



**WOMEN'S
CITY CLUB**
OF NEW YORK

Shaping Policy
Improving Lives

wccny.org

Public Housing in New York City

AN OVERVIEW



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ABOUT WCC

Women’s City Club of New York (WCC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, multi-issue activist organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers. WCC works to shape public policy to promote responsive government through education, issue analysis, advocacy and civic participation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Women’s City Club of New York (WCC) has a long and extensive history of involvement in New York City housing issues. From conducting research projects to writing reports and hosting public programs WCC has, for decades, advocated for housing that is affordable and accessible to New Yorkers.

In September 2014, in an effort to advance this work, WCC created a Housing and Homelessness Working Group. The Working Group identified three potential areas of focus around which WCC members could become engaged: public housing, affordable housing and supportive housing.

Given the considerable resources allocated to public housing by the City and State, the increased level of homelessness in the city, and renewed focus on the issue within the past year, the Working Group identified public housing as its main area of focus and established the Task Force on Public Housing. Because public

housing is a broad category, the Task Force decided to focus its work, and this publication, on facilitating a better understanding of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and encouraging advocacy to improve and preserve public housing in New York City.

At a time when housing costs are skyrocketing, it is imperative that affordable options become and remain available. More than half of all rental households are spending above 30 percent of their incomes on rent. One-third of those rental households are spending more than 50 percent of their incomes on housing.¹ This results in a significant number of rent-burdened families and individuals.¹

The unaffordability of housing and record number of individuals and families seeking assistance mean that people are forced to

double-up with family or friends, to move to overcrowded shelters, or to move out onto the streets.² Clearly, it is crucial to retain and improve NYCHA as a public asset for New York City.

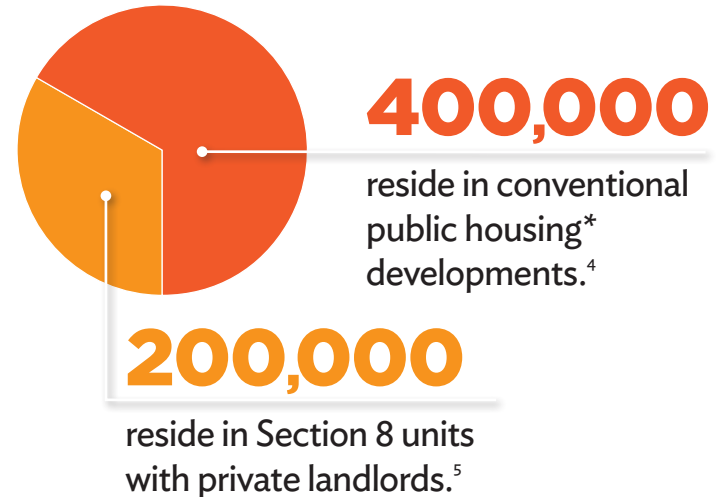
At a time when housing costs are skyrocketing, it is imperative that affordable options become and remain available.

WHAT IS NYCHA?

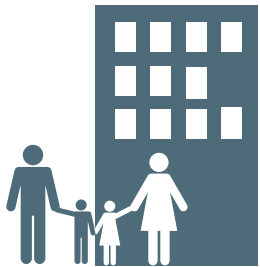
The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the **largest public housing agency** in North America and home to 4.8 percent of New Yorkers.³

The Residents

Over **600,000**
New Yorkers are served by NYCHA.³



*This publication focuses only on residents in conventional public housing.



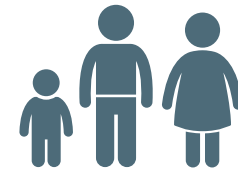
Over **177,657** families live in **conventional public housing** (as of March 2016).³



19.5% of the residents are aged **62 years** or older.³

46.7% of NYCHA families have at least **one person employed**.³

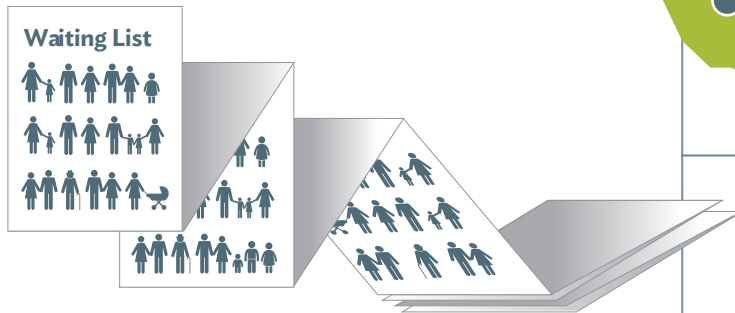
The average **family income** is **\$23,672**.³



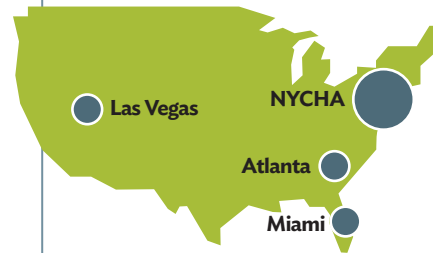
27.3% are under age **18** (as of January 2016).³

WHAT IS NYCHA?

258,880 families are on the **waiting list** for conventional public housing (as of March 2016).³



NYCHA is the **largest landlord** and one of the **largest employers** in New York City.³

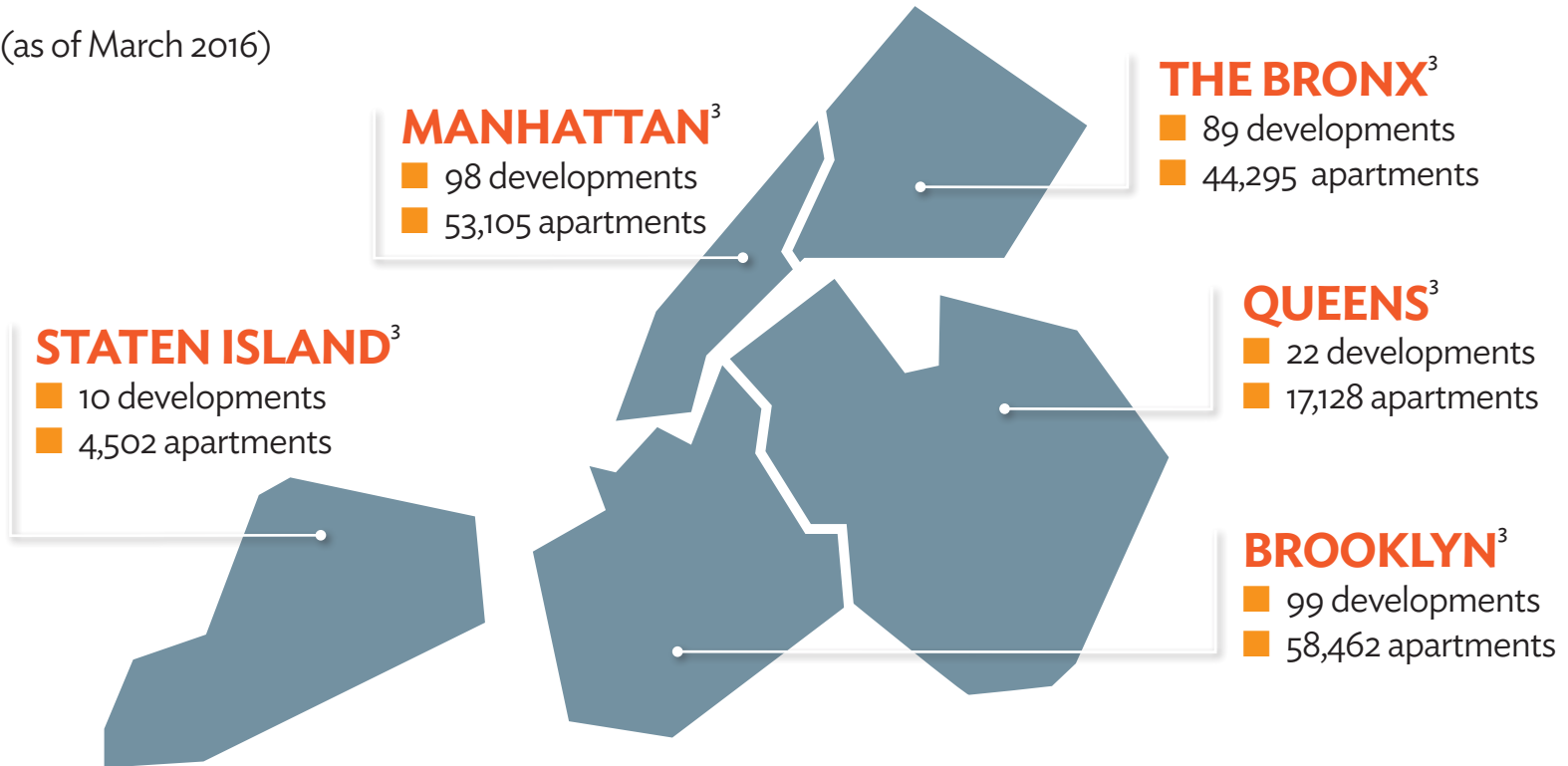


If NYCHA were a city, it would rank 30th in population size in the U.S.³

Under the *Department of Housing and Urban Development Code of Federal Regulations 24 Part 964*, the resident associations in public housing developments provide residents with a role and voice in NYCHA decision making.⁶

The Locations

(as of March 2016)



WHAT IS NYCHA?

The Facilities

9,671 apartments are designated for **seniors only**.³



7,616 apartments are **retrofitted** for persons who are mobility-impaired.³



The average **monthly rent** is **\$483**.³



Residents pay **30%** of their family income in rent.³



HOW IS NYCHA RUN?

NYCHA is managed by a Chair/Chief Executive Officer, Board and Executive Staff who are involved in a host of programs and activities.⁷

The Chair

- The Chair/CEO is appointed by the Mayor and is a member of the Board.⁷
- This is a full-time, salaried position.⁸
- The Chair/CEO supervises the business and affairs of NYCHA.⁷



HOW IS NYCHA RUN?

The Board

- The Board is composed of the Chair and six additional members, all appointed by the Mayor.⁷
- Board members serve a term of three years; the Chair serves at the discretion of the Mayor.^{9,10}
- Three members of the Board must be NYCHA residents.⁷
- Other than the position of the Chair, Board positions are voluntary.⁸
- Duties of the Board:⁷
 - Vote on contracts, resolutions, policies, motions, rules and regulations.
 - Meet a minimum of 10 times throughout the year.
- All changes in the basic organizational structure of NYCHA must be approved by the New York State Legislature and the Governor.⁷



The Executive Staff

- The **32-member** Executive Staff manages NYCHA.¹²



General Employees³

- NYCHA has more than **11,000 employees**.³

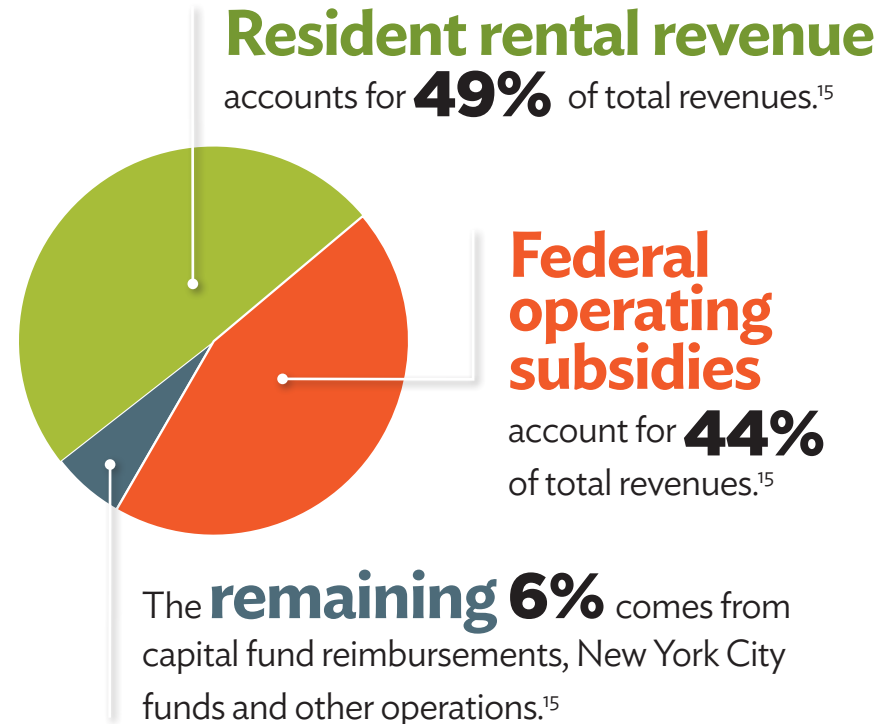
Housing Development Management

A development can consist of 1 building or up to 40 buildings.¹³

- Each development has a management office.¹³
- Each management office employs a manager, assistant manager, superintendent, assistant superintendent and maintenance workers.¹³
- Historically, management has been centralized by borough offices, but NYCHA is now piloting a decentralized management system, the Optimal Property Management Operating Model (OPMOM).¹⁴

HOW IS NYCHA FUNDED?

The **majority of NYCHA revenue** comes from federal operating subsidies and resident rental revenue.¹⁵



HOW ARE RESIDENTS ORGANIZED?

NYCHA offers **Resident Associations** as a means by which residents can organize.

Structure

Resident Association members elect an Executive Board.¹⁶

- Five officers of the Resident Association Executive Board are eligible to receive stipends of up to \$200 per month per officer.¹⁷
- The officers are elected by association members, and typically consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms.¹⁶

Each President is a member of one of nine Citywide Council of Presidents (CCOP) districts.¹⁶

- Each district is represented by a Chair who is elected by the CCOP.¹⁶
- The CCOP then elects a President.¹⁸

The Resident Associations can access a pool of NYCHA money to fund their activities. The amount allocated is dependent upon the number of units in the development.¹⁷

- HUD currently allocates \$3 million a year to NYCHA for Resident Association engagement.¹⁹

Function

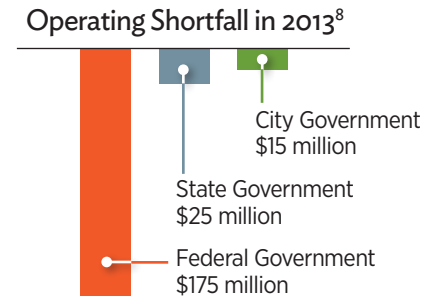
- **Residents Associations are democratic** and work with NYCHA management to improve the quality of life at NYCHA.¹⁶
- As members of the Resident Advisory Board, CCOP **members can make recommendations to NYCHA management** when creating Agency Plans.¹⁹

CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY

The **lack of funding is at the root** of many of the challenges NYCHA faces, leading to an aging housing stock in disrepair and an unsafe environment.

Lack of Funding

- In 2013, NYCHA had an annual operating deficit of over \$200 million.⁸
- In 2015, the annual operating deficit was expected to be \$74 million.⁶
- There is backlog of 85,000 work orders for building repairs (as of November 2014).²⁰
- There is a \$16 billion backlog in capital improvements (as of July 2015).⁶
- The level of funding received from the federal, state and city governments has declined significantly over the past 14 years.⁶



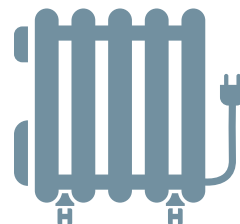
Safety

- Increased police presence on stairwell patrols, the arresting of loiterers, and the now-limited “stop and frisk” is seen by some NYCHA residents as excessive and controversial, with the police enforcing NYCHA rules as well as the law.
- The number of **domestic violence** occurrences has **doubled** from 821 to 1,642 since 2009 (as of October 2014).²¹
- From 2013 to 2014, **shootings increased** by 55.6% from 15 to 28.²²
- From 2013 to 2014, **burglaries increased** by 63.6% from 45.8 to 72.²²

Living Conditions

(as of September 2014)

36% of NYCHA apartments have rat infestation.²³



26% have broken heating equipment.²³

32% have water leaks.²³



CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY

Support Services and Lack of Access

- Currently the majority of social services for residents are provided through partnerships with nonprofits.¹⁴
- There is a variety of missing support services.
- Many buildings lack access to shopping centers and laundry facilities.¹³

Resident Organization¹⁹

- Only an estimated one-third of NYCHA developments currently have a Resident Association.¹⁹
- Resident Association presidents have noted the absence of proper training to effectively carry out their responsibilities.¹⁹
- Millions of Resident Association dollars are unspent, and some Resident Associations have not been trained on how to access the funds.¹⁹

Lack of Transparency and Accountability

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development maintains an open online database that tracks the complaints, repairs and code violations reported by residents of privately-owned buildings. NYCHA has no corresponding means of collecting and tracking residents' issues with building conditions (as of December 2014).⁸

NEXTGENERATION NYCHA

In May 2015, the de Blasio administration released NextGeneration NYCHA, a **four-pronged plan to usher in funding, management, housing, and service improvements** aimed at creating “safe, clean, and connected communities” for residents and at preserving “public housing assets for the next generation.”¹⁴

Living Conditions

- 1 A Secure Financial Future**
The plan seeks to achieve short-term financial stability and diversify the funding of NYCHA properties for the long term.¹⁴
- 2 Property Management for Tomorrow**
The plan lays out a property management goal of operating as an efficient and effective landlord.¹⁴
- 3 (Re)build and Reinvest**
NYCHA intends to rebuild, expand, and preserve the City’s public and affordable housing stock to complement the Mayor’s Housing New York plan.¹⁴
- 4 Engage**
The fourth overarching goal is to engage residents and connect them to best-in-class social and community services.¹⁴

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Bill de Blasio’s Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan (p.5)
- ² <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/basic-facts-about-homelessness-new-york-city/>
- ³ <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/factsheet.pdf>
- ⁴ In conventional public housing, the landlord is the government.
- ⁵ The Department of Housing Preservation and Development administers additional Section 8 vouchers.
- ⁶ Victor Bach, Senior Housing Policy Analyst for the Community Service Society
- ⁷ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/about/governingboard.shtml>
- ⁸ <http://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/strengthening-new-york-citys-public-housing-directions-for-change>
- ⁹ http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/residents/resident_board_member_faq.shtml
- ¹⁰ <http://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/opinions/4654-op-ed-the-next-mayor-owns-nycha>
- ¹¹ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/about/orgchart.shtml>
- ¹² NYCHA Executive Staff: Chair & Chief Executive Officer, General Manager, Corporate Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Communications Officer, Chief Technology Officer, Executive Vice President for Community Programs & Development, Executive Vice President for External Affairs, Executive Vice President for Leased Housing, Executive Vice President for Legal Affairs/General Counsel, Executive Vice President for Capital Projects, Deputy General Counsel, Senior Vice President for Operations, Senior Vice President for Operations Support Services, Vice President for Capital Planning & Design, Vice President for Capital Projects, Vice President for Community Programs & Development, Vice President for Development, Vice President for Energy & Sustainability, Vice President for Enterprise Technology Portfolio Management, Vice President for Public Safety, Vice President for Research & Management Analysis, Vice President for Strategy & Partnership, Vice President for Support Services & Quality Management, Director of the Department for Equal Opportunity, Director of Emergency Preparedness, Director of Employee Engagement, Director of Human Resources, Director of the Office of Public & Private Partnerships, Director of State & City Legislative Affairs.

¹³ 1.22.15 Minutes with NYCHA Resident Board member Victor Gonzalez

¹⁴ <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/nextgen-nycha-web.pdf>

¹⁵ NYCHA Finance Slides Draft FY2015

¹⁶ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/getting-involved-as-a-resident.page>

¹⁷ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/downloads/pdf/tpa-guidebook-20140818.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://citylimits.org/2015/09/24/nycha-resident-leaders-oust-longtime-chief/>

¹⁹ <http://citylimits.org/2015/05/07/tenants-voice-lacks-power-as-nycha-faces-crucial-chapter/>

²⁰ <http://pix11.com/2014/11/13/can-new-chair-woman-bring-nycha-back-from-the-brink/>

²¹ <http://legistar.council.nyc.gov/Legislation-Detail.aspx?ID=1933739&GUID=1A0021F5-CEC9-4A50-8C4D-B4FFA8851311&Options=&Search=>

²² http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/crime_statistics/hb_eagle_report.pdf

²³ http://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/How_New_York_Lives.pdf



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