
19 service and your work, but I'd ask that systems
20 issues be addressed on emergency transfers, on safety
21 transfers because we just can't have situations where
22 people in our communities are in unsafe situations
23 and waiting for 9 or 10 or 12 months to get a
24 transfer. It's just unacceptable. Thank you very much
25 and thank you, Chair Aviles, I really appreciate it.

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Council
3 Member Aviles, if you'd allow me. My team has been
4 amazing, and they did send me the breakdown of
5 Section 9 versus Section 8 if I can share that. For
6 Section 9, we have 5,680 units vacant and for Section
7 8, we have 284.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. We'd request
9 that any reporting done to the TA Presidents on
10 vacancies also note which units are Section 8 and
11 which are Section 9 and just an overall meaningful
12 report. I think having TA Presidents have to do the
13 math around their funding reductions and what that
14 actually means in terms of vacancies is not an
15 appropriate way to engage with our tenant leaders.

16 Going off of Council Member Restler's
17 questions on transfers, in particular RAD and PACT.
18 If a tenant is waiting on a transfer for a vacant
19 public housing apartment but the development converts
20 to a PACT site, what happens to their application and
21 does NYCHA continue to honor the transfer request?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:
23 Unfortunately, once the location converts to Section
24 8, it's a completely different program so their
25 public housing transfer is no longer valid. They're

2 not allowed to transfer from Section 9 to Section 8
3 under PACT.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: There are Section 8
5 housing unit that are managed by NYCHA that are not
6 in private management. Does that also apply to them
7 as well?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: If they
9 apply for a portability transfer so if they
10 apologize, and I apologize, I'm not a Section 8
11 expert, but generally they can apply for a transfer
12 within the Section 8 program and they may be able to
13 join the Section 8 wait list at those NYCHA
14 developments.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Does NYCHA know how
16 many housing residents have requested for transfer
17 that were blocked out because of RAD/PACT
18 conversions?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We can
20 follow up on that data.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay, thank you. In
22 terms of when developments are converted into RAD and
23 PACT, does NYCHA retain data information and do the
24 private management companies report on vacancy rates?
25

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'd have
3 to check with our real estate development team. I
4 think they are in communication with those developers
5 and would receive information upon ask, but I'm not
6 entirely if there's a formal reporting, but we can
7 find out for you.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. We'd like to
9 know how many apartments under the RAD and PACT
10 conversation program are currently vacant and the
11 average waiting time for turnaround.

12 I think similarly under RAD and PACT
13 conversion, we've heard reports of vacancies being
14 held for repair and repairs never quite materializing
15 so I think we'd like to understand better how NYCHA
16 is actually performing oversight over RAD and PACT
17 developments to ensure that there's also not a
18 warehousing happening in RAD and PACT sites as well.

19 One thing I wanted to follow up on in
20 terms of, Miss Torres noted the loss of tenants in
21 COVID. Do we have any sense of how many of the units
22 are vacant because of COVID?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No, we
24 don't have that level of data.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Do we have a sense of
3 what is precipitating the vacancies?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We don't have
5 the specific details on the vacancies, but we can get
6 some general details on that. We do experience
7 regular turnover. We haven't seen that big of an
8 increase in our turnover rate just compared to
9 previous years. Even though our vacancies are higher,
10 there's not like a huge jump in the amount of people
11 that are leaving NYCHA. It's pretty consistent, but
12 there could be many reasons for people leaving public
13 housing.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Right. I think it's
15 incongruous when you look at these significant
16 increase in vacancies and then hear turnover is still
17 kind of standard rate that you've experienced over
18 the years. There's something contradictory there that
19 is troubling.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: We were
21 normally turning them over a lot quicker so that
22 drastic number of apartments seemingly vacant wasn't
23 as apparent.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. One of the
25 things that is a consistent them I think across all

2 the hearings is really communication. You heard from
3 the testimony of the two residents at the top how
4 deeply problematic the communication has been from
5 the NYCHA side. Can you walk me through what the
6 communication protocol is with approved tenants for
7 move-in dates and information regarding inspections
8 and timelines?

9 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: When a
10 prospective tenant receives their letter that they've
11 been matched to an apartment, the apartment
12 previously (INAUDIBLE) begin the turnover process and
13 we would advise the prospective tenant to work with
14 their management office for any updates since the
15 management would have the most detailed information
16 about what's happening at their apartment. Our goal
17 is that with our new policy where you're not matched
18 to a unit until it's ready, a lot of these
19 communication issues will no longer happen because
20 you will be contacted, come in, view the apartment,
21 begin the leasing process, and move in so we are
22 hoping that this is something that we are phasing out
23 of. However, right now we encourage all prospective
24 tenants that are matched to a unit to continue
25 following up with their management office for updates

2 on that, and we are also exploring other ways to
3 better communicate with them.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I hear you that just
5 removing that providing information so early on
6 without clarity could improve the process
7 significantly. What we also hear is that it's a
8 justice by ZIP code where different management
9 offices have different ways of working, have
10 different communication styles, some better than
11 others. What are the expectations for managers and
12 what kind of training do they receive around how this
13 process is communicated to either transfer residents
14 or prospective residents?

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
16 managers are aware of our guidance and procedures
17 that they have to follow when it comes to our
18 turnover process, and we do know that we have a range
19 of skillsets within those management. We hear that
20 from our residents all the time, but they are trained
21 in our guidance of how to communicate this
22 information.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Are residents ever
24 provided with a concrete document around instructions
25 and timelines related to their units?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I
3 believe when they get their match letter, they are
4 notified of their unit and their development and the
5 contact information for the property management
6 office at their development.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. Are those
8 noticed provided in multiple languages?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Thank you are
10 available in multiple languages, but they are not
11 normally sent in multiple languages.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it, so at the
13 front end there's no inquiry around the appropriate
14 language for the communication? A tenant has to find
15 the management office to let them know what the
16 language is?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: At this time,
18 that's the way it works.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. In terms of the
20 tenant that testified at the top of the hearing was
21 contacted. There's an interesting interplay happening
22 with the shelter system that she was in and with the
23 NYCHA employee, and I don't know if anything was lost
24 in translation repeatedly, but who engages with the

2 shelter system for a prospective applicant that has
3 signed and waiting for a property?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: NYCHA works
5 with our DHS contacts, and they manage the shelters.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is that the super,
7 the building manager, who at NYCHA, we could never
8 find who the person at NYCHA was that informed the
9 applicant that actually she had no apartment after
10 eight months of waiting and calling on a weekly basis
11 so who is responsible for interfacing?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Generally,
13 property management is responsible for relaying
14 information to a prospective tenant. For DHS, there
15 is oversight from my office under the Applications
16 and Tenancy Administration Department with our
17 contacts at DHS, but we don't regularly communicate
18 with those folks. Once they have been matched with a
19 unit, their communication is generally with property
20 management.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In terms of, we
22 understand there's a tenant data system. What kind of
23 information is stored there and who has access to
24 this information and how is tenants' privacy
25 protected?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: NYCHA has
3 more than one tenant data system so we have our
4 customer relationship management system which is
5 (INAUDIBLE) that manages the application process.
6 Once they become tenants, that goes into a separate
7 system unfortunately, and then those two systems are
8 integrated to some extent. NYCHA adheres to general
9 privacy rules and regulations that are required by
10 HUD. I can't speak to that specifically, but we can
11 get you more information on our data privacy.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. The reason
13 for context that we're asking is we saw a total
14 breach when not only did someone who it sounds like
15 shouldn't have access to her information gave her
16 very wrong information, and it's direct impact was
17 her health and the health of her children and so I
18 think we cannot underscore enough the direct impacts
19 of the delays of vacancy, the misinformation that
20 gets put out because of the vacancies and how people
21 are being shuffled between systems and the cost quite
22 frankly. I think Council Member Restler was right to
23 note the net cost of us as a city agency investing in
24 a homeless shelter system that is significantly more
25 than the 45,000 it would cost to renovate an

2 apartment on an annual basis, it doesn't make any
3 sense at all so to underscore the importance of
4 training, the correct information, and clear
5 protocols, which I'm not sure I heard we have clear
6 communication protocols on these procedures. If there
7 is, we would like to see what the expectation that is
8 laid out for staff around how they communicate the
9 vacancies and the timeframes because what our offices
10 see and hear is often no communication at all or a
11 form letter with one sentence that is
12 incomprehensible, that doesn't really tell you much
13 of anything so we look forward to receiving that.

14 I just have a few more last questions. In
15 terms of the 2021 Housing Vacancy Survey, it
16 identifies seven major maintenance deficiencies,
17 heating equipment breakdowns, additional heating
18 required, presence of mice or rats, cracks and holes
19 in interior walls and ceilings, floor holes, broken
20 plaster and peeling paint, and water leakage. Can you
21 provide us with a breakdown on how many vacant units
22 have issues with heating equipment breakdown, each of
23 these categories, requiring additional heating, the
24 presence of mice and rats, cracks and holes, floor

2 holes, broken plaster, and peeling paint, and,
3 lastly, water leakage?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We don't
5 track all of those in the same way as presented in
6 the Vacancy Survey. For example, our vacant units are
7 inspected for what they need for general repairs,
8 but, for example, heating is a building system and
9 not necessarily tied specifically to that vacant unit
10 and would not impact the turnover of the vacant unit.
11 We would be working hard to restore heat if there is
12 a heating system failure, but it's not par of the
13 turnover process, but I'd have to see how we're
14 tracking the individual needs of the apartment, of
15 which apartment maybe needs carpentering versus
16 plastering, but I think they all get some level of
17 all of those skilled trades because of the extensive
18 work that's needed. There's usually extermination
19 inspections performed, but I'll see how the data is
20 tracked and get back to you on that.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yeah, I hear the kind
22 of building-wide issues versus the specific apartment
23 issues and because of the age of the developments
24 it's safe to assume that more than one of these
25 factors is there, but what I also hear is it's

2 everything and nothing at the same time, and I think
3 when I look at the vacancies in Red Hook West that
4 have increased from 18 to 63 units, I think in order
5 to tactically address these vacancy issues we need to
6 understand what specifically we're attacking because
7 it also implicates the contractors and the vendors
8 that we're using and so I would love to see more
9 specific granular information on what are the
10 challenges because they're so disparate. There are no
11 particular patterns of the vacancies across NYCHA as
12 we noted earlier, but a more refined report on what
13 it is that we are actually facing and the particular
14 plan to address that with an articulated sense of
15 criteria. Can you tell us who determines
16 prioritization across the portfolio of how vacant
17 units move into readiness?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Right
19 now, we are working on a combination of prioritizing
20 the units that have been matched to prospective
21 tenants as well as how we can most efficiently
22 address the repairs needed. For example, under the
23 Vacancy Readiness Program where we have contractors
24 going out, it's most efficient to give them
25 developments that have significant numbers of vacancy

2 so they can come in and do 10, 15, 20 units at once
3 rather than having to redeploy for a unit here and a
4 unit there so we do a combination of both looking at
5 the matched tenants and how efficiently we can deploy
6 the contractor resources. The other units are then
7 handled through the skilled trades in that
8 neighborhood and development as we can get to them.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. In terms of
10 on the backend, when apartments are ready for
11 tenants, who reviews that work to ensure that it's
12 completed and to standard?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
14 property management office will review the work.
15 We've started in some small cases also using our
16 Quality Assurance Department to review the vacant
17 turnover work. It's something we wanted to explore as
18 an option, but we would need additional resources to
19 scale that up, but the property management office
20 will review the work and sign off on the apartment as
21 being done.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. I
23 definitely would like to follow up on the specific
24 vacancies, not only the significant increase in
25

2 vacancies but also the significant increase in non-
3 dwelling units as well for Red Hook offline.

4 I think with that we're ready to hear
5 public testimony. I want to thank you for your time
6 and answers, and we will continue this conversation.

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
8 you so much.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AUDE: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll now go to public
11 testimony. We have a few folks on Zoom that we're
12 going to do first and then we will continue. I'll
13 read the person who is going to be unmuted on Zoom,
14 the next person who will be ready, and then the third
15 person who is here in the room. We're going to start
16 with Miss Dana Elden. You should be receiving a
17 prompt to unmute yourself.

18 DANA ELDEN: Hi. Good afternoon. Can you
19 hear me?

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yes, Miss Elden.
21 Thank you.

22 DANA ELDEN: Thank you and good afternoon
23 to you all, Committee Members, Miss Trimble. I'm a TA
24 Resident and also the TA President for Saint Mary's
25 Park Houses in the South Bronx, and recently, as all

2 TAs, received a letter from Miss Bova-Hiatt's
3 informing us of our funding for the year depending on
4 the amount of dwellings. Saint Mary's has 1,007
5 units. Our funding, however, was counted as 954
6 units, which is a difference of 53, which is also a
7 difference of 794 dollars roughly so that is the loss
8 that we encounter with the cut in the amount of
9 apartments that can be funded. I'll take it now to
10 Section 964.430 of the 964 rules and regulations
11 which says "resident participation must include
12 matters regarding public federal public housing and
13 Section 8 tenant-based assistance. A resident board
14 member must be allowed to take part in decisions
15 related to the administration, operation, and
16 management of federal public housing programs and
17 Section tenant-based rental assistance programs." I
18 cite that passage because from my experience I have
19 found that it is almost impossible to acquire any
20 information in regard to my development's budget. I
21 am shared the information of vendors after the fact
22 only if I ask, and, of course, there's no
23 differentiation of what apartments that are in that
24 number of 53 that are not counted that are Section 8
25 or Section 9. Again, as Miss Torres said earlier, we

2 are not advised as to who comes into our development
3 as a new resident, but I think that it should be a
4 part of NYCHA's policy. In fact, they have a handbook
5 of 38 pages that says it is, that we should take part
6 of the interview of residents that come into our
7 development so there are a lot of things that are not
8 being shared with the TAs and the resident councils,
9 and I don't think it's fair for me, personally, who
10 is extremely active in my development and citywide as
11 I sit on the district council with Danny (INAUDIBLE).
12 I think that there's a lot of misinformation that is
13 being shared when it comes to how it relates to the
14 resident councils and their knowledge and what
15 information is being shared with them, and I have a
16 problem with that. I have a real problem with that
17 because I take pride in what I do. I love my
18 community very much and don't plan on leaving it if I
19 don't have to so as I sit in this seat it is my
20 responsibility and my oath that I have taken when I
21 was sworn in to represent the residents and their
22 best interests and also to be informative of anything
23 that would affect them, and NYCHA makes it very
24 difficult to do so. Just recently, I had a HUD
25 inspector come and look at our boiler systems. It's

2 not the first time he had been here, and he had sent
3 an email out to a number of people, and what happened
4 was nothing so when he came back the same issues were
5 there. It is not an automated system, and, in fact,
6 there's only one boiler that is supplying heat and
7 hot water to six buildings, and we're a 21-story high
8 rise so, of course, the upper floors are not getting
9 the hot water that they need or the heat, and that is
10 a problem, and that's just one problem amongst many.
11 Recently after four years, I obtained a bathroom in
12 my office so that residents could use it, of course,
13 and it took four years. I love the bathroom. Thank
14 you so much, Miss Trimble. However, at the end of the
15 day, it's a situation where we are handled like
16 second-class citizens so to speak. Unless we ask
17 questions, we don't get answers, and sometimes we
18 don't get answers even if we ask. I had to put in a
19 request to the management who our manager is in her
20 later stage with NYCHA and is using up her days
21 before she retires so we see her one week, we might
22 not see her for another two weeks, and then she'll
23 come back another week, so she's backlogged. It's
24 just a situation of frustration for resident council
25 leaders like myself who put in sometimes 100 hours a

2 month, and she can look at my time sheets. I'm
3 putting in a lot of hours, not just in the office but
4 attending every meeting that they have so I can be
5 better informed, and at the end of the day the things
6 that they say we're supposed to get, we're not
7 getting. The information that should be provided is
8 not provided, and it is very frustrating. Again, with
9 the vacancies, I have a problem with that. Councilman
10 Salamanca, who used to be my Councilman but no longer
11 is thanks to redistricting and rezoning which was a
12 farce and I miss him dearly, he spoke eloquently in
13 regard to that issue, and somebody needs to explain
14 it. Why do we have so many vacancies in our
15 developments? It's unheard of. When I looked at the
16 numbers, I couldn't believe it. 53 vacancies. Why?
17 What is the excuse? If you ask management, the first
18 thing she's famous for saying is I don't know, and
19 that's not acceptable.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so...

21 DANA ELDEN: I would like some answers
22 today if possible.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much,
24 Miss Elden.

25 DANA ELDEN: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: We will be sure to
3 follow up specifically on your development, but that
4 is the question that we are interrogating and
5 expecting more specific answers from NYCHA. Thank you
6 so much for all the work that you do, and we will
7 follow up certainly around, I think you were
8 referring to the 964 regulations and what is not
9 being followed. Thank you so much, Miss Elden.

10 DANA ELDEN: Thank you all. Have a good
11 day.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Bye-bye.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next witness will
14 be Alexandra Dougherty, also on Zoom. You should be
15 getting a prompt to unmute yourself shortly. After
16 that, we'll have Lucy Newman.

17 ALEXANDRA DOUGHERTY: Hi. Good afternoon.
18 My name is Alex Dougherty. I'm a Senior Staff
19 Attorney and Policy Counsel at the Civil Justice
20 Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. Thank you to
21 the Committee on Public Housing and Chair Aviles for
22 inviting us to testify today about the impact of
23 move-in delays on the people we serve.

24 The Civil Justice Practice at BDS works
25 with NYCHA tenants and applicants representing NYCHA

2 tenants across the city in termination cases as well
3 as (INAUDIBLE) cases, advocating for safety
4 transfers, assisting with recertifications and rent
5 adjustments and assisting applicants from the initial
6 application fees through move-in. Through that work,
7 we see both the stabilizing effect that NYCHA housing
8 can have for clients by providing them with the only
9 truly permanent affordable housing options in the
10 city as well as the challenges that clients face
11 attempting to access public housing. One of the
12 largest problems we're currently encountering is
13 extreme delays in move-ins with months or even years
14 passing between accepting an apartment and paying
15 fees to the day of moving into the apartment. The
16 majority of our clients who are currently in this
17 situation have children in foster placements, and
18 access to stable housing is their only barrier to
19 reunification so NYCHA's delay is forcing these
20 families to remain separated indefinitely. Our team
21 works with many NO priority applications, which is a
22 priority application for families with ACS
23 involvement and is designed to accelerate
24 applications for families where housing is the
25 primary barrier to reunification. This priority

2 status offers a vital opportunity for families to
3 secure stable permanent housing together and for
4 parents to reunite with their children who are in
5 foster care, but delays in housing availability cause
6 children to languish in the foster system far longer
7 than they need to. One person we represent, Miss D.,
8 had experienced housing instability for many years,
9 and her children were removed to the foster system.
10 ACS agreed to return her children to her care once
11 she had stable housing. Back in July 2021, Miss D.'s
12 NO application was certified by NYCHA, and six months
13 later she had been selected for an apartment. In
14 February 2022, she viewed the empty apartment, paid
15 her move-in fees, and was told to expect a call from
16 the manager when it was ready for her to move in. She
17 called NYCHA every few weeks, but each time she was
18 told that there was no more information and she had
19 to be patient. Our office contacted the development,
20 NYCHA's central office, and the ACS Housing team
21 multiple times, but we were given conflicting
22 information about what environmental testing had
23 already been done and which repairs were still
24 outstanding. All in all, NYCHA gave Miss D. five
25 tentative move-in dates between April and August

2 2022, all of which they failed to meet. She wasn't
3 able to move in until late October 2022, which was 10
4 months after she was initially offered an apartment
5 and paid her fees. During this time, her kids
6 remained in foster placement solely because of
7 NYCHA's delays preparing the apartment for move-in.
8 Children in New York City's foster system remain in
9 placements on average for two years, which is six
10 months longer than children outside of the city. In
11 our experience, a lack of stable housing contributes
12 to these long stays. Children and families suffer
13 long-term trauma by these separations. While NYCHA
14 provides critical access to permanent affordable
15 housing and family stability, when apartments sit
16 empty for months or years awaiting inspections or
17 repairs, New Yorkers face unnecessary delays in
18 safety and stability.

19 We urge the Council to work with NYCHA to
20 identify the root causes of these delays in turning
21 over apartments and to ensure that NYCHA has the
22 staff and funding to conduct environmental testing
23 and complete necessary repairs on vacant apartments
24 in a timely manner. Thank you and I welcome any
25 questions.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much,
3 Alexandra. We appreciate your testimony and can't
4 agree more, the urgency around ensuring that we turn
5 over apartments rapidly and that there is a full
6 communications system and a clear sense of
7 accountability around whose roles and
8 responsibilities fall to communicate with residents
9 and to communicate proper information so we thank you
10 and look forward to working with you and NYCHA to
11 improve this process for our residents.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will call
13 Lucy Newman. All witnesses will know they can submit
14 their written testimony up to 72 hours after the
15 hearing through the Council website.

16 LUCY NEWMAN: Good afternoon. Thank you
17 very much, Chair Aviles, for having this meeting and
18 to the Committee Members for your support of public
19 housing. My name is Lucy Newman. I'm a Staff Attorney
20 at the Legal Aid Society and wanted to talk about the
21 delays in apartment readiness, much like a lot of
22 people have talked about and, in addition to that,
23 just vacancies generally. As was mentioned by Miss
24 Torres and then one of my Colleagues, Alexandra
25 Dougherty, the delays in readiness has a negative

2 impact on our clients, and we see it daily throughout
3 the five boroughs. As we all know, that data that
4 NYCHA posted confirms the dramatic increase in the
5 turnaround time, and this has real damaging and
6 harmful effects on the people and the families that
7 are waiting to move into their new home. We all know
8 that many people who are waiting access to those
9 apartments could be already living in NYCHA but are
10 waiting for a safety transfer, many of whom by these
11 delays are being put in real dangerous conditions
12 because either they're domestic violence survivors or
13 victims of a crime or have problems with their
14 neighbors that put their safety at risk on a daily
15 basis. Many are also living in conditions that are
16 dangerous to their health, and continuing to stay in
17 those apartments poses a real threat to them. In
18 addition to that, many thousands of people are
19 waiting on NO priority in city homeless shelters, and
20 those delays cause unbelievable stress on households
21 that are languishing in city shelters. In my written
22 testimony, you'll see that I've just explained a few
23 case examples. When I say it's just a few, we have
24 hundreds that we could talk about, many of them,
25 again, examples and demonstrate and confirm the

2 impact and experiences that both Miss Torres spoke
3 about and Alexandra spoke about and this is what's
4 happening on the ground to individuals. You'll see I
5 mentioned a woman who we're calling Miss L. She
6 accepted an apartment in March 2022, and I understand
7 now that that policy has changed in the changing the
8 issuance of the apartment readiness date, but what we
9 see in her example is a lot of the problems that I
10 believe will still continue notwithstanding this
11 change that they made. For example, in November 2022,
12 I had been following up with them so much about why
13 it was that she was still nine months later still
14 waiting for this apartment, and they were able to
15 confirm that the lead and asbestos abatement had
16 actually been done in August but the delay was now at
17 the property management level. I think one of the
18 things we see a lot of is that there is real
19 disorganization at the property management level
20 around staggering of appointments. A lot of the time
21 the apartments are just sitting there with no work
22 being done at all. I do believe that a lot of the
23 lead and asbestos abatement is being done pretty
24 efficiently and effectively, but then there's this
25 kind of gap after that about what then happens. We

2 were told in December that she would get the
3 apartment in middle of January. We were now,
4 yesterday, told that she will be expecting to get it
5 middle of February so that's now 11-1/2 months since
6 she paid the security deposit and first month's rent.

7 I then discuss the case of a gentleman
8 called Mr. M. His family was living in shelter and
9 had been living in shelter for a very long time and
10 had extremely terrible conditions during COVID.
11 Again, he received this ARD letter and then was
12 basically told by management you shouldn't every rely
13 on that letter because it's not definite, but we just
14 kept following up daily, all different types of
15 advocates following up on his behalf, and every time
16 we were just being given different dates. The stress
17 that was put on that household was just unbelievable.
18 He was always concerned that he was missing a letter
19 that may then put him at risk of losing the apartment
20 because, as we know, in shelter a lot of time getting
21 documents is tricky. They eventually ended up leaving
22 shelter to a private apartment in the summer of 2022
23 because they just couldn't wait any longer to secure
24 permanent housing.

2 I also discuss the case of Miss D. She
3 was an emergency safety transfer with bed bugs in her
4 NYCHA apartment. Her eldest child was unable to
5 actually live with them in the apartment because it
6 was so bad for his allergies and other things, and
7 the two younger children slept in the living room
8 because they couldn't access the bedroom. Because of
9 so many conversations that both our attorneys and
10 other advocates at Legal Aid had with the folks with
11 NYCHA, we were finally able to get her into an
12 apartment at the end of October. I have no doubt that
13 she would not have been able to get into that
14 apartment without the work that we did to communicate
15 with NYCHA.

16 Again, just lack of communication,
17 difficulties accessing information, property managers
18 who often very rude to individuals and tell them that
19 they can't give them that information, changing
20 dates. I really do believe a lot of it is
21 mismanagement on a development level with a lack of
22 coordination. Someone had mentioned or you had a
23 question around the training received because I think
24 one of the recommendations that we put forward is
25 that they have better training to help management

2 learn how to schedule trades so that they are not
3 wasting time because what we do see is that lead and
4 asbestos abatement is happening, but thereafter
5 there's a lot of wait time, and I think that that's
6 something that needs to be addressed to speed up
7 readiness.

8 In terms of vacancies generally, we do
9 understand that they are having to keep some units
10 vacant in order to prepare hospitality suites and
11 temporary relocation spaces for the work that needs
12 to be done under PACT and Comp Mod. What I would like
13 to see is more detailed data as to what exactly the
14 vacancies are being held for so if it is for Comp Mod
15 or for preparation for PACT conversion, I think that
16 they should be able to identify that in the data and
17 make that publicly available. I noticed today that
18 one of the things is that, obviously the Council in
19 preparation for the hearing was given a much more
20 detailed and, as you said, granular set of data, and
21 it would be great if that could be available online
22 rather than just the pie chart with the non-dwellings
23 and the available so our ask would be that really
24 primarily so that we can hold NYCHA accountable to
25 see whether the vacancies are a result of delays in

2 readiness or if they're in preparation for temporary
3 relocation as part of repairs under Comp Mod and PACT
4 so there's our recommendations. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much for
6 the work that you do for countless New Yorkers. I
7 don't know what we do without Legal Aid Society for
8 sure. Thank you for the recommendations that you put
9 forward. I think one of the questions that I failed
10 to ask was a clear articulation of the plan of the
11 usage of vacant apartments for moving around. We know
12 that plays an important role to be able to repair
13 quicker when you have these actual units so I will be
14 following up with NYCHA around what that specific
15 plan of retention and usage is in the context and
16 moving forward, and we will be following up on the
17 detailed information and we have put forward data
18 that will be made public. I heard from residents we
19 need to make more public, and that is certainly our
20 intention to do that. I want to thank you, we will
21 follow up, we continue to look forward to partnering
22 with you on moving things along and, certainly, I
23 think these recommendations are both practical and
24 really important and the communication breakdown we

2 must figure it out, we must do better. With that,
3 thank you so much.

4 With that, I just want to make some last
5 closing comments. I want to thank everyone here
6 today, my Colleagues, Members of the Administration,
7 and, as always, a big thank you to the residents and
8 advocates who have taken time out of their incredibly
9 busy schedules to offer their insights and expertise.
10 While today our topic of discussion was regarding
11 vacancies, the themes that have emerged were no
12 different than most, if not all, of our public
13 housing hearings to date. That is that NYCHA must do
14 a better job at communicating with residents,
15 communicating with our offices, having clear and
16 consistent protocols. A tenant approved for move-in
17 should have access to the information regarding
18 inspection dates so that they have the information
19 they need to make decisions that have real impact on
20 themselves and their families. We saw today very
21 visibly the mental agony and anguish that is a direct
22 result of a lack of communication and anxiety that
23 being held in limbo with no information has on
24 people's lives. NYCHA must consider the health and
25 well-being of their tenants and applicants at all

2 turns, and so much can be alleviated simply by proper
3 and consistent communication.

4 I also just need to take a minute to
5 express that as we gear up for discussions around the
6 Fiscal '24 budget, the Mayor's call to house New
7 Yorkers is in direct contrast to what he's laid out
8 in the preliminary budget. A significant cut while
9 the agency contends may not have a huge impact, a 30-
10 million-dollar cut to a vacant-readiness unit that is
11 directly engaged in making repairs to move this
12 quicker while we are at the largest vacancy we've
13 seen is a contradiction in terms to essentially
14 housing New Yorkers so we will continue to advocate
15 for the restoration of this program, we will continue
16 to advocate that NYCHA do better in its
17 communications, that it moves families quicker, and
18 that it explains the vacancies that have spiked
19 across the portfolios. We urge NYCHA to take every
20 effort to prevent further undermining any mission of
21 the authority and house working-class New Yorkers in
22 dignified and safe homes and so thank you with that.

23 Our hearing is closed. [GAVEL]

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date February 8, 2023