

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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March 13, 2023

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HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY
HALL

B E F O R E: Alexa Avilés, Chairperson

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Supporting Parents New York

Shannon McLennon Wier

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check for the Committee on Public Housing. Today's date is March 13, 2023. Located in the Committee Room. Recorded by Steven Sadowsky.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and welcome to the Committee on Public Housing.

At this time, we ask if you can please place phones on vibrate or silent mode. Thank you.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: [GAVEL] Good afternoon. Thank you for attending today's hearing on the City's Fiscal 2024 preliminary budget and the New York City Housing Authority's five-year operating and capital plans for 2023 to 2027.

I am Council Member Alexa Aviles, the Chair of the Committee on Public Housing, and I would like to acknowledge that I am joined today by Council Member Gale Brewer and Council Member Chi Osse.

NYCHA has operated the largest public health program in the nation for over 75 years, providing affordable housing to over 530,000 low- and middle-income New York City residents through both the Section 9 Public Housing and through Section 8 Voucher Programs. While NYCHA continues to be a

precious and critical resource in an increasingly unaffordable city, longstanding divestment and federal and state, city defunding of public housing coupled with organizational mismanagement has resulted in the deterioration of the public housing stock. For years, tenants have reported health and safety issues in their homes, ranging from lack of heat to unresolved mold issues, pest infestations, lead-based paint hazards, elevator outages, and leaky roofs just to name some of the longstanding issues.

As we know, NYCHA's longstanding capital needs exceed 40 billion dollars. In 2019, these health and safety issues came to a head. To avoid a takeover, the City signed a settlement agreement that placed NYCHA under the federal monitorship that requires it improve its operations across key pillar areas like heating, elevators, and mold, reinvest in its properties, and become more accountable to both the residents and the federal government. This monitor requires NYCHA to remediate living conditions at the developments citywide by specific deadlines. On some of these key metrics, NYCHA has made improvements, and on others, like elevator repairs, the Authority is desperately behind. NYCHA's five-

year capital plan totals 8.6 billion with 3.5 billion in city funds.

The City's capital commitment, as we've discerned, for this Fiscal '24 is only 700 million dollars, half of what the federal monies support, and is paltry compared to what the City's commitment should be and what the need is capitally. Meanwhile, NYCHA has been working to implement the Permanent Affordability and Commitment Together, or PACT, which converts Section 9 public health to project-based Section 8 and leverages public/private partnerships to secure funding to complete comprehensive repairs. So far, about 30,000 authorized residents across 58 developments have been converted to PACT, almost half of NYCHA's goal of 62,000 apartments. Last summer, the State approved a new financing model for the Authority, the Public Housing Preservation Trust. Under this strategy, NYCHA would transfer development to the Trust which can borrow against rent revenues and federal funding in a way that NYCHA presently cannot. According to NYCHA, the Trust could borrow 3.4 billion for repairs and capital improvements for 25,000 units. In addition to the departure of the former NYCHA Chair Greg Russ, there is still no Board

seated for the Trust and no residents have yet voted to join the Trust. Lastly, at a recently released report from the Independent Budget Office, noted real concerns around some of the financial assumptions that were made in order to make the Trust workable. We are deeply concerned.

On top of its well-known capital challenges, NYCHA's operating budget is now imperiled by a ballooning tenant rental arrears. Tenant rental arrears totaled over 454 million at the end of 2022, up from 125 million in 2019. NYCHA is only collecting 65 percent of the rent charged over a 12-month period, and now there is less than one month's of reserves remaining, indicating the clear impact of the pandemic. To date, NYCHA has submitted 120-million worth of Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications for 31,330 households. However, none, I repeat none have been awarded due to State rules deprioritizing public housing residents. NYCHA is seeking 330 million from the State to close its arrears gap.

Rental arrears helps explain why NYCHA's 4.4 billion operating budget for 2023 presents a 35 million dollar deficit, even after a planned 65

million withdrawal from reserves. NYCHA's 2023 budget also cuts 25 million from central office contracts and reducing approximately 50 percent of vacant central office positions. While NYCHA's overall vacancy rate is about 7 percent, it's vacancy rate in core operations like heating, elevators, and safety is 17.5 percent. This is a problem. To get the repairs that tenants so desperately need, we need those kinds of operational staff.

The confluence of the budget, staffing, and operational challenges are visible in NYCHA's Vacant Unit Readiness program due in part to stricter new lead-abatement standards, the average amount of time it took NYCHA to turn vacant apartments around for re-occupancy more than doubled in 2022 from 182 days in January 2022 to 399 days in January 2023. However, the City administration cut the contracts for this program by 10 percent in the November 2022 plan, removing about 30.6 million over four years. Cutting this program to get units back online amidst a housing crisis is simply unconscionable for residents who both need to transfer and for some of the quarter million people that are waiting on NYCHA's waiting list.

Our public housing is an incredible asset and a lifeline to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who deserve health and safe homes, but it's beleaguered finances presents its existential challenges. At today's hearing, we hope to better understand how NYCHA will stabilize its immediate finances, fix its physical conditions of its buildings under the federal monitor's agreement, reduce its bureaucracy, and engage and improve in services and job placements for residents.

Problematic PEGs like the Vacant Unit Readiness cut requires closer scrutiny to ensure that the City is doing all it can for our public housing residents. Every level of government can and should do more. Each level is making active choices to defund NYCHA or minimally fund NYCHA. Every day, this choice imperils residents and some of our greatest social housing assets.

I would like to thank the Committee Staff who have helped prepare for this hearing, Daniel Kroop, Jack Storey, Chima Obichere, Jose Conde, Ricky Chawla, and my Staff, Christina Bottego, Edward Cerna, and James Neimeister.

2 After NYCHA, we will hear from members of
3 the public. I would like to remind everyone that
4 would like to testify today to please fill out the
5 witness slip with the Sergeant-at-Arms so that we can
6 put in the queue.

7 I will now pass it to our Committee
8 Counsel to swear in NYCHA leadership before turning
9 it over for testimony.

10 Thank you all for being here.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your
12 right hand.

13 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
14 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
15 testimony before this Committee and to respond
16 honestly to Council Member questions?

17 ADMINISTRATION: (INAUDIBLE)

18 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Chair
19 Alexa Aviles, Members of the Committee on Public
20 Housing, other distinguished Members of the City
21 Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and
22 members of the public, good afternoon. I am Lisa
23 Bova-Hiatt, NYCHA's Interim Chief Executive Officer.
24 I am pleased to be joined by the Chief Operating
25 Officer Eva Trimble, Executive Vice President of

Finance and Chief Financial Officer Annika Lescott-Martinez, Chief Asset and Capital Management Officer Shaan Mavani, and other members of NYCHA's team.

Thank you for this opportunity to present the Authority's adopted budget, which was approved by NYCHA's Board of Directors in December. I would also like to briefly discuss our efforts to transform this vital institution and improve residents' quality of life.

There is considerable work underway to stabilize and strengthen the Authority so that we can improve conditions at our developments and provide residents with the quality of life they deserve. We are focused intensely on this mission, and the stakes could not be higher. NYCHA is home to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, a significant resource of affordable housing in our city. However, in addition to the accumulating impacts of decades of federal government disinvestment, today we are contending with another serious challenge, rent arrears, which are growing at an alarming rate. Rent arrears now total 466 million across about 73,000 households, having nearly quadrupled since 2019, when arrears

stood at 125 million dollars. NYCHA is collecting only 64 percent of the rent owed over a 12-month period. HUD expects public housing authorities to collect 100 percent of the rent. NYCHA's primary mission is to keep families housed, and we launched a campaign to inform residents of the various ways they can get help with paying their rent from one-time emergency assistance available from the City's Human Resources Administration to financial counseling opportunities from our partners, and we work with residents experiencing hardship. For instance, payment plans are possible, and residents experiencing a loss in income can have their rent reduced to as low as zero, a powerful demonstration of the vital safety net that public housing provides. In addition, we submitted 121-million-dollars' worth of Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications to the State on behalf of more than 31,000 households. At this moment, though, there is no ERAP funding available for public housing residents, and, at the same time, the NYCHA households with ERAP applications pending have amassed more than 240 million dollars in arrears.

To bring attention to these critical needs, we sent each State Legislator data on rent arrears in their district as residents with subsidized rents have been granted the lowest priority for ERAP funding. Rent payments fund one-third of NYCHA's operating budget and are crucial to our operations. We rely on rent payments along with federal funding to maintain our developments, which are aging rapidly and have more than 40 billion dollars in major capital needs. Without additional funding or an increase in rent payments, beginning next year, NYCHA will have no choice but to significantly cut expenses and curtail repairs, including those related to the HUD Agreement, which will have a real impact for residents. We will discuss the ways we are mitigating the loss in rent payments later in our testimony.

I would now like to take you through some specific information related to NYCHA's budget. For 2023, with expected operating revenues of about 4.378 billion dollars and an expected 4.413 billion dollars in operating expenses, we anticipate a year-end deficit of about 35 million

dollars. We believe we can close this gap. We will continue to closely monitor our spending and implement cost-saving measures as necessary as we did to close the budget gap in 2022. However, with the increasing needs and expected mounting losses in rent revenue, the anticipated annual deficit climbs to about 56 million dollars in 2027.

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

We expect to receive about 1.46 billion dollars for Section 8 vouchers and the associated administrative fees this year. NYCHA is receiving the previous year's expenses plus a Section 8

administrative fee that is estimated to be prorated by 88 percent. Along with program reserves, NYCHA will be appropriately funded to issue more Section 8 vouchers for low-income New Yorkers.

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

The majority of our buildings are more than a half century old, and the historic lack of investment is driving up the costs to simply maintain them. Due to the insufficient rental revenue and the escalating costs related to the HUD Agreement, NYCHA has relied heavily on operating reserves to improve services for residents and meet the demands of the Agreement. As part of our efforts to close this year's budget gap, we will withdraw 65 million dollars from our operating reserves, leaving less than one month of

reserves. To put this in context, HUD recommends three to four months of operating reserves for public housing authorities of our size. To help close this year's deficit, we will also use 17 million dollars in restricted PACT proceeds, and we will again shift 35 percent of our federal capital grant for our basic operations, the maximum amount we can shift under HUD rules.

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

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Thank you, Lisa. I believe y'all have the slides in front of you. We're currently on slide 2.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Before you continue, I just want to acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member Barron online and Council Member De La Rosa. Thank you. Please continue.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Thank you, Council Member.

Tenant rent arrears totaled 466 million over 73,000 households as of December 31, 2022, which is up from 125 million in 2019. If you're looking at

the slides, each of the red bars represents the millions cumulatively that NYCHA is owed, and the dotted line shows our tenant cumulative rate of rent collection so you'll notice that the rate is going down from 88 percent at its high in 2019 down to 64 percent where we are at the end of 2022. That means that we're only collecting 64 percent of all the rent we charge over a 12-month period, and HUD expects PHAs like us to collect 100 percent of the rent so our operating subsidy and HUD support does not increase to cover the difference. To date, as Lisa mentioned, NYCHA submitted 121-million worth of Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications for over 31,000 households, but keep in mind that those households owe 240 million and counting. Next slide.

Given our precarious financial position due to large tenant rent arrears, increasing utility costs, and increasing HUD SDNY agreement expenses, we had to take the following proactive measures in the 2023 budget to shore up our financial position.

First, we prioritized stable funding for property management contracts, staffing, and increases for the pillar areas where appropriate.

Second, we removed all nonessential contract spending in the center office department through a zero-based budgeting exercise, which allowed us to reallocate 119 million to other critical areas.

Third, we eliminated 145 vacant budgeted positions in the central office with the exclusion of our pillar areas, compliance departments, properties, and leased housing. We recognize that further reductions may be required.

Lastly, we are submitting an operating subsidy appeal to HUD to fund the mandated HUD agreement environment expenses. Next slide.

I won't spend too much time here because Lisa went through this in the testimony, but this essentially shows our 2023 sources and uses, which were just discussed. The main idea here is that we're anticipating a 35-million year-end deficit in 2023, and we will closely monitor the deficit and provide a mid-year update to the NYCHA Board with regard to our progress. Slide five.

In the absence of sufficient rental revenue and our escalating cost related to the HUD agreement, NYCHA has relied heavily on our operating

reserves to improve services for our residents and meet the compliance demands of the HUD SDNY agreement so what you're looking at down below is the reserves available for use in blue and the withdrawal that we had to make from that reserve in pink. The dashed line shows a month of reserves, which estimates about 254 million. If you notice, in the 2022 budget, we withdrew about 100 million from our reserves and, in 2023, we're anticipating a 65-million dollar draw. That unfortunately puts us at less than one month of reserves, actually around 25 days, and HUD recommends that PHA of our size has three to four months of reserves on hand at any given time.

Lastly, so what does this mean for NYCHA? Next slide. In terms of financial risk, we really wanted to make sure that we were being transparent about without additional funding or improvement in tenant rent payments, NYCHA will be forced to significantly cut our expenses and curtail property repairs beginning in 2024, and this could potentially impact repairs required for HUD SDNY agreement compliance so we've outlined five of the key financial risks down below.

First, 121 million in emergency rental assistance funding is unlikely while the households with pending ERAP applications amass 240 million in arrears. That's about half of the arrears balance in total.

Second, we have been heavily relying on our one-time unrestricted developer fees to cover what we know to be ongoing increased operating expenses from the HUD SDNY agreement, and that's not sustainable in the long term.

Third, our repeated reserve draws are reducing our cash position, and it makes it difficult to respond to unanticipated issues, prefund our State, Federal, and City capital projects, and mitigate any unexpected delays or reductions in grant funding, like a federal shutdown.

Fourth, our overtime costs are continuing to grow year-over-year as we deal with the increasing rate of decay at NYCHA properties.

Lastly, our utility costs have increased 20 percent due to price and consumption increases.

I'll pass it back to Lisa.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:

Thank you, Annika. In terms of NYCHA's capital

investments in our properties, about 2.45 billion dollars is available for this purpose in 2023, including approximately 390 million dollars in expected federal capital funding, 741 million dollars in City capital funding available in the 2023 City Fiscal Year, and other Federal, State, and City funds allocated from prior years' awards. We are grateful for the City's support, which is vital to our efforts. We are also grateful for the State's commitment of 350 million dollars in 2022, which we plan to use to upgrade heating systems and repair facades across the city after finalizing a Funding Agreement.

While the capital funding we receive is only a fraction of the more than 40 billion dollars needed to provide residents with the quality of life they deserve, we are making a difference with the money we do receive. More than 700 capital projects are underway across the city. Over 250 of these projects are in the construction phase. In 2023, we anticipate committing an additional 950 million dollars to upgrade heating systems, roofs, elevators, and waste management systems, repair building facades,

and abate lead-based paint and asbestos in apartments, among other important capital improvements. Expenditure in 2023 is expected to be 935 million dollars, or 78 million dollars each month.

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

As of the end of 2022, we have completed 2.83 billion dollars of Sandy recovery work, providing thousands of residents with new roofs, flood-proofed electrical equipment, boilers, backup power generators, flood protection as well as exterior lights, CCTV cameras, and security systems. For the 2022 Hurricane Season, 100 apartment buildings had flood protection and almost 10,000 households had full backup power

generators installed. By the end of 2023, those numbers will almost double.

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

Additionally, we have completed or significantly advanced a range of smaller projects funded through Mayoral, discretionary City Council, or Borough President allocations. After the 2022 preliminary budget hearing, we began working to further accelerate projects with City funding allocated in 2020 or earlier. Of the 72 projects we prioritized through this effort, 20 are now substantially complete, 32 are in construction, and 20 are in procurement or completing design work to move to construction during 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are also working to help address the housing instability crisis in our city by issuing

more than 5,700 Emergency Housing Vouchers to New Yorkers last year. EHVs are tenant-based vouchers targeting those families experiencing at risk of homelessness or housing instability, referred directly by the City's Continuum of Care partners.

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

The PACT initiative is revitalizing the homes of thousands of NYCHA residents. In 2022, PACT drove 2 billion dollars in large-scale improvements, providing residents of more than 8,500 apartments across 17 developments with comprehensive apartment renovations, building system and infrastructure upgrades, and improved grounds and common areas. Currently, 137 developments comprising over 36,000 apartments are in either the engagement or pre-development process, under construction, or have received

comprehensive repairs through PACT. Our goal is to bring dramatically improved quality of life to about 62,000 NYCHA families in total through PACT.

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

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

community to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to pivot to a better and stronger tomorrow.

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

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. With that, I'd like to turn it over to Council Member Brewer to ask.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I'll be quick. Thank you very much. Just like everyone else, I've heard from the State officials about the fact that people aren't paying rent and it's a problem so my question is it sounds like you're never going to get State money, I don't know, we'll try for it, but how can we help with our developments to work on one-shots or whatever is appropriate because that seems to me that that's a really huge problem so how, I know you listed some, one-shots aren't that easy to get, but how can we help on that front? Does the State have any possibility of doing it or should we be working locally? Or both?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:

Thank you so much for that question. We would hope that the State will be able to find money to serve our subsidized residents, not only residents of NYCHA but residents across the state who live in public subsidized housing. New York State was the only state to deprioritize subsidized housing, and, as Annika mentioned, more than half of our rent arrears come from people who applied for ERAP and have been waiting.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Because you're the bottom of the list is my understanding.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: We are at the bottom of the list.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Second question. I have Wise Towers. With all due respect to the developer who was doing the PACT RAD, it's not great. It's because I think there wasn't the kind of input that was appropriate with Elliot and Fulton. That was perfect, and they're on their own, doing really well. How much money, I know you mentioned some number, is going into the PACT program, and how do you get your money out? How does that work because it seems to me with all the

money that they will in fact end up making, at least the risers could work and we don't have to have floods and I'm calling about the elevator. Tenants even say I want to go back to NYCHA. That's how bad it is. How does the money work and how much is involved with PACT? I know you mentioned a big number. I don't know if that's actually happening.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you, Council Member Brewer. Overall, the PACT program, if we split it into kind of two groups, those sites that have already through PACT and those sites that are in planning or engagement and we expect to convert in the next couple of years. For the sites that have already converted, which is just under 16,000 units, the capital repairs are estimated at about 3.4 billion dollars so there's our financing that will be raised by the PACT development partners to do renovations up to the full scope that we require. If there are concerns that you or constituents have on a specific project around...

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: He knows them all. Don't worry.

2 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yes. We're
3 in close communication with Brian and his team.
4 We're very happy to look into those and talk with
5 you (INAUDIBLE)

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, I can handle
7 them. I just want to know, so 3.4, and then to be,
8 you want to try to do 64,000 units or 62,000?

9 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's
10 right. In addition to the 3.4, currently we have
11 about 20,000 additional units where we're in the
12 planning or engagement stage with residents. For
13 that set of units, our estimated capital need is
14 about 3.6 billion. Together, between those two
15 groups which is about 36,000 units, we anticipate
16 meeting the equivalent of about 7 billion dollars
17 of capital needs addressed through the PACT
18 program. Obviously, for the remaining 26,000, up
19 to that 62,000, we would expect a similar per-unit
20 average, but those sites have not been, obviously,
21 selected as of today so we don't have specific
22 numbers on the capital need.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. What are
24 the reporting requirements the converters go
25

through? Is it constant? Is it monthly? Is it quarterly? How does that work?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you for the question, Council Member. I think it's a very critical aspect. We have a dedicated function whose role it is to only oversee PACT developers once a property converts so they're in pretty constant communication, both right after the conversion, during the construction period as well as after that. In terms of specific reporting, we get in addition to regular contact we have with these developers, we require a monthly report where they report across a range of indicators around physical conditions, tenancy proceedings, etc.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right. I won't keep you anymore. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. You can see what the challenges are.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council Member. Council Member De La Rosa.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you so much, Chair. I do have a question about ERAP and rent arrears. In the case where a tenant is not able to come up with the funds to pay for rent

arrears and there's no options, what is that process look like right now?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:

Right now, applications for subsidized housing residents have not been determined so right now a tenant who has filed for ERAP is currently protected and cannot be evicted from NYCHA. Again, we are hopeful that the State will make funding available for our tenants. Otherwise, they would have to find other sources of ways to help them. One-shot deals, payment plans, but if you think about it, an average family at NYCHA makes a little more than 24,000 dollars a year. The average rental arrears for those families is over 6,000 dollars so it's incomprehensible and incredibly frustrating both for us and for our residents so every opportunity we will take to try to make sure that they get back on track.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Yeah, and the, for example, one-shot deal is not foolproof because you can only take it once a year I think it is and also you have to be able to show an ongoing ability to pay your rent going forward and there's challenges in that, right, if you're

someone who doesn't make, like you said, enough money to actually pay what you owe plus the ongoing rent.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:

Yeah, I think that's the challenge, but, as I said in my testimony, we have interim recertifications. If somebody has a reduction in their income, they should immediately come into the management office, they should ask for a rent reduction, your rent can be reduced to zero if you are not showing any type of income, but we really would ask that for the people who do have an income that they pay their rent because the rent is such an integral part of our budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Thank you. I just have one other question about the capital funds. Obviously, I'm disappointed to hear that some of our projects we've been waiting for in Dyckman Houses and Marble Hill Houses in our Districts are delayed, but I want to know what is going to be the communication for communities to understand where the delays come from and what possible timeline there is. In addition to that, I also want to ask if there's going to be capital

requests for the coming years, should we not fund those projects because there's a delay. What is the plan for addressing ongoing delays, because we don't want to continue to put money in if it's not going to move the needle forward. I was in Albany for five years. I know that this is an uphill battle and that we have not invested in NYCHA in the way that we should be investing in NYCHA. That's at the crux of this system that is completely broken at this point, but I want to know what is the plan going forward for capital needs because when I go to my NYCHA centers they're asking us for renovations, and we want to be able to use the little bit of capital funding that we have, especially and during this budget process, to advocate for things, but is there a point of doing that if there isn't going to be projects that are going to come to fruition for our communities?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you, Council Member. Just to answer your first question and to reiterate, 99 percent of budgeted projects will move forward as per the current schedules. It's that unfortunate 1 percent where we're going

to have to make this difficult decision to pause them. Those projects could already be in design, they could be in procurement so typically we're already engaging with residents and stakeholders, and so they won't go on pause, let's say today. It'll be over the next few months where there's a natural point to stop the work. We'll engage with stakeholders, explain why we're stopping the work, where we're stopping, and how we'll be able to pick that work up again once we're able to resolve our operating budget constraints.

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: I will say though for that 1 percent, like I'm looking at this list, there's like four projects in every Council District that are delayed. In my own District, there's three projects that are delayed so although it's maybe 1 percent of all the projects that are in the hopper, it's a large portfolio of projects that are paused.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's right, Council Member De La Rosa, and we would like to move those projects forward as quickly as possible as soon as our budgetary issues are resolved, and that kind of is the answer to your

second question, which is that as soon as we're able to fully resource the project load that we have, we will pick up these 50 projects, and any further allocations we get for small (INAUDIBLE) projects, we will try to be creative and see how we can combine those new funding allocations with existing projects to move them forward. Otherwise, we're going to be able to staff and resource them after we can resolve the existing portfolio that we have. Naturally, we'd want to move these forward first before we take on new projects. What I would say is that, as any agency, we do also have funding gaps for a number of projects and so if there's an opportunity to redirect allocations to some of those limited funding projects that may be another opportunity for Council Members to contribute to the Districts and the specific properties.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Council Member Restler.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so much, Chair Aviles. I really appreciate your leadership. Thank you to the NYCHA team for joining us today.

I'd like to just start on the topic of Chair Aviles' last hearing, of the Public Housing Committee's last hearing around the increase that we're experiencing in the timeline to prepare vacant apartments. We've seen this extraordinary increase, I'm actually looking at different numbers. Some of the numbers that I'm looking at say the timeline for re-occupancy has increased from 182 to 399 days over the last year. Something else I'm reading is saying it wasn't quite that bad but close to it. Under any circumstances, it's been an extreme increase, and yet NYCHA and the Mayor have cut the Vacant Readiness Program by 31 million over the last four years. Could you just clarify for us how it's conscionable to cut this program when we're seeing such an extraordinary increase in the length of time the apartments are vacant.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure. Thank you, Council Member Restler, for that question. Once again, I'm Eva Trimble, Chief Operating Officer for NYCHA. I want to be clear that it wasn't NYCHA who cut the funding, but we worked closely with OMB to realign the forecast in

the five-year plan to match our actual spending. The Vacant Readiness Program has been very successful for us in giving us the funding to do primarily the lead and asbestos testing work that's needed for our turnover process, and that's a really large range of funding. Apartments can go anywhere from 20,000 to 63,000 depending on whether they're positive for both lead, asbestos, or neither, and so we worked with OMB to budget the Program at the maximum amount, but we don't always need all that funding year-by-year so we've worked with OMB to match the funding to our production volume, and so we have never had a shortfall in funding to do the work that we need to do.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: What doesn't jive for me is that OMB is slashing the funding by 31 million dollars over four years while the timelines to prepare vacant apartments are going through the roof. That's when we should be investing more resources so that we can more speedily fill vacant apartments because we all know the homelessness crisis that we're facing in New York City, and that just takes me to my next

point so I just want to say it doesn't make sense to me that this is a question of what NYCHA can afford to spend, what NYCHA can manage to execute. You all were doing it at a much aggressive pace just a year ago and, under this Mayor, as funding for the program gets slashed, the timeline to prepare vacant apartments has gone way down. On the next point I was hoping to raise, we're seeing a decline in placements of homeless families into NYCHA housing, and I know that's been offset a bit by additional placements in Section 8, but I just wanted to look for clarity. Is there a goal or a metric that NYCHA is keeping to right now in terms of the percent of vacant apartments that are going to families exiting Homeless Services and other high-need populations?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure. I'll start by also adding that the time delay that we're seeing is, as we discussed in the last hearing, is due to both the environmental work and the level of general repair work that's needed in the apartments at turnover, and we really strive to make sure that every apartment is lead-free and asbestos-safe, but there is also cabinet work,

plastering work, painting work that needs to get done, and we are looking at ways to expand our capacity to do all of that work to increase the volume. With that being said, on your DHS question...

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I want you to be able to do that. You can't do it if you've lost 31 million dollars over the next four years. My point is that OMB is cutting us off at the knees and preventing us from actually being able to do the work that is necessary to fill these vacant apartments and get them inhabitable. That's why I'm angry. It's not that I don't think you can do the work or that you can upgrade the apartments so that they can be inhabited. I understand that there are additional requirements around lead testing and otherwise that you need to do, and I welcome it. I'm annoyed that you don't have the staff to be able to do it and that you're being cut, and you have no ability to actually execute what is needed when you don't have the staff, and I just think this is a cut that makes no sense.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:

Regarding the homeless placements, we are turning

less units this year. Typically, since 2014, approximately we have always allocated about 25 percent of our vacant units for families experiencing homelessness and coming out of the city shelter system so that 25 percent has stayed fairly constant. We are turning over less units per year at the moment so there are less available for families experiencing homelessness.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. My understanding was a percentage that it had dropped as well but appreciate if you're saying that those numbers have stayed constant. I would like to see those numbers on set-asides for homeless families increase as it's critically important, but we also need to, of course, increase the speed at which we're turning over apartments.

Would it be okay if I ask one more question?

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yeah, and I'd like to know do we have the numbers of how many set-asides for this past Fiscal Year and the prior one?

2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure.
3 In 2022, we did just over 600 rentals for DHS
4 clients.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Do you have
6 that for '21 and how it compares year-over-year?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.
8 For '21, it was...

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I
10 think that's just public housing.

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Just
12 public housing, just to be clear, not through the
13 Section 8 program. In 2021, it was just over
14 1,000.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: It's a
16 significant decline, and it's a significant
17 decline at time when we have less apartments that
18 are being renovated so that they can be
19 inhabitable for families.

20 The last thing I just wanted to ask is
21 we've experienced this dramatic decline, as the
22 Chair mentioned, in rental payment rate. I believe
23 we're down to 65 percent from 88 percent pre-
24 pandemic if I have the numbers right, and I'm just
25 trying to understand if ERAP funding doesn't come

through or the State does not provide subsidy, what's the plan and what kind of engagement with each tenant to provide a one-on-one household plan for how they can catch up on rent and get back into good standing for the long-term health of the Housing Authority and for the stability of the tenants?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure. I can start on that last part and then hand it off. For any resident who is experiencing rental arrears, our property management staff reach out to the residents, they do door knocks, they do phone calls, they invite the residents to come into the management office and speak about what's going on. As Lisa mentioned, we would do interim recertifications to readjust rent if they're having rent hardships. However, what we're seeing with this significant amount of rent arrears is that it becomes a burden once residents are so far in debt, it's very hard for them to start choosing to pay rent again, and so we are really hoping that if we can get some relief at the State level to clear those accounts, to give residents a fresh start, they will start paying rent again. I think

the level of rent we were receiving before, the residents would start paying again if we could clear those arrears out.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate that. Happy to support the advocacy for it. If there are ways in which I can be helpful in the seven developments in our District, we could set up financial counseling workshops, be happy to go door-to-door, connect people with HRA and one-shot deals in any way we can. We want to help make sure that every tenant in our developments is in good standing and are supported to access all of the resources that they should be able to benefit from to catch up. I can only imagine how overwhelming it is when you're thousands upon thousands of dollars behind in rent and it feels kind of hopeless to contribute the amount that you can, and if we can try to do our best to bring resources to bear, we would love to do so.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank you so much for that partnership.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you for your answers. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council Member. Can you talk to us about what elements in the budget support the Mayor's Housing Blueprint and where should we expect to see more activity in future plans?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I think the key part of the Mayor's Housing Blueprint that you see in the budget is the dedication to the Transformation Plan as we mentioned earlier, the focus on improving our repair process, our focus on funding skilled trades, and really this focus on ensuring that the property management operations were held more harmless from the cuts than central office was, and that's the key of the Housing Blueprint was focused on achieving our Transformation Plan goals.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Would you say the current budget proposal exempts those repair lines from cuts?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: It does. We did not cut any lines from the properties, from our Leased Housing Program, our

pillar areas of the HUD agreement, and any of our compliance departments.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What is NYCHA doing in order to fill those desperate needs for skilled tradespersons?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Currently, we have 696 positions in the pipeline that are not filled, 237 of those are in the central office, 307 are properties in the boroughs, and 152 are central operations. Most of those are civil service titles so we've been working with DCAS to have hiring fairs, trying to get pools of applicants so that we can do direct hiring even if the hiring manager is not available so our HR department has been working very closely with DCAS.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Have you noted specific goals over a time period? Obviously, that is a huge number, and I know the City is having significant challenges in hiring across the board. Are there specific timebound goals that you are trying to reach in order to fill these positions?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Our goal is to hire all of our vacant, but we don't have

individual goals. Our goal is to fill all of the current positions that we have.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Sure. I appreciate that, but, if you don't have reachable, accessible goals for staff, shooting for the sky is a nice effort, but you're always going to come up short so like, in the next six months, do you have a plan around specifically what you would do, how you would change your outreach to meet those goals?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Honestly, if you think about the fact that we have an 8 percent vacancy rate and, out of the 937 budgeted positions, only 696 have to be filled, we actually think that that's a pretty achievable goal.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: My understanding is you have within the operations area a 17.5 vacancy rate in those areas of skilled trades, that the 6 percent is overall.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: The 8 percent is NYCHA-wide. Let's just go through, we have in 2023 adopted headcount is 12,212 full-time positions, 10,020 are at the properties and in operation, 2,192 are in the central office. Out of the 10,020, we have 307 vacancies at the properties

and in the boroughs and 152 in central operations.

Correct? No? Do you want to...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: I just want to clarify for the record. I have the vacancies. We have 394 in the properties and borough offices, 257 in operations, and 286 in the central office departments for a total of 937 so only slightly different, but, yes, Lisa was correct. The vacancy rate across NYCHA is around 8 percent and, as mentioned, we are, of course, focused on the properties and the borough offices and especially all of our operations vacancies.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What the challenges to expedited hiring that you've encountered?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I think fundamentally the most challenging is the civil service rules, the one in three in hiring, and we have, again, focused on working with DCAS, we have the hiring pools which gives us a bit more flexibility.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What role does OMB play in approving NYCHA's hires, if any?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: OMB does not approve NYCHA's hires.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Let's go back to the rental arrears situation. We've heard a lot that there's been advocacy at the State level as Council Member Brewer noted, what was the plan if the State doesn't come through with that funding? Can you talk to us about what is the plan C or D if that does not materialize?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I have to say there has to be funding from the State for ERAP. There has to be a way to protect affordable housing and our NYCHA residents. As we said, when you think about the amount of arrears for people who applied for ERAP, it's nearly double so the people who applied for ERAP, it's 240 million dollars in total arrears for the people who applied for ERAP, the 120 million dollars that we filed for. If funding does not come through, then what we are going to have to do is systematically make sure that our tenants apply for one-shot deals, get funding from outside sources, enter into payment plans, but, again, to our point earlier, if you are a family making 24,000 dollars a year and you have over 6,000 dollars in rental arrears, a one-shot deal is not going to help you. It's not going to make you feel good about

paying your rent again. We house, we serve the most vulnerable populations in New York, and they deserve to be treated exactly the same way their neighbors who live across the street who are not in subsidized housing.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: You're definitely preaching to the choir here. I appreciate the optimism that there has to be a way, but, under the guise of where we're sitting in our most resource, that is 40 billion dollars in arrears, and I don't have a whole lot of confidence. If the State fails, will NYCHA present the 330 million ask to OMB as a new need?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just one second. If you could please raise your right hand?

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

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I do. Good afternoon. Brian Honan, Senior Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs at NYCHA.

Over the last few months, we put together I think a really strong coalition of upstate and

downstate housing authorities, advocates, residents, and legislators to really make this rent arrears issue something to be taken serious in Albany. We feel very confident in our ability to make our case, and I think we have made our case. However, if that does not come to fruition, we will come right back to the Council, I'm telling you, on April 2nd, to present a Plan B. I do not want to give that today because I think that will be letting other folks off the hook...

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Absolutely not.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: And I want to make sure that we keep our focus over the next few weeks on Albany, and we will share Plan B as soon as possible.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you for that, Brian. The question is not to let the State off the hook at all, by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, I think that is a floor of a request for NYCHA from what the State should be investing because these are New York State residents so, in fact, is much higher, both operationally and in terms of capital funding for NYCHA so that is not at all to be misconstrued. Nevertheless, I am deeply concerned, as

we all are, and this is not to set up the Authority to fail. It is the death by a thousand cuts. Everyone's on the hook here, including New York City.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I totally understand that, Council Member, and I think this panel here and others behind me, we spend seven days a week thinking about this issue. We do have Plan B, C, and D, but I just don't want to give away the end of the story yet.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: We talked about the accumulation of the rental arrears, and the opportunity for residents to do interim recertification. Can you talk to us about what the engagement is in terms of why residents are falling behind, how have those payment plans worked out, and how is that actually looking on the ground?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We reach out to residents, as I said, who are facing arrears. We do a lot of referrals through our Family Partnerships Department to financial counselling and other resources, whatever the family needs to help stabilize their situation, and hopefully cut off the arrears and have them return to payments. We do offer payment plans. I don't have the information right now

today on how many payment plans we have, but we are reaching out to residents and offering all of these services to try to get them back on a stabilized fit.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Could you provide to the Council a reporting on how many families you've reached out to and how many are actively in payment plans?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure. We will follow up with that information.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. In terms of evictions, obviously, in this context we are deeply concerned about evictions. How is the Legal Department working through the evictions process and that is the numbers to date?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:
During the pandemic, we took a look at our eviction process. At the time, I was NYCHA's General Counsel, and what we did was we discontinued over 30,000 pending non-payment actions in housing court, and what we decided to do was focus on residents who had the largest amount of arrears for the longest amount of time, and that's what we continue to do. Although there have been people who had pre-pandemic arrears who filed for ERAP protection so those cases are not

moving forward. I can tell you that since the eviction moratorium lifted, I believe that we have evicted five or six families in total.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In Fiscal '22?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: No, I think in two years, right, because the eviction moratorium ended last January so about a year and a half, so our goal is to keep people housed, and we take that commitment very seriously. Again, we are laser-focused on people with the highest amount of arrears for the longest amount of time.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: We have 30,000 that are on the ERAP list alone. How many are in...

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: We have 70,000 families who have some form of rental arrears.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: None of those 70,000 are in eviction proceedings?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: No. We have 70,000 total. We have 31,000 who applied for ERAP protection, and, again, we're being strategic so we have certainly not 70,000, I don't have the exact number, but I can get to you how many cases we have pending, but it is a miniscule amount considering the

2 number of cases that we had pending prior to the
3 pandemic.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay, but you'll get
5 back...

6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Oh,
7 here. Actually, I can tell you right now. Since the
8 eviction moratorium ended, we served about 1,000 rent
9 demands and filed 500 cases. The six evictions were
10 over the past year.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The 500 cases are
12 eviction cases?

13 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:
14 Correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And only five
16 materialized of those 500?

17 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Six.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Does it remain 500
19 cases still or has that number changed?

20 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: It's
21 fluid.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Do you know how many
23 now you have on the rolls, how many eviction cases
24 are pending? How many cases? I think I'm using the
25 wrong legal terminology.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I think you should just assume, and we can also follow up with you if it's easier, because language is very, very important when we're talking about these types of cases so why don't we just get you the breakdown after the hearing?

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. In terms of the Vacant Unit Readiness Program, clearly the Mayor should have exempted NYCHA from this PEG given the housing crisis in our city and the fact that we have so many incredible vacant units. In fact, we have more vacant units than the Innovation Queens Rezoning Proposal that is expected to be built several years away, the numbers are mind-blowing. I think we have still yet to receive a breakdown of why those units are vacant. We hear, as you've mentioned, environmental and general repair does not tell us specifically where they are in the queue and why they are in the queue and why there are so many so we're still waiting for those responses from NYCHA for the record.

Can you tell us a little bit about how is NYCHA planning to improve the turnaround time with this cut in place?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Right now, we're evaluating our resources for the program including our split between the use of vendors and the use of our own staff in order to find ways to improve the turnaround process and increase our production of turnover units. I do want to just add that NYCHA still maintains an extremely low vacancy rate of just over 3 percent so even with the units that we're looking at right now, it's still a very low vacancy rate for our entire portfolio.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Sure, but you have the largest amount of vacant units ever. How do you explain that?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Again, part of that is due to the environmental work that we're performing on all of our apartments. In the past years, we would turn over apartments and not do all of that due diligence that we're doing right now so we'd much rather have the vacant units and ensure that every person that's moving in or transferring within NYCHA is having a lead-free and asbestos-safe apartment.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So what you're saying 90 percent is because of environmental reasons?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No, it's a mix. I don't know...

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: That's my point. My point is NYCHA has not provided any clear data around the breakout of the various reasons and their timeframes. All we're seeing, the data we're seeing that comes from your data, is increasing number of units vacant throughout the city with no pattern and longer, longer times to get these units back online, and a cutting of a program to get these units back online, none of it makes sense.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We just received the formal followups from that hearing with the specific questions that you wanted us to respond to, and we are working on those responses now so that we will absolutely be providing the breakdown of all the vacant units and their categorization.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: We'll take a break and turn to my Colleague, Council Member Pierina Sanchez.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Chair Aviles, and thank you, NYCHA, for answering all of our questions today.

I know that some of my Colleagues have asked questions around this, but I'm really struck at, we're having a conversation that we've had time and again, the underfunding and it just seems to be different versions of the same discussion, but looking at the operational deficit that NYCHA has today, I'm just trying to understand how the agency is going to just be able to continue to carry out these core functions. I'm looking at this list of projects that are going to be stalled, two of which are in my District shared with Council Member De La Rosa in Marble Hill, and that's really it. Are we seeing layoffs at NYCHA or we just seeing hiring slow down? How exactly is this manifesting, the 845 vacancies?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's a great question. Thank you so much, Council Member. We are not pursuing any active layoffs at NYCHA. The positions that were cut were vacant budgeted positions so presumably they have been open and, while it's not ideal, we have been managing without that staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you.
Zooming in on the fact that of these 845 vacancies,

500 are in operations, I'm having trouble squaring that with you saying that there's an emphasis on the pillar areas, right, from the agreements with HUD and SDNY. How are we having 500 operational vacancies and still able to meet our criteria on mold and elevators and the other pillars of the agreement?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sure. I'm can start and I'm happy to pass it over to Eva. As mentioned, those are the vacant positions, but those have funding and so we do fully intend to staff up. As Lisa mentioned, that is our goal. We have been working with DCAS very closely. We do have civil service requirements that we have to meet, and we continue also to do outreach to our residents to make sure that those positions are hired for. I'll pass it to Eva in terms of our progress on the pillar areas.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Those vacancies, and as Lisa mentioned, we're actively trying to fill those vacancies, really only represent a 5 percent vacancy for all of operations so operations is a total of just over 10,000 employees and, while it's critical that we remain as fully staffed as possible, there is always a natural attrition that we're working to refill so this is

just a 5 percent and we're actively hiring and so we're continuing to operate without significant impact from those vacancies.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. That is helpful to understand. The other 445 vacancies, could you share more on where those are, what kind of roles, what kind of positions, and are you also looking to hire those or are those budgeted?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: Sure. I'm happy to speak to that. I also just want to clarify the numbers. I think there's different numbers floating around. Our vacancies are 937. As we've mentioned, that's 8 percent. 394 are at the properties and borough offices, 257 are in operations so all told that's what sits under the Chief Operating Office, in Eva's team. 286 are in the central office department so things like legal, finance, admin, and the like.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Are those funded...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: All of those positions are funded.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: So you're looking to hire for those as well?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
3 MARTINEZ: Correct.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Okay. Great.
5 Thank you so much, Chair. Thank you, NYCHA.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, Council
7 Member. Going back to the Vacant Unit Readiness. How
8 does property management at the developments
9 coordinate with the Vacant Unit Readiness
10 contractors? We hear that there are coordination
11 challenges between the two.

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
13 you, Council Member. The programs coordinate
14 together. There's always going to be some
15 communication problems, but, in general, property
16 management initiates the process of a turnover by
17 when a resident moves out they collect the keys and
18 then they mark the unit that it's ready for turnover.
19 The first step is that it goes through the lead and
20 asbestos process, and, once the lead and asbestos
21 process is complete, if the apartment is designated
22 as one of the apartments going through the Vacant
23 Readiness Program, then it gets turned over to the
24 Vendor Program, and the vendors do the work. Not all
25 of our units that are getting turned over are getting

turned over to the Vacant Readiness Program or city funding. There are other units that we just turn over through the property management process. The skilled trades come in and do all the necessary repairs so there is some coordination between whether this unit is going through the Vendor Program or whether it's going through our property management and just skilled trades work, and we are in constant conversations to improve that coordination as I mentioned before.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What distinguishes where the unit goes, whether it goes to the Unit Readiness or to the property management?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We have identified 2,283 units as the goal for the Vacant Readiness Program so we've selected units, I will get back to you on how those units were selected, but we've identified 2,283 as the goal for the Vacancy Readiness Program through June 2023. We have not yet set targets for the out-years and so, if that apartment has been designated for the program, it goes through the vendor work. If it's not, it just proceeds through our property management and skilled trades work.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How close are you to
3 achieving that goal?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: So far
5 of the 2,283, we have leased up 1,246. In addition,
6 we have 890 units remaining to repair, of which 235
7 have already completed their environmental work.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The 898, what does
9 that mean again? What was the designation for...

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Those
11 are the units remaining to repair.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: What does that mean?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: They're
14 still going through the repair process.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Could you explain to
16 us a little bit about what the range of repairs that
17 could include?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure.
19 Out of the 898, 235 have already completed lead and
20 asbestos work, so 636 units are going through the
21 other work so usually an apartment needs painting or
22 plastering, sometimes carpentry to install new
23 cabinets that may have been damaged, other types of
24 fixtures so the general repair work that is needed
25 because of the wear and tear on the apartments.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Would you say that
3 the plan to cut the Vacant Unit Readiness Program is
4 laid out in the preliminary budget is in contrast to
5 the Mayor's Housing Blueprint?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: As I've
7 stated, I think we're continuing our conversations
8 with OMB to make sure that we're aligning the funding
9 that we need with our production volume in the
10 program, and those conversations are ongoing.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: If you had to answer
12 yes or no to that question?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I would
14 stick with my last answer.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Not surprised. Let's
16 talk a bit about the vouchers. Is NYCHA concerned
17 about the possibility of reduced Section 8 voucher
18 appropriation due to the change in Congress?

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
20 MARTINEZ: We're not currently concerned. We do feel
21 as though our vouchers that we've been getting
22 through HUD, we've been getting funding for all of
23 the vouchers that we currently have. We also have
24 some reserves on hand that can be used in the program
25

2 so we are not currently concerned about the
3 appropriation.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In relation to the
5 Independent Budget Office's report that noted the
6 dependence of a voucher that is extremely high for
7 the Trust's success, that brings you no concern at
8 this moment?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
10 MARTINEZ: No. We have not selected properties yet for
11 the Trust so we do believe that we have enough time
12 to line things up appropriately.

13 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: And I
14 will say that just last year Congress appropriated
15 337 million dollars in TPVs, the most in recent
16 history and three times recent appropriations.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I'm not surprised by
18 that, but just this year we have a Congress that is
19 including climate deniers

20 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:
21 That's a fair point.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I have no confidence.
23 Does NYCHA receive any Tenant Protection Vouchers?

24 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sorry, Chair
25 Aviles, can you please repeat the question.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Does NYCHA receive
3 any Tenant Protection Vouchers?

4 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sorry. I was
5 blanking a little bit on this and what you were
6 referring to. Obviously, we don't receive TPVs
7 directly. Our PACT development partners receive TPVs
8 through the PACT RAD programs and specific deals that
9 we close with them.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Switching very
11 quickly around to homelessness and special
12 populations housing, you noted earlier a pretty
13 significant decrease in the number of homeless
14 households that were served. That is very concerning.
15 Can you explain to us what resources in the budget
16 NYCHA allocates to help homeless families get placed
17 in the agency?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
19 MARTINEZ: I don't know that we have a specific
20 program that helps homeless families, but, of course,
21 there are programs. We are supporting all of the
22 families that enter NYCHA, whether they were
23 experiencing homelessness previously or not.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay, so no specific
25 funding source to address that issue?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: No, we do not.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. In terms of the emergency transfer priority designed to protect victims of crimes such as domestic violence that is struggling with the PMMR reporting a decrease in residents approved for a transfer by 61 percent. We're hearing some intimidated victim transfers are waiting well over a year. What is NYCHA doing to improve the performance of transfers?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank you, Council Member. We understand how important those transfers to these residents that are experiencing violence. We have a total of 2,330 emergency transfers pending right now, and about 76 of those are flagged as VAWA transfers, or Violence Against Women Act transfers.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Can you repeat those numbers, Eva? I'm sorry.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure. We have 2,330 emergency transfers total, and 76 percent of those are for VAWA or domestic violence transfers.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And how long have those transfers been in existence, their life average?

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I don't have that information in front of me right now, but those transfers are waiting for the vacant units that we've been discussing so there is a significant time that they are waiting for the transfer process.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So we have emergency transfers that are waiting for thousands of units to get ready, and the PEG cuts the Vacant Unit Readiness Program. Deeply, deeply concerning.

The PMMR states that there are now nearly 30,000 residents in 15,000 units at the 58 developments who are part of PACT, the City's Section 8 public/private partnership under HUD. How many are anticipated to be part of PACT by the end of Fiscal '23? I know you gave the big number earlier in your testimony.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's right. By the end of Fiscal '23, so by this June, we've had some recent conversions or closings. I don't think we are forecasting specific closing within the next three months so the number would be the same as

today, which would be about 16,000 that have converted to date.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Then by Fiscal '24, do you have an anticipated number?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I don't have that exact number for you, Chair Aviles, but we'll follow up with that.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. How does PACT impact the five-year financial plan? For example, is the exit of units from Section 9 counted in declining rent revenue, and what are the savings accrued by moving units to PACT?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: That's a great question. Thank you so much, Chair. We do include our PACT pipeline as best we know when we approve the budget into the five-year financial plan so we take into account a couple of different things. First, of course, as you mentioned the revenue so we do decrease the tenant rent revenue over time as the units exit the portfolio, but, with regard to the operating subsidy, there's a bit of a phase-out so you don't fall off the cliff with the operating subsidy immediately. You actually have two years, and it steps down over that two-year time

horizon. On the sort of expense side, you also see a reduction in things like our utilities related to those properties and all the various expenses, contracts, equipment, supplies, etc. so we do include that into our projections.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is the capital needs of those buildings also removed?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: Shaan and his team are working through the P and A and so I'll let him speak to how we consider PACT.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: In general, that's right. Once a property converts through the PACT program, that fully addresses the 20-year capital needs for that site, and that no longer is a liability for NYCHA.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. What have been some of the challenges in the implementation of PACT that weren't foreseen pre-pandemic when the program was designed?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: We've been learning in the PACT program as we go. There are early deals pre-pandemic and through those experiences and through the pandemic we have

continued to refine the program very dynamically based on resident feedback and how the projects are going. I think that some of the challenges we have seen after the pandemic period relate to the earlier point that was made around the increases in the lead abatement standard that the City implemented, which created additional requirements for deals that had already closed as well as upcoming deals. The implication being not only financial implications for the full cost of renovation but also NYCHA putting in place strengthened oversight mechanisms to be able to ensure environmental abatement work is in line with our own requirements so we've taken a number of steps around that piece. We went ahead and issued a policy that fully aligned the requirements that we apply within NYCHA with our PACT developers. We put in place additional oversight mechanisms. We brought in additional resourcing that is full-time focused on environmental abatement activities by PACT developers, and, over time, we've been strengthening our overall asset management activities in terms of monitoring of PACT developer performance on work orders, on tenancy proceedings, and construction. I think the other area, not so much of challenge but

where we've grown is that a very large number of closings completed during the pandemic or after the pandemic and so we have many sites that are in construction today, and we have resourced up our construction oversight function that does regular visits to PACT sites, ensures that resident needs are being met during the construction period, that our standards of renovation are being met, etc.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: For the record, unfortunately, Council Member Barron who was on the line cannot speak directly to you because of outdated, weird regulations, but he has very strong concerns around how poorly PACT is operating in two developments in his District, including Linden Houses and Boulevard Houses in addition to Council Member Brewer and others who it is emerging that these deals are not cutting, and when residents are asking to go back to NYCHA and not be in this nebulous private developer, I think we need even a closer look at what exactly is happening here.

With the current Chelsea Houses article, that suddenly they're proposing demolishing the buildings, how does NYCHA engage with that

conversation? Are they able to do such a thing, and what is NYCHA's engagement there?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you, Chair Aviles. We are, obviously, very closely engaged in the Chelsea Fulton area project. As the idea, as you referenced, taking a different approach to renovate or redevelop the properties has emerged including from many of the resident leaders of those properties, we have tried to be flexible to work based on whatever the resident needs are and resident preferences around how can we make that happen together with the development team that residents have selected, and so we are an active player in that conversation, ensuring that if there is any change in the project structure or the approach that's taken there, that's very much aligned with what is the priority for residents and what best preserves the housing quality and renovation.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How will residents be protected, and who makes ultimately that decision on the future of the development, whether they repair it as is or they decide they want to pursue demolishing?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: The approach to renovating the property generally would not impact

resident protections that are protected through the RAD program and that attach to these types of conversion so we wouldn't expect to see any difference in the level of resident protection depending on the ongoing discussion at Chelsea Fulton. The ultimate decision depends on both where residents land in this discussion, if the currently selected developer is able to meet the specific requirements both of the residents, of NYCHA, and obviously eventually of HUD as well around the way that the renovation is structured, if it meets the full scope of renovation that's required.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So HUD would need to approve the plan?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And residents would need to be involved? I'm not sure what that means. NYCHA would have to approve the plan. I'm sorry. Thank you, Brian. I just want to be really clear with what these steps are.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Let me just be clear, I think Fulton, Chelsea, Elliot, the plan that was brought together brought together not only the NYCHA community but the entire community there.

There were Community Board, elected officials, the residents both for and against. Residents continue to be involved in this process. In fact, if you talk to the Tenant Association President at Chelsea and Fulton and Elliott Houses, they're the ones who are supporting this plan that's currently being proposed. We need to see the final details, but nothing can happen on its own. A joint plan that is supported by residents, that is supported by the community, that is supported by NYCHA will be put forth, and no demolition can happen without HUD approval.

Can I just also talk about the two other projects that were mentioned before? I think it really needs to be pointed out that Boulevard and Linden were built by the State, they received no funding whatsoever for many, many years, and they fell into disrepair where I sometimes used to say the developments were eating themselves because of years and years of disinvestment. Not like regular disinvestment that we see in NYCHA. I'm talking about total abandonment, and so we needed to find a funding source to bring those properties which are both very large properties up to a state of good repair. Wise Towers, it fell into the same bucket. It was locally

built. It needed a funding source. Usually the most frustrating times in these projects to tenants is year one of the project because that's when we're doing the most significant construction, that's when we are replacing elevators, that's when we're replacing boiler systems, that's when we're getting inside people's apartments, and no one knows better than you, Council Member, living in a construction site as your residents have at Red Hook for about 10 years is, frustrating is too weak of a word, it is really both physically and emotionally tough on tenants but come back in year two, come back in year three when the renovations have been done and then you ask tenants are you happy, and I've been to those developments where in year one they said Brian, could you please come back. In year two and three, they say it's nice to see you but you're leaving, right, so there definitely is a transformation at some point, but that first year is really frustrating.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I appreciate that and, as someone who survived a renovation over a six-month period, yes, and when it turns into five years, even more so, and that's not even counting the conditions prior, so this is like years and years in

the making so I hear that and obviously Boulevard and Linden have a particular subset of issues. Nevertheless, I think my role here is to lift up my Colleagues' call for serious problems occurring there. It is not the first and only set of problems that are occurring in PACT sites. We're hearing more and more of it from our Colleagues, and so we are here flagging it for you because there is a kind of accountability responsibility for us. I appreciate what you're saying, Brian.

Let's move to some talk about the pillar areas. NYCHA has shared that it's relying on external vendors as well as in-house capacity to meet the pillar areas compliance for mold, pest, heat, elevators, and the like. What's the split between the contracted and in-house spending on the pillar areas?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Thank you for that question. The 2023 contract across all the pillar areas is around 101 million dollars. If you think about it in total, the operating budget for the pillar areas in total is around 380 million dollars so it's probably about a one to two split in that regard.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The one to two is outside contractors?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: Correct. Contracts in general 101 million dollars and then 270 million would be the in-house capacity.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. Thank you. Boilers are a primary concern among capital projects. How many boilers will be replaced through the traditional Section 9 capital versus PACT projects, and is NYCHA on track to hit its goal by 2026?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: We are targeting to replace 320 boilers in that period through 2026 so slightly above the HUD agreement target of 300 through the capital investment side, and then we similarly have a target under the HUD agreement to address 200 boilers through the PACT program which we've already surpassed and plan to address several hundred more through the PACT program in that period.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So the 200 boilers through PACT were already done in prior years?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's right.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is there a goal for
3 those boilers in PACT through the 2026 period?

4 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yes, I can
5 give you, rather than a goal an estimate of how many
6 more currently we're projecting based on the
7 conversions that are in progress. We're expecting
8 about an additional 650 or so boilers through PACT.
9 Part of the reason why the numbers are large is that
10 some of the PACT sites are smaller developments, and
11 they often would have multiple small boilers in their
12 buildings rather than a large campus with a central
13 heating plant so that skews the number a little bit,
14 but it's still a significant amount through the PACT
15 program.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Right, but these are
17 650 boilers that are being paid by the developers,
18 not as capital through NYCHA?

19 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yes, through
20 the financing that's raised through the PACT
21 conversion.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay, thank you. In
23 terms of NYCHA struggled to replace elevators, fixing
24 only eight rather than its target of 100 by the end
25 of '22. Tell us what the plan is to pick up the pace

on elevator repairs, why did we only do eight, and will NYCHA be able to hit its target of 275 by the end of 2024?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: At an overall level, we do anticipate still meeting that target. The two major drivers of the delays in that program at an overall level, first significant delays in procuring the number of vendors across a large number of projects at one time that both stems from some of our internal challenges but also from kind of industry and market capacity. I think more importantly in the last year supply chain issues have really impacted within construction the elevator area so we've seen significant delays due to availability of different elevator parts, elevator paints, and other aspects. That's unfortunately why we did not progress as far as we had hoped by the end of 2022. Many of those projects are now in construction or moving into construction, and I think earlier in the testimony Lisa quoted that we would have over 160 elevators in construction this year at some point in 2023 completing this year or next year, and we have an additional pipeline of elevator projects moving to

construction in 2024. Therefore, we're still expecting to surpass that 275 number.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In the construction phase, how long does that generally average?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Elevators are a little bit interesting in that the majority of the construction is off-site where they're fabricating the actual elevator. In many cases, the on-site construction is only a few months. Obviously, if it's a large campus with many buildings and you would phase the construction of the elevators across those buildings, the campus itself could have an 18-month construction period, but there's a three- to six-month or longer lead time where they're fabricating off-site. In answer to your other question, one of the ways we're mitigating further supply chain related delays in the future is by pushing vendors to make those purchases earlier, to bring more materials on-site earlier, and to kind of stockpile so that when they are ready for on-site construction that can move more quickly.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. Are you seeing improvements in supply chain issues or do they remain?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I think we're seeing improvements in supply chain issues either because some of those issues have worked themselves out or because we're working with vendors to find alternative painting sources or things like that, working with the manufacturers in a number of cases as well so I do think that some of those are being resolved. I think the industry capacity is also starting to anticipate and match the large number of procurements we're putting out there.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. How much is NYCHA spending on the monitor agreement, and where is that in the budget?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: Happy to provide that. The 2023 budget for the pillar areas is 1.9 billion across operating and capital. As mentioned, it's actually 382 million in operating and 1.485 billion in capital sources, and that is across the budget so you see it in specific areas. You see it in our elevator department, heating, pests and waste, lead, mold, and then in the three compliance departments of Compliance, Quality Assurance, and Environmental Health and Safety.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Do you have a total
3 amount for that?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
5 MARTINEZ: Sure. It's 1.9 billion. Do you mean the
6 NYCHA monitor?

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yes.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
9 MARTINEZ: I'm so sorry.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I was like, that's
11 not right.

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
13 MARTINEZ: We do not pay for the monitor so NYCHA
14 spends no money on the monitor so in our budget it is
15 zero.

16 That's in case you cared about the
17 pillars.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The PMMR suggests
19 repair times are still a serious challenge with the
20 average time to resolve non-emergency repairs
21 increasing 48 percent from 39.5 days in the first
22 four months of Fiscal '22 to 58.4 in the same Fiscal
23 period for '23. Two months remains an unacceptable
24 wait time. What is the assessment of the problem and
25

2 what is the solution that we are implementing? We'll
3 talk a lot about this.

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
5 you, Council Member. Before I answer that question,
6 if you'd allow me, I did receive the information on
7 voluntary payment plans. We've done 826 voluntary
8 payment plans so far in regards to your arrears
9 question earlier.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: 826, and that's
11 across...

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: All the
13 boroughs.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: All the boroughs?
15 What's your guess of how much that represents in
16 terms of the people in arrears?

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I don't
18 have that, but we will definitely follow up with you
19 on that.

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
21 MARTINEZ: I mean, if you think about it, it's 826 of
22 73,000 people so very small, but to the point that
23 we're making earlier, it's difficult to encourage a
24 tenant with a pending ERAP application to come down
25 and apply for a payment plan. They really do think

that the ERAP application will get a determination, and they really are, in their minds, expecting money from the State. As we've all mentioned, they owe over 6,000, their income is only 24,000, so they really from a financial position find it pretty difficult to engage in payment plans. I don't know that we've mentioned this, but we're not allowed to forgive the rent so we're doing the best that we can to collect with the resources that we have.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Sure, so the 826 families, of course, one family is an achievement and is great. 826 is nice. 75,000 households is astronomical so while I appreciate how difficult it is obviously to get people there, the point of the question is knowing, that's less than 2 percent of the residents that are facing this issue, and so what is it that we have to do, what is it that the agency has to do additionally to make sure that we do better than 2 percent because this is a critical issue for the agency's success in order to collect the rents and also the financial impact on families. If, in fact, families go into eviction proceedings, they will be barred from other subsidized housing in other states. This could be a lifetime impact for residents

for a whole number of reasons. It's not for saying you're not trying but to clearly quantify that we need to do something different, greater, and our city also needs to pitch in here. These are New Yorkers so I appreciate that. Thank you for the numbers. I don't even remember where we were.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I will remind you. You asked about repair times.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: There we are. Our favorite topic.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: NYCHA is constantly monitoring our repair times. We review the data. As you know, at the end of 2022, we finished our rollout of our Work Order Reform Program, which decentralized skilled trades to the neighborhoods and also added a neighborhood planner for residents to schedule their repair needs so we've created a single point of contact for residents to reach out to and to really work with to schedule the repairs at their conversation so that we reduce the amount of times we're knocking on a door with nobody home. However, we do continue to face significant time delays in achieving the full and complete repair job. Part of Work Order Reform was also about improving how we

sequence and schedule repairs. Previously, you would have the plumber come and we wouldn't schedule the plaster until the plumber finished the work, we wouldn't schedule the painter until the plasterer finished. Now, we are scheduling everything in order to try to get them right after each other in consecutive steps. However, we are facing still delays in that scheduling due to staffing constraints but also due just to the enormity of our workload that we're dealing with, and COVID really impacted that significantly. Our work order backlog has grown 88 percent from the start of COVID in March 2020 to now in March 2023. For about 18 months or so, we had restrictions on how much work we could do within a unit because of COVID restrictions and so we were only sending staff into residents' homes to really repair the most emergency life, health, safety conditions, and so now we're working as hard as we can to catch up on that work and to get through a lot of those work orders that remained since COVID.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. Does NYCHA need more staff to help manage capital work?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: As Lisa explained in the testimony, we do have a shortage of

resources to fully manage the growing portfolio that we have because our capital portfolio has increased significantly since 2019 through today and continues to grow, our resourcing needs have grown along with that. Currently given our operating budget situation, we can't meet that.

[ALARM SOUNDING]

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: That's okay. I thought we maybe had to evacuate or something. Apologies. Continue.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Just repeat that as Lisa mentioned earlier, because of the operating budget leading to some staffing constraints within our capital projects teams we are pausing a number of projects so that is obviously indicative of the fact that we have a small resource shortage.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So, Shaan, the answer is yes, we need more staff to manage capital projects.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yes, to manage the full funding allocation we have, we would need more staff.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. Has NYCHA accepted and implemented all of the monitor's

expertise on how to manage capital projects? If not, what has happened and why?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: We work very closely with the monitor team that is specifically staffed to work on capital projects including a number of sub-consultants they use who have industry experience in this area. We work collaboratively around making various improvements. We meet multiple times a month, so I do believe we have taken on a significant portion, if not all, of the recommendations and expertise that they've brought.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So there were no particular areas that you had concerns with or did not implement?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Since I've been in my role which is a little bit over a year now, we've had a very collaborative working relationship, and that is the point I believe when the monitor also brought in more capital projects-focused experts to work with us. I do believe in previous years, early after the agreement there were areas of dispute around different portfolios, but we have a very positive working relationship and

appreciate kind of the additional oversight that they bring.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. What resources would be needed to allow all the Council discretionary funded projects to flow more quickly?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: For us to be able to not have to pause these 50 Council-funded projects, we would need in the range of 5 to 10 million dollars additional staffing budget to be able to manage those effectively. Obviously, I'm giving you a range because it depends on some other variables around how we allocate the funding, how we staff the projects, and other priority needs NYCHA has given our operating budget situation.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So 5 to 10 million in expense funding, for your operational funding?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's right. Thank you for clarifying that. City and State capital funding cannot be used for our staffing expenses so, therefore, it would need to be some other funding source.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. Thank you for that. In terms of the City funding for this Fiscal

Year, can you tell us again what's the total amount of City operational funding for NYCHA?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Sure. In 2023?

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yes.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Sure. In 2023, the City has budgeted 1.4 billion in capital and 375 million in expense. In addition, they've forgiven around 100 million dollars in payments.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The last part? I'm sorry.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: They've forgiven 100 million dollars in payments so revenue that we would have otherwise had to provide to them.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: For Fiscal '24?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Sure. In Fiscal '24, the amount is slightly lower. 224 million in expense and 1.7 billion in capital.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: For Fiscal '23, the 1.4 capital was specifically for RAD and PACT. Is that correct?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: No, it's actually a split. There is 741 million in capital funding for the agreement and our other capital projects, and there is 668 million in PACT's funding for a total of 1.4.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And for the 1.7 for Fiscal '24, is there a split there as well?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Yes, there is. The split there is 1.5 billion in agreement funding for NYCHA to meet the HUD agreement pillar areas and also our capital projects, and there is only 156 million for PACT for a total of 1.7 billion.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: From '23 to '24, there's a significant decrease in terms of operating funding?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. Okay. In terms of the total amount of cuts in terms of contracts, can you tell us, NYCHA has removed all nonessential contract spending in central office departments for Fiscal '23 to save 25 million. What

types of contracts should we expect to see to be eliminated? What does that mean?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: Sure. That's a great question, Chair. Our budget doesn't cut specific contracts. We leave that up to the departments to decide so it essentially reduces spending authority in the central office department of contracts so in the case of Finance, for example, you'd see a cut in my contract budget and then as an EVP and a Head of a Department I'd have to decide where I can supplement with my staff or supplement with additional resources throughout the Authority so we don't cut specific contracts, but, as mentioned, it's clear to say that we have not cut the contracts at the properties, for the pillar areas, or in our leased housing Section 8 program.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it, but

everything goes downhill so at some point the residents will feel it so it's good to understand kind of what that looks like.

What is the total amount of cuts from Fiscal '22 to '23?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-

MARTINEZ: As mentioned, our contract budget went down

by 25 million, and then we saved another 12 million in cutting the vacant budgeted positions, and then we've made small cuts in other places where we could. We tried to cut supplies where appropriate, equipment if we could, but part of the challenge is that while we can try our best to cut on the discretionary items, there are things that are in our expenses that are outside of our control, for example like our utilities, but Shaan and his team have been working very closely to kind of make our capital assets more sustainable over time.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How much is NYCHA cutting red tape to get stuff built?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I can talk a little bit about that. We have been very active participants in both the Citywide Capital Reform Taskforce and in the Get Stuff Built effort with a range of agencies including Department of Buildings so through the Taskforce I think the notable changes that have been made to Comptroller's Directive 10 where we've been a very active participant will help move our City-funded projects significantly faster. We've also worked directly with the Comptroller on a number of streamlining of process improvements that

will shave or have already started shaving significant time off of that aspect of our capital projects. Through the Get Stuff Built effort where there are over I think 111 changes agreed, there are three that are NYCHA-specific, and there are a much larger subset where we would benefit from that other agencies would also benefit from. In particular, the three areas that we focused on were around our coordination and engagement with Department of Buildings. Given the type of work we do, approval processes for our properties and assets that have a lot of historic violations or other aspects to them can be quite complicated, and so aligning on a more effective coordination model, single point of contact, being able to eliminate some of these historic violations that are not relevant anymore as well as there's a provision in Get Stuff Built to agree a different potential set of rules for historic buildings or older buildings that are like NYCHA's buildings will face a lot of challenges to meet some of the new code requirements, and it would allow us to also move projects faster. We've been closely involved in those efforts and do believe that they'll have a significant benefit on our project timelines.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: How much is NYCHA
3 using for design build?

4 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Our design
5 build portfolio to date kind of has two main
6 components. We initiated a series of design build
7 projects out of the HUD agreement for heating systems
8 work so we have a range of boiler replacement
9 projects that use design build. I'll come to the
10 exact numbers in a moment. The other main area that
11 we are utilizing design build is our comprehensive
12 modernization portfolio. Lisa mentioned earlier in
13 the testimony that we have almost 850 to 900 million
14 dollars across four large projects there. We were
15 also leveraging a design build approach to be able to
16 be more cost-effective and move those projects
17 forward more effectively. If I can't find the exact
18 design build numbers, we can also send those to you
19 as a followup.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Are you finding
21 efficiencies with the process and how are you
22 tracking that?

23 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: We are. I
24 think we're seeing two main benefits. One of those is
25 the efficiencies you're mentioning in terms of cost

and timeline, especially with NYCHA's properties that are subject to a lot of unknown site conditions and surprises. By having the design and the construction entity be the same entity, they're able to deal with those risks more effectively, and we believe we'll see cost benefits, but, in particular, we'll see timeline and quality benefits from that. The obvious other benefit is that design build inherently allows the design and the construction to happen more collaboratively and in parallel so we're seeing, for example, normally our projects can get held up with a lot of what are called RFIs between the construction vendor and the design vendor, those types of things are all internal to the design build entity so we don't have to deal with that and we don't see those types of things slowing our projects.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it, and you're seeing improved timeframes of how much on average with this new process?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I think we'll be able to assess that when some of our design build heating projects close off because we have about I think 23 of them active to really see what the gains have been. I would mention the other reason that we

use design build in both of these programs is because it allows for more innovation in the type of solutions. We've definitely seen that in the heating program as I mentioned earlier through use of geothermal and other types of unique technologies that a traditional design bid build bid-out the way we do would not probably have landed us with that type of innovation.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. Just to switch very quickly to the Trust, how much money has NYCHA expended on the Trust?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: It's actually quite small. I think we've spent less than 100,000 on the Trust to date, keeping in mind that it was passed just recently.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Do you know how much NYCHA has expended on the Transformation Plan? It goes back a couple years.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: I don't have that number in front of me, but we could get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: When should we expect to see a permanency announced and a full board seated at the Preservation Trust?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: We're hopeful that within the next couple of weeks the board will be announced for the Trust and, once that happens, it would be the Board's responsibility to pick a President of the Trust.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: In the testimony, it was noted in terms of the Trust that residents at select sites will begin voting this year. What are those sites and who determined them?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Council Member, as you know, the legislation gives NYCHA the ability to convert 25,000 units. We are looking at a number of different factors that will go into choosing the first sites. The first is resident support to do something, to have a conversation on what is the best strategy to move forward so that's a big factor. The other factor is need. We will be announcing sites in the next quarter. We'll make sure that you know well in advance, but resident input is big here.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I think I missed, so resident support to do something?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: 90 percent of the residents, and then the next criteria?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I didn't say 90 percent.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: And the next criteria was what?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: The next criteria is need.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Need?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Do you want to say more about that?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure. There is need in terms of overall capital need, but then there's also some places where there's immediate need, right. There are some properties that we're looking at, maybe their number isn't huge, but if we don't do something soon we fear for the long-term health of the property.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. I'd love to see a clear rubric around how, this is like 90 percent of the portfolio. I still don't understand how you make a decision based on that.

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I think the
2 first thing, in terms of the resident willingness to
3 have a conversation about the future of the
4 development. We've heard from a lot of people that
5 said I don't want to be first, I want to see how you
6 guys do this and then I'll judge. We also have
7 conversations with some residents saying I'm ready,
8 and I don't know what it is I want to choose, but it
9 could be RAD, it could be PACT, it could be at the
10 end of the day after I listen to you guys go on about
11 those two programs I might decide that I'm going to
12 stick with what I have but all I know is I want
13 something.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Okay. Does the budget
16 for resident engagement go up or down from Fiscal '22
17 to '23?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
19 MARTINEZ: That's a great question. I think I will
20 have to get back to you on that one.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Just to clarify, you
22 noted 100,000 to date, not necessarily this Fiscal
23 Year in terms of...

24 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: On the Trust,
25 correct.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: On the Trust engagement efforts. Do you have a projection of how much you would spend moving forward or is there a project budget for this in particular?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: I think it sort of, to Brian's point, it would depend on the timelines for the ramp up, when the residents actually decide to join the Trust which projects end up going through the Trust and then we would sort of form the budget accordingly.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: So there's no allocated resources as of yet in the budget?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: Not in this budget, no.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: The 100,000 dollars that was spent to date, has that mostly been to design a voting process or...

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: It's mostly been on some consultant support, I'm sorry, on some consultant support so the support to actually stand up the Trust so it's a new organization, it requires an EIN number, for example...

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: To do the structural work...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
MARTINEZ: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: But not for the
resident engagement portion?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-
MARTINEZ: I think there's some small funding, but at
this stage, as Brian said, we're still trying to
select sites so we haven't made any significant spend
on the Trust.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. All right,
I'm going to ask just two more questions and then
we're going to open it up for public comment.

In terms of Local Law 97 and the greening
of NYCHA, what is the anticipated cost of Local Law
97 implementation and how is NYCHA preparing for
this?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: The
anticipated cost for meeting Local Law 97 commitments
over the next few decades, our approximate estimate
is about 10 billion dollars. That's additional to the
40 billion dollar number that folks usually quote for
(INAUDIBLE) 2017 physical needs assessment. About
half of that is heating systems related work as well
as directly related improvements in the buildings.

The other half of that is broader work in the buildings around envelope and installation and things like that that are required for energy efficiency and electrification upgrades, things like that, for moving towards electrified buildings.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Got it. One of the things we know is that development costs obviously have risen, inflation through the roof, interest rates. How much additional capital is needed in the next Fiscal Year to meet the existing capital repair goals?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: We have the capital funding we need to meet our existing capital plans, obviously, so in terms of your question, it's not that we face a gap in capital funding. We've planned our work around the five-year plan and the funding we expect to receive from different sources. That's not to say that if we were able to secure additional capital funding that we cannot use that effectively, but, depending on the type of funding and the amount of funding, we could initiate larger projects or more projects.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: If I'm hearing correctly, you're saying in the planning, you are

taking into account inflation, interest rates, and all these other dynamic elements that impact the capital projects already.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: That's right. Maybe to clarify my answer, for this year, right, our capital projects are budgeted. We typically do look at a multi-year view so we would look at inflation or interest rates, we would look at supply chain we've seen and how that might impact costs. When we're looking out several years obviously, those factors will significant impact what we can do with funding that we have allocated in the next few years.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Can you tell me what would make a material difference for the work that you are each pursuing in NYCHA in terms of capital and expense dollars that you would need to materialize the work that you're doing? I'd like each of you to answer it.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: I would like 466 million dollars in tenant rent arrears.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: From whom?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: Well, we will take it from anywhere we can

get it, but preferably starting to the State as we've mentioned with the ERAP program. We'd be really grateful for any support that we receive from federal, state, and city partners. Of course, it would be helpful to also, as we've all mentioned, work with the tenants to be able to give them a fresh start.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I'll just settle for the 353 million dollars we've asked the State for, again, to put our tenants on the same footing as their neighbors who are not living in subsidized housing and would also give us the operating dollars that we so desperately need.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I guess I'll choose capital dollars since you went with operating, but I sincerely believe that the capital work that Shaan's team have been doing is critical to the operation side in that many of the repairs that you see in the backlog are repairs that are happening over and over again because the conditions of our buildings are so deteriorated so we may arrive today to fix a plumbing leak only to have that leak return in two weeks, three weeks, whenever again, or in a different part of the pipe. We really need major

stack replacements so the work that we're doing on the operating side is really band-aids at this point while we wait for all of the different capital proposals that we now have at our fingertips to really come through for us.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I'll build on Eva's point. What would help us the most is to be able to do more large integrated projects like the comprehensive modernizations that we've kicked off. These are much more effective and efficient in terms of delivering renovations. They also are the best way to minimize tenant disruption by doing a largescale renovation but really covering everything in the property at once. In particular, I would focus on two areas that funding is really critical. One is plumbing or waste and water lines. It's very difficult to renovate those parts of buildings without doing a full-on gut rehab of the building, and so that has become a major driver of our operating costs, and we're not able to undertake the fundamental upgrade of the plumbing that we'd like to because we don't have enough funding to do the branch piping in the rooms, the kitchens and bathrooms, etc., so those are large-dollar capital amounts like

the comprehensive modernization. The second area is really our Clean Heat For All Challenge. Our ability to quickly scale up the window heat pumps and alleviate many of the challenges that our heating systems are creating in our properties would really be a game-changer for us in the next few years, and so that's an area we could very quickly use a lot of additional funding.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you all for indulging me in that, and I would say we have to aim higher, like 330 million is clearly not enough, but I appreciate the work that you're doing. Thank you for answering today's questions.

I have one more question around hiring. Is NYCHA free to hire up to its budgeted headcount or does OMB restrict those hires?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LESCOTT-MARTINEZ: That's correct. NYCHA is free to hire up to our budgeted headcount, and OMB does not restrict our hiring plans.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Does not restrict that at all. Y'all are lucky.

I guess with that we can move to public comment. Thank you for answering the questions, and

we look forward to receiving the follow-up information.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: For anyone wishing to testify in-person here, if you have not, please fill out an appearance card at the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk. We'll shortly call the first panel.

For those wishing to testify online, we will call upon you after the in-person testimony is done.

A reminder to all members of the public who testify, we would encourage you to submit written testimony via email at testimony@council.nyc.gov or through the Council website at council.nyc.gov/testify.

The first two members of the public to testify in-person, Marquis Jenkins and Jessica Yager, can come up to the table.

If you could identify yourself for the record and then you can begin.

JESSICA YAGER: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is Jessica Yager. Good afternoon, Chair Aviles and Members of the Committee. I am the Project Director at the Red Hook Community Justice Center, and I'm here today representing our umbrella

organization the Center for Justice Innovation,
formerly known as the Center for Court Innovation.

Since it's inception, the Center has supported the vision shared by the Council of a fair and effective and humane justice system and public safety built through sustainable community-driven solutions that cultivate (INAUDIBLE) neighborhoods. The work we do to expand housing justice is central to that vision. This year, we're seeking 550,000 dollars in new Council funding to support our Housing Navigators Program, which provides assistance to low-income tenants in New York City to achieve housing stability. In Red Hook and beyond, Housing Navigators at many of our Community Justice Centers and our Legal Hand Program work directly with New York City residents who are facing instability, whether through the threat of eviction, the need for permanent housing, or living conditions that pose risks to safety and well-being. Much of this work is with tenants living in public housing. While New York City has made significant investments in attorneys for low-income renters, our Housing Navigators work with residents who are facing housing instability to find solutions before evictions are pending. We also help

tenants navigate the legal process when they don't have access to counsel, and our Housing Navigators support tenants in obtaining critical home repairs, preserving affordability, preventing evictions, and finding justice and fair treatment in housing court.

In FY24, we are seeking new funding through an expansion of the Council's Community Housing and Preservation Strategies Initiative to support Housing Navigators in Staten Island, Harlem, Brownsville, Red Hook, Crown Heights, Jamaica, and Tremont. This work is currently supported by Congressional funding that's due to sunset in late 2023. With City Council support, we will be able to continue to provide this important program for public housing tenants and other low-income renters.

Oh, I've ran out of time. I just wanted to say a quick word on the NYCHA arrears issue. Is it okay if I just...

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yes, please.

JESSICA YAGER: I just wanted to thank you, Chair Aviles, for your leadership on this issue and for all of the questions you were just asking NYCHA about this. As you know, because we've been working with your office on this, we're very

concerned about the uncertainty and the looming threat of eviction that's hanging over the head of NYCHA residents across the City, we see it in Red Hook every day, and we really urge the Council to continue to work with government partners to find a solution to this difficult problem, and we are looking forward to partnering with you in any way we can.

Thank you so much for your time today.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. I'd like to just ask you a quick question before you head out. Can you tell us for the record what you are seeing in terms of the tenant experience with the rental arrears and if you're seeing I guess this pending eviction situation and the support that NYCHA says that it's providing to tenants?

JESSICA YAGER: Of course, Chair Aviles. In Red Hook, we operate a housing court that's jurisdiction is the Red Hook Houses so all of the cases in the Red Hook Houses come to our court to be resolved, and we have a Housing Resource Center that's worked very closely with tenants in the NYCHA houses to address nonpayment issues and a host of other issues that come up in their housing, and we

helped people apply for ERAP back when the application portal was open, we helped thousands of people in the Red Hook Houses apply, and ever since then people have been living with this incredible uncertainty about what comes next, and, as NYCHA acknowledged and as you acknowledged in your questions, it's very hard for people to think about paying their current rent when they have this huge looming debt hanging over their head and so we work with people to figure out ways that they can move forward but without an answer to the question of what's going to happen with those applications, it's just a tremendous amount of stress and uncertainty for people, and we are very worried about the evictions that are likely to follow if there is not a solution to this problem.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you, and I want thank you for all the work that you do in our community and many others across the City. It makes a huge difference to have you there working with the tenants. I guess I just want to ask one last thing. What recommendations would you put on the table for the record with regard to this issue in particular

(INAUDIBLE) ERAP?

JESSICA YAGER: Thank you. We're very much hoping like everyone else here today it seems that there will be a solution from the State. The State created this problem by deprioritizing people in subsidized housing which was clearly a big mistake, so we, like others, are fighting to try to make sure that it's a priority for the State, but, if not, the City has to step up and help solve this problem, and that might involve having to go to the feds and asking for some cooperation there as well. We very much are interested to hear what NYCHA's Plans A, B, and C are, B, C, D as they said when they're ready to talk about that, but clearly there needs to be a solution here. A nonsolution isn't an option so there has to be a solution.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much.

JESSICA YAGER: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear from Miss Annette Tomlin and then, after her, John Rusk, you can come up to the podium.

ANNETTE TOMLIN: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for hearing me out today. Mine is really plain and simple. At this point in time, I do not understand how if NYCHA knows that it needs 40

1 billion dollars and it's only asking for the minimum,
2 and that's not even a minimum. I look 10,000 pennies
3 and they're not even offering half. That's
4 ridiculous. Over the years, 30 years of failure. I
5 don't understand why they don't think that they
6 should be held negligent and responsible for all the
7 years that have been neglected, mismanagement and
8 everything. I live in Breukelen Houses. I've been a
9 resident there for almost 25 years. I would have
10 loved to have the American Dream of owning a home,
11 but that's not going to happen, especially when you
12 get rid of public housing. The thought of getting rid
13 of public housing is totally ridiculous. We have a
14 housing crisis, we're dealing with a shelter issue,
15 people that are living in shelters have vouchers,
16 they're not being called. They're talking about short
17 of staff. I just can't fathom all of this happening
18 in the greatest City of New York. I mean, really?
19 We're looking at America. What are we becoming, a
20 third world country? This is ridiculous. (INAUDIBLE)
21 is unacceptable. As far as the tenants, yes, we do
22 have a responsibility, grant you that, but with the
23 living conditions and people living in despair, you
24 can't expect that so who is at blame? We're all to

blame. Okay, but definitely with NYCHA, the management companies, the vendors, they're doing jobs that are not actually being completed correctly, cosmetic. They're just giving materials that's just fix me up, (INAUDIBLE) repairs, putting a band-aid on a gunshot wound. It's ridiculous. I don't understand how we continue to let them do this here and, at this point in time, I wouldn't blame really if people just didn't pay their rent at all. Really, they shouldn't, okay, because the health conditions, the gentleman spoke about the lead condition last time I was going to speak, I believe his name was Joel, he was talking about the toxins. I get kind of excited so, again, just bear with me, it's just that something needs to be done and what's not being done is obvious. At this point in time, I just think, Charles Barron, I'm from his District, he was here last time, and he's definitely a forefront, spearhead, trying to fight for all of us, but he's just one person so, again, with mobility and organization of different tenants, they need to get together. A lot of people are not aware of what's going on. They don't understand the language. We wasn't even aware of this ERAP. At least I wasn't. I'm thankful that I was able to pay my

rent. I believe in even making a, what do you call it, (INAUDIBLE) statement in the sense where as you say, show good faith, that's what it is, right, show good faith, to just prove that you are willing to care for where live so what is it that we're not doing? It's not so much the tenants. It's actually the responsibility of each one of you here along with all the persons that we put in these positions of elected officials that are not doing their job as well so accountability on every part. Again, I just thank you for just hearing me out. I know my time was spent, but we need more than three minutes. We need three hours, if not 30 years, to (INAUDIBLE) not yes all particularly, but definitely those who are responsible, and, again, like I said, if the State doesn't do it, at this point in time, what are we going to look like? Everybody's going to be homeless? It's not even affordable. It's about low income. What's feasible for you might not be feasible for me. People that are on fixed incomes. What are you going to do with those persons, the senior citizens? It's just too much, not just for my generation but for my son and my grandchildren's generations so what are we saying here? Again, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Miss Tomlin, thank you for your patience and sitting through the hearing. I know you've been here a long time and for the 30 years that you've been putting up and watching this story, living this story so I appreciate your frustration, and you are 100 percent right. It is all of our responsibility. Unfortunately, some who are in power have decided it is not their responsibility and we have not yet held them to account so we're here to hold them to account, we're here to extend our work with the residents to say yes, at the Governor's level, at the Mayoral level who control billions of dollars in funding, what they have provided is insufficient, and I would include our Congressional Members there as well. Thank you.

ANNETTE TOMLIN: Nothing against my brothers and sisters, against the persons that are coming in to look for different types of freedoms in that sense, freedoms and liberties and everything, but, again, that's extra 40,000 people that are here that might not actually have adequate housing versus the persons that are in shelters that have vouchers and not even being called. They said they have 5,000 (INAUDIBLE) vacancies in NYCHA. They're talking about

this lead and asbestos and stuff like that, the OCC, that's the persons that they call for NYCHA, okay, they go back and call NYCHA and NYCHA didn't do their job the first time so what is that entity even built then, created for. It just have to stop. Again, I thank you all for just hearing me out and everything that you all are trying to do and stuff but, like you said try is a good thing, make an E for effort, okay, but it just needs to get down, and we don't have up until five years, 10 years to wait. This is something critical at this point right here, right now.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Right, and we are here collectively demanding the Mayor and Governor step in in significantly more ways in terms of operating and capital money to address this situation for the urgent situation that it is so really appreciate your testimony.

ANNETTE TOMLIN: I'll be here more often and more frequent because we need more critical persons. Again, I'll get it when I stop getting the jitters and stuff, but, again, I'm trying to maintain because I'm really just pissed. I'm mad as, and I'm not going to, so we're at that point and at that level so again, God bless you all and just thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All right, Mr. Rusk.

4 JOHN RUSK: Thank you very much. Thank
5 you, Committee Chair Aviles. I appreciate how
6 seriously you take all this. I have but one page. I
7 don't know if it'll be three minutes. I'll do my
8 best.

9 Thank you for this opportunity to testify
10 on a topic we believe is crucial for the safety of
11 the residents of public housing as well as a cost-
12 effective means of extending the useful life of the
13 existing public housing stock. New York City has a
14 unique opportunity to vastly improve our ability to
15 monitor, record, and address the deficiencies in
16 public housing so that we might be able to assign the
17 resources required to make public housing safer for
18 the families who call these apartments home. This
19 year, the New York City Council is expected to see
20 the New York City Department of Buildings implement
21 new rules for natural gas detection. Detectors are
22 expected to be required for all New York City
23 dwellings where natural gas appliances exist, and
24 these rules will require a substantial investment of
25 time and resources by NYC Public Housing. These new

requirements are part of Local Law 157, which was passed in 2016 after the devastating losses of eight lives in the 2014 East Harlem explosions and two more lives in the 2015 East Village explosions. Of special note to the City Council is that the DOB can decide to make these gas detectors monitored, which will certainly save residents and firefighters' lives. A cost-effective wireless network created within buildings to connect these gas monitors to 9-1-1 will also enable the City to address many of the persistent issues that public housing buildings face. With a low-cost network installed for the gas monitors, other small wireless sensors could be deployed alerting building staff within seconds of water leaks, temperature, humidity, and exhaust vent malfunctions and other operational and environmental concerns. These near-instant notifications will allow residents and service teams to stop water leaks, prevent freezing pipes, or determine if exhaust fans are operating properly. These specific malfunctions create mold, a leading cause of asthma. Other sensors will alert as soon as the boiler goes cold, if an elevator stops moving, and when a rodent is trapped allowing swift cleaning and re-baiting so that

infestations can be quickly addressed. All these issues are reported to building managers on a single application and data is aggregated. This simple to-do list for building staff will keep work crews focused on addressing the issues that have plagued public housing. With concrete statistics, Section 8 and 9 housing can support their requests for resources. This effort to monitor public housing will take resources for the next few years, but it will make housing maintenance much more focused and efficient and will address the concerns expressed by the federal monitors. Certainly, tearing down and building new projects will always give a fresher start, but realistically New York can only afford so many of these large-scale projects a year. With low-cost wireless monitor devices, the net cost to the City may be neutral while improving the quality of life in public housing.

Thank you very much. Happy to answer any questions, and I brought the wrong one of these testimonies so we'll e-mail you the right one.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Great. Thank you so much. What is the estimated cost?

JOHN RUSK: Per sensor, it's around 65 dollars so just the water leaks, there might be one at the kitchen sink, one at the toilet, and one underneath the bathroom sink so that's three monitors so three times 65 is like 205 dollars so not very much, and then there's a monthly cost of around 4 dollars per unit. For instance, for a 200-unit building, 39,000 dollars would cover the water leakage, but those sensors last 10 years. It's an ultra-efficient system on a new technology. The whole building could be outfitted for say 39,000 for just water leaks, but if you amortize that over 10 years, that's 3,900 dollars a year and then the monitoring is like another 10,000 dollars a year. What it allows is the property management staff to know almost immediately when there's a leak within 30 seconds.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I appreciate that technology, and I think there's much technology that has been avoided. I think the one problem that it does not address is our lack of staffing to make the repairs that are required.

JOHN RUSK: My suggestion is when faced with these concrete numbers, in other words, if the federal government sees within 30 seconds we know

there's a leak under a sink, we know we've caught a mouse or a rat, we know that exhaust fans have gone out, we know that the boiler has gone cold. I recognize it's terrible that the federal government is refusing to fund NYCHA, but when you're faced with this data of exactly when the leaks happen that it's in apartment 2111, that it's in apartment 6J, you can see the data of when it happened and you can see the data of when it's closed. Obviously, staff at NYCHA would be very concerned about these statistics because it's going to report a lot of leaks right away, and they'd rather just build brand new buildings. Not possible. A child who is age three who grows up with visible mold is 700 percent more likely to have asthma. It's unacceptable. My hope is that realistically the push to Section 8, though I understand why, can't be done fast enough or realistically enough, the federal government just has to fund NYCHA, and I think the kind of statistics that this kind of program could do, this kind of monitoring, giving NYCHA just one pane of glass to see when the boilers don't work, when the elevators don't work, when there's water leaks, will force the kind of attention from the federal government that

otherwise it's just a little bit anecdotal and repair logs, but this is clear data. When the leak happened, when it was cleared.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much for your testimony.

JOHN RUSK: Thank you so much for listening. I appreciate your work.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much. Unless there's anyone here to testify in-person, we'll move on to the online testimony.

For the folks on Zoom who are wanting to testify, I will call your name and you will receive an invitation to unmute yourself. There will be two minutes to testify, and we would encourage also any testimony be submitted to the Council, again through testimony@council.nyc.gov.

The first member of the public on Zoom should be receiving an invite to unmute yourself will be Ramona Ferreyra.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Miss Ferreyra, you should be getting an invite to unmute yourself shortly.

RAMONA FERREYRA: Can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear you now. You may start.

RAMONA FERREYRA: It wasn't doing the thing. Sorry. Good afternoon. I know there's going to be like a timer somewhere. I am Guatu Ke Ini Inaru. My colonial name is Ramona Ferreyra, and I am a social entrepreneur, public housing tenant, and also the founder of Save Section 9, but this testimony doesn't reflect our collective opinions.

I'm here today to ask the Council, unlike NYCHA, for 1.5 billion dollars for Section 9 public housing, and I wish to see that accompanied by stronger oversight, which is clearly necessary to reach operational excellence and earmarking the proceeds from legal marijuana sells to help offset that cost to the City and State, and, finally, that money should also come with a caveat that we create a new public housing authority for New York City. This Council has an opportunity to make it clear once and for all that public housing is the standard. Affordable housing, vouchers, tax credits, 421-A, and other programs have not and cannot fulfill the

housing needs of average New Yorkers making less than 65,000 dollars a year.

I'd like to highlight a couple of issues that I think are important based on the testimony that NYCHA gave. First, the Trust continues to be NYCHA's priority even against the wishes of tenants. While our homes deteriorated, NYCHA wasted unknown amounts. They did not include in that 100,000 dollars the funding that they actually spent on consulting and on hiring New York City Action Lab in 2021. They also didn't include the consultants that prepared the materials for the Blueprint, which is the first version of the Trust. While they continue to focus on developing the Trust and throwing money at privatizing 25,000 units against our wills, we have suffered. Pre-pandemic, I paid my rent. My grandmother and I, we waited patiently for our repairs.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Please continue.

RAMONA FERREYRA: The pandemic killed my grandmother, and it sickened me twice. My neighbors at Mitchell Houses, we were amongst the top 10 developments seeing deaths and infections according

to the Department of Health Bronx site. This is why in September 2021 I started a collective rent strike. To this day, I have open work order for my floor tiles, for the painting which I finally finished my kitchen after two years. Because of my disability, that took me a really long time. I continue to have a leak in my living room that's about a decade old. None of this has been taken care of, and I have not been contacted by management regarding my rent arrears options or any conversation, right, to address the fact that I have not been paying rent for that long, and I say proudly that I have been on rent strike for that long because I was publicly shamed by a HUD employee, Daniel Sherrod, in front of NYCHA staff, but it's my right to withhold rent when a legal contract such as my lease is not being upheld. There's a couple things regarding the vacancy units that you guys raised today, which are very important, and I want to highlight who's actually impacted by the vacant units.

We've heard a lot about homeless families, and we've heard a lot about people needed emergency transfers, but there's another population that we're completely looking over, and that's about

1,000 people that are sitting today on Rikers Island in unsafe conditions because judges are afraid to let them out although they have been found innocent or have reached their time of release, and they're afraid to send them into the shelter system or onto the street so every time that NYCHA neglects repairing a unit, another person possibly dies in a domestic violence situation, from the toxins in their apartments, or on Rikers Island, and the story regarding vacant units is not full. As my dear neighbor, Luciano, passed away in April 2020, and he was the first one that we lost to COVID in my development, in my building, his unit continues to be empty. It is clean because I cleaned it after he died. I was his emergency contact person. His cabinets are in good condition. His refrigerator probably needs to get power-washed, but his unit and the one next to me both sit empty while people are in the streets and homeless shelters and on Rikers Island.

NYCHA also has not been upholding the Section 9 guidance. They don't prioritize our homes so we'll get notices telling us that there's going to be spackling and painting, and we find that our

hallways are being repainted but our units are sitting 10 years waiting to be painted, right. NYCHA continues to operate and made a budget request that really reflects their commitment to privatizing public housing, and, when I say privatize, I mean shift any unit from Section 9 traditional public housing to the PACT or the RAD program, and NYCHA has been unable to prove or disprove the findings of Human Rights Watch who sent them a letter and sent Congress a letter regarding the violation of tenant rights, the more likelihood to see eviction rates increase, which the Comptroller is not looking at, and our quality of life decrease when you privatize units. Privatization cannot be the guiding principle of an organization that is supposed to overlook public housing in New York City. This new housing authority needs to be explored. We need to stop seeing elected officials traveling to different cities seeking inspiration from social housing and collective housing and all these other things when in New York City we're about to have 100,000 units left without leadership as NYCHA continues to focus itself on the 25,000 that are going to go into the Trust. I'll leave it there, and I'm open for questions, and

I also have all of the evidence and supporting articles and research regarding my testimony. I can submit that with the written testimony.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: First, thank you, Miss Ferreyra, for waiting patiently. I know you have been listening the entire time. I can't agree with you more around budget and policy for that matter that reflects the intention around privatization. I think all arrows are pointing in the same direction to our great dismay.

In terms of work order reform, I think your experience tells us then that that is not operating in your development.

RAMONA FERREYRA: No.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Is that correct?

RAMONA FERREYRA: I had a visit from a team that was interested in learning whether or not I can get spackling, and when I showed them the water damage which is in my living room and has been there for more than 10 years, they said that that wasn't their responsibility, that they don't spackle walls that have been damaged by anything more than regular usage is what they explained, and they gave me the number to the Bronx office to follow up on my tickets

for flooring and painting the unit and spackling of that section, but I've called that unit in the past, and I'm tired of getting upset over the same thing so (INAUDIBLE)

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: I understand. I know you've put together in terms of expenses around the Trust and Action Lab and the Blueprint, but love to see those. Thank you for your testimony and your guidance and your fight to save Section 9.

RAMONA FERREYRA: Thank you for the hearing.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Again, testimony can be submitted to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

The next person who should be receiving an invite to unmute yourself is Tanesha Grant.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

TAMIKA MAPP: Hi. Thank you so much, Council Member (INAUDIBLE) and thank you, guys, for having this important testimony. My name is Tamika Mapp. I'm the State Committeewoman for the 68th Assembly District. I just wanted to be on record to make sure that we keep our Section 9 in the forefront of everything while making sure every money that has been allocated goes to the Section 9 portion of

public housing instead of the RAD PACT portion of public housing as it has been in the previous situations so that's all my testimony is today.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much, Miss Mapp. Thank you for being her and your testimony.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next member of the public will be Tanesha Grant. You should be receiving an invitation to unmute shortly.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

TANESHA GRANT: Hello. Thank you for having this hearing. My name is Tanesha Grant. I am the Executive Director of Parents Supporting Parents New York. I am here on behalf a lot of community members that we support that are in NYCHA. I also want to bring Councilman Charles Barron into the equation since he can't speak. What we want is we want the City Council to allocate money to NYCHA, public housing, Section 9. Last year, 1.3 billion dollars was given to RAD and PACT, and none of that money was for NYCHA for Section 9. We also like the idea of residents being in charge of facilitating their own buildings and being in charge of managing their own buildings under NYCHA. The people closest

to the problem have the solution. The people that have been living disenfranchised for decades are the ones who know how to fix the problem. It is mind-blowing that every time I come on these hearings I see a whole bunch of white people, white men and white women, who have never lived in NYCHA but have the authority of leadership of something that they know nothing about. That's one of the reasons why NYCHA, why public housing, Section 9 has been disenfranchised and underserved and under-managed for so many years because the people that are managing them, the people that are getting paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to run them don't have to live in them. Give the power back to the people, keep Section 9, and we're advocating and demanding that Section 9, NYCHA, be fully funded. Not RAD, not PACT. No one wants to fix the situation but wants to...

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Your time has expired.

TANESHA GRANT: Come in with all of these other things instead of fixing NYCHA Section 9. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Miss Grant, thank you so much for your testimony. You did Council Member

Barron proud because we absolutely 100 percent agree with that. We appreciate you and your advocacy.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next member of the public on Zoom, Shannon McLennon Wier, should be receiving an invitation to unmute.

SHANNON MCLENNON WIER: Can you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can.

SHARON MCLENNON WIER: You can hear me? Great. Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Sharon McLennon Wier. I am the Executive Director for the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York, CIDNY. I'm here to advocate for the over 1 million people with disabilities that are living in New York City.

CIDNY has approximately about 90 percent of people that we serve with disabilities are living in public housing. They are living in NYCHA housing. They have chronic disabilities. They have sensory disabilities. They have autoimmune disabilities. The housing that they are living in further exacerbates their disabilities. I'm here to advocate for funding to fix the NYCHA problem. We have consumers calling us every day to talk about how they are exposed to mold, how they experience roaches, how they experience rats, how they don't have hot water, how

they don't have heat, how they're afraid to leave their apartment because they cannot see, because they cannot hear, because they don't have a mobility device, they're afraid of being attacked in elevators, or they're in buildings where they can't even leave their homes because elevators are not in working order. I'm here to advocate for people to understand that having a disability can happen to anyone, and because most people with disabilities have low income, because of the disparities and the barriers to employment and to the environment, they have no other choice but to live in public housing. It is imperative as a community, as a society, that we provide comfortable and appropriate housing for each and every individual.

I'm also here to advocate for funding for CIDNY to help our clients and those individuals who need an attorney to help them in navigating the system for the right to counsel. CIDNY has many people with disabilities who are unable to find appropriate counsel to address their housing issues. Our consumers are afraid to enter into the shelter system or to enter into the streets. It's imperative that you work with non-profits, especially CIDNY, who

are advocating for people with disabilities so that they have safe and healthy housing in New York City.

I thank you for listening, and I just also want you to understand that we all have friends and families that are affected by disabilities, and it's imperative for us to make sure that the funding is appropriate for New York City Housing. I'm ready to take any questions that you may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much, Miss Wier, for your testimony. Can you tell me have you seen the conditions for disabled residents in NYCHA improve or deteriorate, and I know it's a very general question, but I'd love to hear what your experience has been with the folks that you work with.

SHARON MCLENNON WIER: All I can say based on the numerous calls that CIDNY receives on a daily basis is that there are many, many complaints. The housing conditions are deplorable. What really kills me is that we're here to advocate, we want to teach our consumers how to speak up and go through the right procedures to put their claims in to do the right thing in advocating for what they need in their apartments, but they're not getting it. Further, to

hear consumers acquire additional disabilities, maybe they have a sensory disability, now they have respiratory issues because they have water and mold problems. We also have children who are not doing well in the school system because of the constant exposure to mold and to lead. This is a problem, and we understand that NYCHA needs funding, we understand that they need help, but what do you say to a mother that has a child that could excel if they just lived in a different place and there's no other choice or no other place for them to live based on their income so I hope I answered your question, but basically the conditions have not improved.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you so much. Thank you for your testimony. I know we all need to do better, specifically with our community members. In terms of communication, I know this is an ongoing struggle that NYCHA has not been able to ensure that it meets the needs of all its disable community members in terms of how it communicates. I'd love to talk to you more offline.

SHARON MCLENNON WIER: Chair, I just wanted to add the right to counsel is very important as well, and a lot of our constituents are saying

that they cannot find an attorney to appropriately address their disability-related accommodations that they may need in that process so it's really imperative that we further increase the funding to right to counsel because CIDNY works with people with disabilities, we know the accommodations, we know what they need, and so I just want to also keep that on your radar.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Yeah, thank you for that. I can't agree with you more. It is critical for our city to make sure that we provide all the tools necessary to our residents so that they can protect themselves. I appreciate that very much. Thank you.

SHARON MCLENNON WIER: Thank you so much. Good evening. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. With that, I think once again I just want to extend all my thanks to everyone for being here today, especially to all the residents and to the Staff who helped to prepare. While it is shocking to learn that NYCHA has three weeks' worth of reserves left in the bank, I am not surprised and I'm sure none of my Colleagues that joined today are surprised and deeply concerned. For a decade, every level of government has failed the

residents of public housing. For decades, our elected officials have treated NYCHA residents like second-class citizens, divesting to the point where thousands of units and sometimes whole buildings have become uninhabitable. This is most certainly a disgrace. New York is the wealthiest city, not just in the country, but in the world, and we continue to let our working-class suffer the indignities of crumbling public housing stock. Worse, we again and again turn to privatization in hopes that we can fix what we deliberately broke. Privatization has never been a good long-term solution if the past few decades of growing inequity have taught us anything, but we continue to refuse to do the hard work of fixing antiquated bureaucratic structures designed to disenfranchise more and more. We refuse to do the hard work of care. We must care for our public housing residents, and I plan to reflect that in my work on this year's budget. I will take what was learned here today and work alongside our Colleagues, residents, and advocates to help restore dignified living conditions to our most vulnerable.

Thank you so much for being here today.

With that, the meeting is adjourned. [GAVEL]

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 March 27, 2023