

**Restore and Revitalize the New
York City Housing Authority**

Summary of Proposals: May 22, 2025

- **Proposal 1:** Provide an additional \$500 million per year in capital funding above the existing level of New York City's capital commitments to help finance renovation and redevelopment of NYCHA housing. This 75% increase over New York City's Current 10 Year Capital Plan will substantially increase renovation and redevelopment activity.
- **Proposal 2:** Increase resources for traditional Section 9 renovation and repair projects to meet immediate needs when the complexity of a RAD conversion outweighs the benefits.
- **Proposal 3:** Accelerate renovation and redevelopment projects through section 8 conversions under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, whether in the form of a transaction under the Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program or the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust (Preservation Trust) program. Leverage the future Section 8 revenue streams under RAD to implement large-scale renovation redevelopment projects.
- **Proposal 4:** Identify NYCHA campuses suitable for redevelopment with more affordable and workforce housing. With resident support, utilize undeveloped land to build affordable housing and workforce housing to address New York City's housing shortage while generating additional revenue for renovation.
- **Proposal 5:** Reform NYCHA management and governance structure to ensure high-quality day-to-day property management operations. Expand the "Neighborhood Model" that clusters developments into more accountable, locally-based management teams.
- **Proposal 6:** Enhance safety at NYCHA campuses. Invest in basic security infrastructure, including better lighting and more security cameras, as well as evaluating the force levels of the Housing Police bureau of the NYPD.
- **Proposal 7:** Add retail and mixed-use development to expand services on NYCHA campuses. Relax the market rate rent requirement to facilitate the use of vacant ground-level space for retail and other services that may no longer be available in gentrified neighborhoods.

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Proposal 8: Promote Open Space. Take advantage of relatively low cost enhancements of open space to improve the physical and mental health of NYCHA residents.



Proposal 9: Build public-private partnerships to expand programs on NYCHA campuses. Develop partnerships with New York City's corporate sector, medical centers and foundations to improve the day-to-day life of NYCHA residents.

Introduction

As Andrew Cuomo described in his Policy Paper “Addressing New York’s Housing Crisis,” the lack of affordable housing in New York City is the most important aspect of the broader crisis of affordability facing New Yorkers. In 2023, the overall rental vacancy rate in New York City was 1.4%, while the vacancy rate for affordable housing (defined as 60% of Area Median Income) was less than 1% and the vacancy rate for the lowest quartile of rents (\$1100 per month) in 2023 was 0.39%.

Andrew Cuomo’s plans for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) are an important part of his strategy for addressing the larger housing crisis in New York City. NYCHA is the home of more than 500,000 New Yorkers across 177,000 apartments in 335 housing developments. NYCHA is the most consistent provider of affordable housing for very low-income households in New York City. With median rent at \$588 a month, NYCHA provides vital housing for households that have very few other housing options due to the city's housing affordability crisis.

Despite the importance of public housing to our city, NYCHA faces dire challenges. In 2023, it was estimated that its buildings required approximately \$78 billion in capital repairs. In addition to its capital requirements, there are ongoing challenges in the quality of day-to-day life at many campuses resulting from these deteriorating conditions.

These dire challenges are compounded by the proposed cuts in rental assistance programs included in President Trump’s FY 26 proposed Budget for Discretionary spending released on May 2, 2025, which called for a \$26.7 billion cut, representing a potentially devastating 42% reduction in federal rental subsidy programs of the type that support NYCHA and its residents.

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If Congress adopts the proposed budget, the potential damage to NYCHA from a 42% reduction in funding will be devastating and lead to further deterioration of conditions in New York City's public housing. This budget proposal truly represents an existential threat to NYCHA's future and the future of New York City's most important affordable housing stock. All New Yorkers must call on the Republican members of the House of Representatives from New York State to oppose President Trump's proposed 42% reduction in federal rental subsidy programs with the same conviction with which they have advocated for elimination of the SALT cap.

Andrew Cuomo considers rebuilding and revitalizing NYCHA to be a core priority of his agenda for New York City. As mayor, he will push NYCHA to improve the day-to-day quality of life and the condition of its apartments for its current residents, as well as to contribute to solving the broader housing crisis by developing more affordable housing on its campuses.

This policy paper outlines Andrew Cuomo's two-pronged strategy to address the challenges facing NYCHA and its residents.



Strategy 1: Renovate and Redevelop NYCHA Properties. Using a significant influx of City capital, ambitious use of PACT and Preservation Trust conversions reflecting resident preferences, and traditional Section 9 capital projects, Andrew Cuomo will fully renovate tens of thousands of NYCHA apartments over the next four years and support critical building system upgrades. In some cases, it will even be possible to replace existing apartments with completely new apartments for the benefit of current residents, while always protecting existing tenancy rights and rent level limitations.



Strategy 2: Improve the Day-To-Day Life of NYCHA's Residents. It's important to improve the day-to-day life of NYCHA's residents without delay. This can be achieved by making routine repairs on a timelier basis, ensuring safety on NYCHA campuses, offering more non-residential services such as retail options that may otherwise be unavailable in the neighborhood, making connections with health services adjacent to NYCHA housing, and providing other services such as digital connectivity and computer labs in community centers, which will make NYCHA a better place to live.

Background

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) was established in 1934 during the Great Depression, making it the first and largest public housing authority in the United States. With early federal funding through the New Deal, NYCHA began by building First Houses on the Lower East Side. Over the next several decades, NYCHA expanded rapidly, constructing high-rise developments throughout the five boroughs. By the 1970s, NYCHA provided homes for more than 400,000 residents in over 300 developments, serving as a critical safety net for low-income New Yorkers.

However, beginning in the 1980s, NYCHA entered a prolonged period of disinvestment and neglect driven by federal cutbacks in public housing funding. By the early 2000s, many NYCHA buildings faced chronic problems – from broken elevators, to lead paint exposure, to failing heating systems. Despite its challenges, NYCHA is one of New York City’s most essential institutions, housing nearly one in every 175 New Yorkers and representing one of the last bastions of deeply affordable housing in the city.

NYCHA’s future is heavily dependent on its level of financial support from the federal, state and city governments. The substantial uncertainty of future funding under the Trump administration therefore is a dark cloud that hangs over NYCHA’s head. The federal support for NYCHA comes primarily from two rental assistance programs managed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Section 9 subsidies for public housing and the Section 8 voucher program for low-income tenants and Section 8 project-based programs.

As noted above, President Trump’s “toplines” budget for discretionary spending proposes to cut \$26.7 billion from the state rental assistance block grant, which provides funding for rental assistance, public housing, and housing for the elderly and disabled. The proposed Trump budget would accomplish this mostly by converting existing federal rental assistance programs into a block grant system, allocating approximately \$36.3 billion to states, accompanied by a 42% decrease from the FY 2025 rental assistance funding of \$63.5 billion.

This block grant affects NYCHA’s most important housing programs, including Section 8 rental assistance contracts in the form of vouchers and Section 9 public housing subsidies. If Congress enacted this level of funding reduction, it would be devastating for NYCHA residents and New York City.

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Governmental subsidies from various sources account for the lion's share of NYCHA's \$5.3 billion operating budget. NYCHA receives approximately \$1.3 billion in Section 9 federal project-based subsidies, approximately \$2.2 billion in federal Section 8 subsidies in the form of rental assistance contracts or vouchers, and \$300 million from New York City operating subsidies to cover two specific expense categories – the vacant unit readiness program and general wage increases for NYCHA programs based on wage increases for other New York City workers. In addition, NYCHA receives approximately \$1 billion in rental revenue from tenants.

NYCHA's recently adopted Five-Year Operating Plan forecasts an operating deficit in each year, beginning in 2026, of approximately \$200 million annually. This operating deficit, on top of the capital costs associated with building maintenance, threatens the future of NYCHA and the quality of life of its residents – especially if these deficits are increased by reduced federal subsidies.

Despite these risks and liabilities, NYCHA has tremendous assets across the city, including ownership of 2,400 acres of land, making it the single largest steward of property across the five boroughs other than the city itself. This land includes underdeveloped and low-density lots across the five boroughs—with the buildings covering less than 20% of the overall lot area at many developments, including those in high-density neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Properly managed, these assets and strong support from its governmental sponsors hold the potential to significantly upgrade this unique public housing institution.

Andrew Cuomo's Record on Public Housing: A Legacy of Reform

Andrew Cuomo's commitment to public housing spans more than two decades and two levels of government. He spent eight years at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under President Bill Clinton including four years as the cabinet Secretary of HUD, followed by a decade as Governor of New York. During this time, he developed invaluable experience in addressing housing insecurity, reforming sluggish bureaucracies, and advancing ambitious strategies to meet the needs of public housing residents.

Andrew Cuomo came to HUD after more than a decade of work on homelessness and affordable housing development in New York City. As Secretary of HUD from 1997 to 2001, he led an agency of 10,000 employees and a \$30 billion budget that was responsible for housing policy, including oversight of the nation's public housing authorities.

During his tenure, HUD implemented reforms to address the widespread deterioration of public housing stock, launched programs to promote mixed-income redevelopment, and empowered local housing authorities to leverage private capital for large-scale repairs.

As Secretary of HUD, Andrew Cuomo also championed the innovative Capital Fund Financing Program, which enabled public housing authorities to borrow against future federal capital grants. This was a critical departure from HUD's historical reluctance to embrace financial innovation, and it laid the groundwork for the current generation of finance tools. These tools, including issuing debt backed by future Section 8 voucher revenues to support large-scale renovations, underpin NYCHA's current strategy for campus conversion and rehabilitation.

Historically, New York State had provided virtually no capital funding to NYCHA, leaving the City and the federal government to support deteriorating buildings on their own. However, Andrew Cuomo broke that pattern. Between 2015 and 2021, his administration committed more than \$1.5 billion in capital support to NYCHA – the largest state investment in NYCHA in a generation. Much of this funding was directed toward lead paint abatement, boiler replacements, and other urgent repairs that could not wait for federal appropriations or New York City Council action.

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As Governor, Andrew Cuomo also used the power of his office to push for greater accountability at NYCHA. Following a wave of scandals at NYCHA in 2018, including the falsification of lead paint inspections and a heating crisis that left thousands of residents without heat during the winter, his office prompted a negotiated agreement among New York City, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District (SDNY) and HUD that resulted in a federal monitor being appointed to oversee NYCHA operations. That agreement also committed New York City to invest \$2.2 billion in capital repairs over 10 years – funding that is now being deployed at developments including Wyckoff Gardens, Gowanus Houses, Todt Hill Houses, and St. Nicholas Houses.

In early 2018, Andrew Cuomo directed state emergency response agencies – including the National Guard – to provide immediate assistance at NYCHA sites suffering from heating and maintenance failures. When bureaucratic inertia threatened to stall progress, Cuomo brought in state inspectors, engineers, and public health officials to cut through red tape and stabilize conditions.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will draw on this deep experience to restore NYCHA and reestablish its role as the most important public housing authority in the country. He understands the inner workings of HUD. He has managed public housing crises at the state level. And he has successfully implemented massive capital programs for infrastructure and housing, demonstrating that he has a unique ability to get things done to which others only pay lip service.

Strategy 1: Renovate and Redevelop NYCHA Properties

The guiding principle of Andrew Cuomo's NYCHA plan is the goal of ensuring that every current public housing resident lives in a safe, healthy, and modern apartment. Most of NYCHA's 177,000 apartments can and must be preserved through a combination of significant capital investment in renovations, smarter financing, and continued improvement in day-to-day operations. These improvements will be delivered by allocating significant capital funding and amplifying the investment through two primary programs under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Section 8 conversion program – the Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program and the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust (Preservation Trust) – as well as capital projects under the conventional Section 9 capital program. All three of these programs have advantages and disadvantages but each should be thought of as tools in the toolbox, with the specific program to be used being dependent on which strategy is best suited for a particular situation with the support of the residents they serve. Renovation and redevelopment through these programs will be supported through the investment of significant additional capital support from New York City.



Proposal 1: Provide an Additional \$500 million Per Year in Capital Funding Above the Existing Level of New York City's Capital Commitments to Help Finance Renovation and Redevelopment of NYCHA Housing. This 75% Increase Over New York City's Current 10 Year Capital Plan Will Substantially Increase Renovation and Redevelopment Activity.

For the past several years, New York has provided capital subsidies to finance PACT transactions at NYCHA campuses. In many other states, cities provide Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to finance RAD transactions. In New York, LIHTC has not been provided to finance NYCHA construction since 2010 because all available credits are used for other affordable housing projects. Instead, capital funding from New York City capital is used to plug funding gaps in the capital structure. Many of the recent PACT financing deals could not have closed without it.

New York City provides capital subsidies to NYCHA through two different funding vehicles. New York City contributes directly to the NYCHA capital budget, in part as its fulfillment of its obligation under its \$2.2 billion-over-10 years agreement with HUD and SDNY. New York City's 10-Year Capital Plan allocates \$3.6 billion over 10 years, or approximately \$360 million a year on average, to NYCHA through this funding vehicle.

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In addition, New York City also provides funding to NYCHA to finance RAD conversions (which to date have all been PACT conversions) through the capital plan of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). In the four-year HPD Capital Plan FY 26-FY 29, New York City has allocated \$1.2 billion, or \$300 million annually, to provide capital for RAD conversions. Collectively, the total amount of New York City capital directed to NYCHA for renovations and redevelopment is thus approximately \$660 million annually.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will provide \$500 million annually in additional capital to NYCHA, or \$2.5 billion over the first five years of his capital plan, over and above the approximately \$660 million average annual amount of capital funding currently included in New York City's 10 Year Capital Plan directly and through HPD for the benefit of NYCHA. This \$500 million annual increase, a 75% increase, in New York City's capital funding for NYCHA will enable the completion of renovation and redevelopment of a substantially larger number of units at NYCHA campuses than could be completed without this additional capital contribution.

This investment in renovation and redevelopment generates multiple benefits.

- First, and most importantly, it will improve the quality-of-life of NYCHA residents by providing them with a fully renovated unit or in some cases even a new apartment.
- Second, the construction of additional affordable and workforce housing will be made possible by this additional capital contribution.
- Third, the number of available NYCHA apartments will be increased as a result of putting back in service units that currently are vacant because they are in such poor condition.
- And fourth, the long-term reduction in operating expenses that results from comprehensive renovation programs which reduce the need for ongoing and inefficient capital repairs.

With respect to this last point, one reason that NYCHA's operating expenses are so high is because unless the need for the work is urgent, the maintenance and capital repairs are just deferred to a point where it costs more to fix the problem. For example, if a pipe is beyond its useful life and leaks continuously, NYCHA will send plumbers who work both regular time and overtime to perform ad hoc repairs. However, if NYCHA invested the capital to replace the pipe, it would save operating costs because there wouldn't be a need to deploy the plumbing team on an inefficient and continuous basis.

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Proposal 2: Increase Resources for Traditional Section 9 Renovation and Repair Projects to Meet Immediate Needs when the Complexity of a RAD Conversion Outweighs the Benefits.

Traditionally, NYCHA has managed renovations through direct capital investments in isolated projects in the Section 9 capital project program. These renovations focus on specific building components like roofs, boilers, or elevators as funding permitted. This piecemeal approach often led to prolonged timelines and incomplete overhauls due to chronic underfunding and the vast scale of repairs that are needed.

NYCHA still uses traditional Section 9 capital funding to make repairs and renovations. Both the PACT and Preservation Trust RAD transactions are complex and may not be necessary for certain projects that involve moderate repairs or upgrades, particularly at small developments or that involve only discrete needs on a campus. In cases in which, for whatever reason, NYCHA undertakes major, site-wide renovations of a development using Section 9 funding, it is called a Comprehensive Modernization project.

For example, under NYCHA's 2019 agreement with HUD, the City, and SDNY (the HUD Agreement), the City agreed to contribute \$2.2 billion in city capital over ten years to NYCHA repair efforts. To date, NYCHA has used this capital to perform much needed lead abatement work and pursue the Comprehensive Modernization program at four sites—St. Nicholas Houses in Harlem, Todt Hill on Staten Island, and Wyckoff Gardens and Gowanus Houses in Gowanus.



Proposal 3: Accelerate Renovation and Redevelopment Projects Through Section 8 Conversions Under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, whether in the form of a transaction under the Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program or the NYCHA Public Housing Preservation Trust Program. Leverage the future Section 8 revenue streams under RAD to implement large-scale renovation redevelopment projects.

Both the PACT and Preservation Trust programs are based on using the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, which allows public housing authorities to convert public housing units funded by public housing subsidies under Section 9 into Section 8 rental assistance contracts, also known as 8 project-based vouchers. This conversion results in higher subsidies being paid under the Section 8 rental assistance contracts or vouchers than under traditional Section 9 operating and capital subsidies.

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More importantly, this conversion greatly facilitates the ability of a NYCHA project to raise debt financing to generate the funding needed for a comprehensive renovation or redevelopment. The reason conversions make long-term debt financing feasible is that Section 8 funding is provided under long-term rental assistance contracts – technically known as Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contracts – which are typically 20 years in length and renewable. By contrast, operating and capital subsidies under Section 9 are subject to annual appropriations, which have been declining in recent years.

The reason that the amount of subsidy available under Section 8 vouchers is significantly greater under Section 9 capital and operating subsidies is that the Section 8 voucher amount is based on a formula in which the subsidy is equal to the difference between the contract rent (which becomes tied to local fair market rents) and the tenant's rental payment, which is limited to 30% of the tenant's household income. In practice, these contract rents typically are higher than per-unit funding levels under Section 9.

The RAD conversion structure through PACT or the Preservation Trust typically supports more ambitious renovation and redevelopment programs. As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will work to implement RAD conversions whenever they are economically and administratively feasible – under either the PACT or the Preservation Trust program at the option of tenants – because they generate a significant amount of upfront resources that are necessary for larger scale renovation and redevelopment.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will work with all stakeholders to ensure that they are comfortable with the renovation options brought to the table, and work to ensure that tenants are protected in safe and habitable apartments. Labor unions have also raised concerns about the use of these tools. As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will ensure all stakeholders have a seat at the table to have their concerns addressed as part of these complex transactions.



Proposal 4: Identify NYCHA Campuses Suitable for Redevelopment with More Affordable and Workforce Housing. With Resident Support, Utilize Undeveloped Land to Build Affordable Housing and Workforce Housing to Address New York City's Housing Shortage While Generating Additional Revenue for Renovation.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will pursue major renovation and redevelopment at NYCHA sites where there is an opportunity for more affordable and workforce housing (i.e., housing affordable for households with moderate incomes, typically 120% of Area Median Income).

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A particularly ambitious prototype for this strategy is the proposed reconstruction and redevelopment of the NYCHA campuses at Fulton, Elliott, and Chelsea Houses in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan (known as the “Chelsea Project”). When the cost of renovation exceeds the cost of a newly constructed unit, then a redevelopment that results in every resident having a new apartment rather than renovating their existing apartment makes sound economic sense.

Work on the Chelsea Project began in 2019 through a coalition called the Chelsea NYCHA Working Group, which was comprised of NYCHA residents, elected officials, Manhattan Community Board 4, housing advocates, and other stakeholders. Over approximately 15 months, the Working Group conducted extensive consultations, including public workshops and meetings, to ensure that resident voices were central to the planning process.

The Chelsea Project contemplates demolishing all 2,056 existing apartments at Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea and replacing them with new, enhanced apartments. The proposal would also build approximately 875 new affordable apartments and roughly 2,000 new mixed-income units on the campuses. The market rate units would financially support the overall development.

Although a majority of residents expressed a preference in 2023 for a complete rebuild, the Chelsea Project continues to be controversial because of resident fears about the involvement of private developers and the security of their housing commitments, concerns which must be taken seriously and addressed.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo would work with residents to ensure that PACT projects are only undertaken with tenant support and understanding. Andrew Cuomo would also convene stakeholders in the labor movement to ensure that their concerns are addressed and find opportunities for MWBE companies to partner in these projects, is the case at the Chelsea Project.

Strategy 2: Improve the Day-To-Day Life of NYCHA's Residents Now

Residents of NYCHA developments face daily challenges that stem from decades of disinvestment and infrastructure decay. Daily life is disrupted by frequent outages of heat and hot water, malfunctioning elevators, and chronic mold and leaks that contribute to serious health risks such as asthma. Residents face long wait times for even basic repairs. Safety remains a paramount concern, which is exacerbated by dimly lit common areas and deteriorated community spaces. Improving day-to-day life by aggressively addressing these issues is the second part of Andrew Cuomo's plan for NYCHA.

➤ **Proposal 5:** Reform NYCHA Management and Governance Structure to Ensure High-Quality Day-To-Day Property Management Operations. Expand the "Neighborhood Model" That Clusters Developments into More Accountable, Locally-Based Management Teams.

The 2019 agreement between HUD, the Southern District of New York (SDNY), and the City of New York, changed the composition and appointment process of the NYCHA Board. The Board is comprised of three members who are residents and four non-resident members. All Board members are appointed by the mayor, but the HUD Agreement stipulates that the mayor must select the Chairman and CEO of NYCHA from a list approved by SDNY and HUD. As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will take a strong personal interest in NYCHA and ensure that his appointees to the Board share his goals and priorities for revitalizing NYCHA.

Although NYCHA has shrunk from its 1990's size of over 17,000 employees, the organization still has 12,000 employees on staff, including over 2,000 in its central office. Because of the sheer size of the agency and significant differences among campuses in different boroughs, some have argued for a breakup of NYCHA, which would involve dissolving NYCHA in favor of five borough-based public housing authorities, three of which would remain amongst the largest in the country.

A more pragmatic alternative than legally breaking up NYCHA is to delegate more authority to individual sites, including by NYCHA's Neighborhood Model. The objective of shifting more management authority from the agency's central office to individual sites is to enable NYCHA to deliver better services at a faster speed.

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Repairing NYCHA's apartments isn't just about major capital work – it also requires a transformation in how NYCHA delivers day-to-day services. Residents have waited too long for basic repairs, experienced delays in response times, and faced avoidable frustrations with scheduling and follow-up. The current system too often fails its residents, not because of individual workers, but because of broken structures, poor accountability, and outdated systems.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will work with the NYCHA Board to improve property management and day-to-day maintenance by implementing a more tenant-centered approach to property management built on three core principles: responsiveness, accountability, and innovation. In concrete terms, this means he will decentralize operations by expanding the “Neighborhood Model” that clusters developments into more accountable, locally-based management teams.

The Neighborhood Model was developed in 2019 in response to frequent resident complaints that the agency had grown too top-heavy and centralized. The Neighborhood Model is an attempt to return the agency to its local roots, with decision-making and resources pushed from the central office to the local level. In partnership with resident leaders, Property Managers are empowered to run their developments and respond to resident needs without every decision requiring approval from the senior management team at NYCHA headquarters.

NYCHA is the largest landlord in the country and requires local substructures to enable effective management. Under the Neighborhood Model, the central office still plays an important role in setting performance standards and performing oversight, but all on-site work, including in-unit repairs, janitorial work, and tenancy work is managed by local staff with a focus on responsiveness and speed.

While the Neighborhood Model has proven popular with resident leaders, NYCHA still faces staffing challenges that have hampered the model's effectiveness. With a staff of 5,000 fewer employees than the 1990s and a higher volume of apartment repair tickets than ever, NYCHA has longer wait times and lower service levels than residents deserve.

Under a revised approach to the Neighborhood Model, site-based managers will have greater control over budgets and repairs, and residents will participate through newly established Maintenance & Safety Committees. As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will be committed to increasing NYCHA's investment in resident-facing, front-line staff, allowing the model to serve residents more effectively.

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Proposal 6: Enhance Safety at NYCHA Campuses. Invest in Basic Security Infrastructure, Including Better Lighting and More Security Cameras, As Well As Evaluating the Force Levels of the Housing Police Bureau of the NYPD.

NYCHA residents often cite crime and a lack of safety as the biggest challenge at their developments. Crime rates remain higher within many NYCHA campuses. In recent surveys many residents have emphasized they do not feel safe at home. Until 1994, NYCHA's more than 300 sites were served by a separate NYCHA Housing Police force, which had almost 3,000 officers and reported to the Chair of NYCHA. The Housing Police are now a bureau within NYPD, with a force size of approximately 2,100 officers. Residents across the city have asked for additional coverage and an enhancement of vertical patrols and community policing.

NYCHA developments also lack basic security measures, with many front doors consistently broken and an insufficient number of cameras. There is also an urgent need for better lighting for security on site. As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will work with NYCHA to prioritize security investments, including new front doors, better lighting, security cameras, and even security guards as required.



Proposal 7: Add Retail and Mixed-Use Development to Expand Services on NYCHA campuses. Relax the Market Rate Rent Standard Requirement To Facilitate Use of Vacant Ground-Level Space for Retail and Other Services That May No Longer Be Available in Gentrified Neighborhoods.

NYCHA campuses have a significant amount of vacant ground-level space that could be developed into commercial retail space and other enterprises that would benefit residents, such as healthcare services. The Public Housing Community Fund, a not-for-profit organization that works closely with NYCHA and its residents, has been a strong proponent of such efforts.

As the neighborhoods in which NYCHA campuses have evolved, the city's retail landscape has shifted – often to the detriment of NYCHA's residents. For example, as neighborhoods gentrify and retail rental rates increase, it has resulted in the closure of local grocers, laundromats, pharmacies, and other small businesses, which has an outsized impact on lower income residents of these communities.


Vacant NYCHA ground-level spaces present a unique opportunity to reverse this trend by introducing commercial and community-based services that directly benefit low-income residents. Potential uses include farmers' markets, grocery stores, pharmacies, health care facilities, laundromats, daycare centers, and small business incubators for NYCHA entrepreneurs. NYCHA's typical standard is that space must be leased at market rate rents, which often means that it is not financially viable for these types of businesses to operate, resulting in vacant space that neither generates revenue nor serves NYCHA's residents.

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As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will work with the NYCHA Board and HUD to relax this market rate rent standard and pursue efforts to rehabilitate and activate ground-floor spaces across NYCHA campuses, ensuring that new uses are responsive to residents' needs and designed to fill existing retail and service gaps in each neighborhood.

Another type of nonresidential service that would benefit NYCHA's residents while advancing New York City's health goals involves bringing primary care closer to NYCHA residents by attracting urgent care centers or federally qualified health centers to operate on or adjacent to NYCHA campuses. On-campus community health centers can address barriers to access to primary care, such as transportation, hours of operation, and trusted care providers.

The long-term goal for NYCHA should be for each one of NYCHA's 335 residential developments to have a partnership with one or more health care providers to enhance resident access to primary care services, including during extended evening and weekend appointment times. Services should include primary care, behavioral health, dental, vision, and care coordination. Another benefit of a closer relationship with providers is the opportunity to recruit community health workers and other staff from among NYCHA residents.

 **Proposal 8:** Promote Open Space. Take Advantage of Relatively Low Cost Enhancements of Open Space to Improve the Physical and Mental Health of NYCHA Residents.

Another nonresidential service that will improve health involves upgrading NYCHA's open spaces with the goal of improving the mental and physical health of NYCHA residents. NYCHA has open spaces that are not large enough to support housing, but which can be an important amenity for residents.

Guided by the 2021 NYCHA Open Space Master Plan and NYCHA's Connected Communities framework, nonprofits such as the Public Housing Community Fund, Center for Justice Innovation, Design Trust for Public Space, Trust for Public Land, Green City Force, New York Restoration Project, and others have invested private and public dollars in improving NYCHA open spaces across the city.

Most recently, the Public Housing Community Fund has been leading Green Space Connections, a privately funded initiative to transform open spaces in the Bronx and Brooklyn through resident-led design, leading to NYCHA's first dog park at Castle Hill Houses, new playground and fitness zones at Patterson Houses, urban forest restoration at Roosevelt Houses and other improvements to come at Marlboro Houses.

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The Public Housing Community Fund and partners released NYCHA's first open space toolkit, *From Imagine to Activate*, to guide residents and philanthropic organizations in improving NYCHA's open spaces. These programs have the opportunity for expansion at scale while bringing in much-needed investment with the goal of improving community health and safety.

As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will direct NYCHA to support groups to expand this work, identifying innovative models through public-private partnership to improve public housing open spaces across all boroughs while addressing the needs of residents and centering them in decision making.

A model for this type of open space investment can be found in Harlem's Carver Houses, where the Trust for Public Land worked with public housing residents and NYCHA to secure funding from Mount Sinai to install NYCHA's first outdoor fitness zone. By investing in NYCHA open spaces to bring intergenerational fitness zones and new active areas to public housing communities, more residents can participate in an active lifestyle, improving their health and creating safe places for social cohesion.



Proposal 9: Build Public-Private Partnerships to Expand Programs On NYCHA Campuses. Develop Partnerships With New York City's Corporate Sector, Medical Centers and Foundations to Improve the Day-to-Day Life of NYCHA Residents.

As the largest public housing authority in North America, NYCHA has the opportunity to forge strong bonds with New York City's corporate sector, medical centers and foundations with the aim of improving the lives of New York City's public housing residents. As mayor, Andrew Cuomo will boost public-private partnerships within public housing communities to address the economic, health, and quality of life issues unique to the residents of NYCHA.

These efforts will be focused on activating the City's technology, finance, and real estate industries, as well as large and small foundations, to support projects at NYCHA campuses, providing opportunities for training and careers in cutting-edge industries like artificial intelligence and the green economy. These efforts will also focus on working with both NYC Health + Hospitals and not-for-profit private health systems to improve public health disparities found in public housing communities and offer career pathways in the growing health industry.

The digital divide is one area that must be addressed urgently. It's unacceptable that in 2025, thousands of NYCHA residents lack affordable public broadband access, which puts NYCHA's residents at a disadvantage in education and the modern workplace. In addition to broadband access, NYCHA should take steps to seek philanthropic support for computer labs at every community center on a NYCHA campus.