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**Testimony of Chair and Commissioner Christine Clarke  
New York City Commission on Human Rights  
Before the Committee on Civil and Human Rights & Committee on Finance  
March 13, 2026**

Good afternoon Chair Lee, Chair Nurse, and members of the Committees on Finance and Civil and Human Rights.

My name is Christine Clarke, and I serve as Chair and Commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the Commission's work and the role it plays in ensuring that all New Yorkers can live, work, and thrive free from discrimination. Joining me today are Katherine Carroll, Deputy Commissioner for Law Enforcement, and Mariela Salazar, Deputy Commissioner of Administrative Services.

The New York City Commission on Human Rights first and foremost enforces and educates the public about the New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL), one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation. It protects New Yorkers from discrimination across broad swaths of life, including protections against discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. But these rights are meaningless in a vacuum. Rights only become reality when they are broadly recognized and enforced. One person's rights are another person's obligations, and unless those obligations are undertaken, whether voluntarily or through governmental enforcement, the rights cannot be fully realized.

The rights protected by the New York City Human Rights Law are fundamental to an equitable society—the right to live, work, and participate in society free from discrimination on the basis of one's national origin, citizenship, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, disability, criminal history, and more.

These rights are currently under attack—broadly in society, fueled by a political atmosphere that encourages and incites hate and isolation, as well as with the tacit and even overt approval of the federal government. Moreover, as inequality has increased over the past few decades, those with the least suffer the most. Discrimination affects people in all walks of life, but the toll is unquestionably the greatest for individuals and families who have the least. And those who have the least access to financial resources also often find that they have the least access to justice.

These are precisely the issues that I intend to make the focus of the Commission on Human Rights during my tenure as Chair and Commissioner.

I am privileged to work with a small but dedicated team at the Commission on Human Rights, who have been successful at moving mountains with limited resources. Our team of eight intake staff field over 15,000 inquiries per year. Our dedicated team of civil rights enforcement attorneys then single-handedly investigate and/or conciliate every case that falls within our jurisdiction and prosecute cases at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) where we find probable cause for discrimination and the parties do not settle. After trial, and after receiving OATH's report and recommendation, I, along with a small handful of colleagues, work to write final decisions and orders.

Our small but dedicated team also works hard to create updated and accessible trainings, know your rights materials, legal guidance on the provisions of the Human Rights Law, FAQs, and communications strategies and campaigns, as well as to engage in outreach with communities across the city.

From the moment I walked through the door at this agency, the dedicated staff at CCHR have made clear they share my vision and my priorities and are willing to embrace change to make that vision a reality.

Together, we are dedicated to making the Commission a place that will survive the Trump administration's retreat from federal civil rights enforcement, to ensure that whatever happens at the federal level, the City Human Rights Law will continue to be enforced to ensure that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to thrive in our great city.

Together, we are dedicated to engaging all New York City communities, including small business owners and landlords, to ensure that every New Yorker understands their rights *and* their obligations, and to ensure that small businesses have the help they need to comply with the law *before* a civil rights violation occurs.

Together, we are dedicated to ensuring that our services are accessible to people who cannot afford lawyers, and for whom we are the only shot at justice they have. That means taking a hard look at what works well and doubling down. This includes our Pre-Complaint Intervention program, where we are often able to intervene in a situation before too much damage has been one. This includes our Project Equal Access, where we make on-site visits to ensure that buildings are accessible to people with disabilities.

That also means ensuring we make real impact whenever we can. When the Commission settles discrimination complaints, we ensure that those settlements include provisions that will prevent future civil rights violations. For example, we require virtually every Respondent in a conciliation to agree that their staff will be trained by CCHR staff in the NYCHRL and to create and implement nondiscrimination policies. We also frequently find creative solutions to ensure

impact. For example, in housing voucher discrimination cases, we will agree with landlords that they will set aside some number of their apartments for voucher holders in the future. We recently conciliated a case with a broker who agreed to create a fund to help voucher-holders pay apartment rental application fees. Recent decisions have provided redress for gender-based harassment in the workplace through policy and practice changes at a food chain, as well as disability discrimination in a well-known clothing store.

We also, of course, seek compensation for victims of discrimination, both in conciliations and in litigation. Where a case is taken all the way through to trial to a decision and order, we frequently order damages and civil penalties, either of which can frequently reach six figures, alongside those same kinds of trainings and policy changes discussed already.

New York City has long been a national leader in civil rights protections. The Human Rights Law reflects our city's belief that diversity is a strength and that fairness must be actively defended.

The Commission is proud to carry forward that legacy.

In closing, I want to thank the Council for its partnership in supporting the work of the Commission and for its continued commitment to protecting the rights of all New Yorkers.

I look forward to working together to ensure that the promise of the Human Rights Law remains real and meaningful for every person who calls this city home.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at the beginning of this budget cycle. I welcome your questions.

**Testimony of NYC Chief Equity Officer and Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice  
Commissioner Afua Atta-Mensah  
Before the Committee on Civil and Human Rights  
Friday, March 13, 2026 – 1:30 PM**

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**Introduction**

Good morning, Chair Nurse, members of the Committees on Civil and Human Rights, distinguished members of the City Council, and the public. Thank you for convening today's hearing. I am Afua Atta-Mensah and I am proud to serve as New York City's Chief Equity Officer and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice (MOERJ).

Today, I am joined by Dabash Negash, Deputy Commissioner, Delilah Tyson, Chief Administrative Officer, and Nathifa Forde, Executive Director for NYC Her Future at MOERJ.

We are excited to speak to you about MOERJ's continued work to advance equity in our city.

**MOERJ Background**

As I shared in my most recent testimony two weeks ago, MOERJ was established as the City's centralized office that takes an intersectional approach to advance equity across our city. Our mandate is rooted in a simple but powerful belief that every New Yorker deserves the opportunity to live, work, and thrive with dignity.

In order to realize that vision, we bring together several key initiatives and offices that work across government to tackle inequities experienced by communities in our city using various strategies from policy and research to advocacy and programs, including:

- The NYC Commission on Gender Equity (CGE), working to ensure our city leads in the development and implementation of best practices in gender equitable policies and programs with a focus on economic mobility, health, and safety;
- NYC Young Men's Initiative and NYC Her Future, sibling offices focused on addressing inequities among young men of color and young women of color, respectively, in education, employment, health, and justice; and
- The NYC Unity Project, which works to address inequities among LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, particularly youth, people of color, and TGNCNB people.

At MOERJ we take a three-pronged approach to our work with a focus on:

- **Structural Change:** Dismantling structural inequities across City government through policy and practice. This includes implementing our racial justice charter mandates.
- **Culture Change and Engagement:** Breaking silos and shifting culture to increase collaboration and inclusion. This includes bringing stakeholders together in various ways to contribute to shared strategies to advance equity and supporting community-based coalitions to advance local initiatives.
- **Creating Equitable Outcomes for New Yorkers:** Utilizing a whole-of-government approach to address disparities concentrated by race, gender, and other identities. This includes collaborating with city agencies to invest in programs supporting youth and LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, as well as working across government to expand programs like NYC Save for College and cement universal college savings for all NYC kindergarteners.

## **Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)**

### ***Building the Infrastructure for Equity in Government***

As you know, the charter calls for the city to create an Office of Racial Equity. Following the announcement of the office in the previous fiscal year, and months of planning to identify and secure fiscal resources, create preliminary staffing structures, and begin establishing personnel and other administrative systems necessary to onboard staff and ensure sustainable operations to advance the work, MOERJ continued to do the thoughtful and intentional work to grow our team, develop processes and implement systems for a growing office, and more broadly, ensure the city has strong equity infrastructure for years to come.

While continuing to operationally stand up the office, MOERJ also continued to implement its charter mandates and other existing work.

### ***Implementing the Racial Equity Planning Process, Developing Plans, and Finalizing Citywide Preliminary Plan***

During FY25, MOERJ spent significant time implementing its racial equity planning process aimed at moving government towards equity and justice together.

In preparation for agencies to build their first racial equity plans, MOERJ engaged them in advance of development, which included building racial equity planning teams within each agency, reviewing their priorities relative to the foundational values of the charter, assessing disparity data and Commission on Racial Equity (CORE) community equity

priorities, leading full-day workshops, and developing and providing planning tools to guide the process.

In Fiscal Year 2025, MOERJ continued our work with over 40 city agencies and 200+ staff as they began to refine their individual racial equity plan goals, strategies, and indicators with the guidance of MOERJ which included continuous support throughout the process including dedicated office hours and one-on-one technical assistance.

MOERJ spent this time finalizing plans with agencies and rolling them up into a single Citywide Preliminary Racial Equity Plan, the first for the city.

MOERJ also hired 10 Equity Planning Managers at MOERJ to support racial equity planning as well as work with agencies on the implementation of the first Citywide Racial Equity Plan.

We look forward to publishing the preliminary plan within the Administration's first 100 days and sharing it with the public, receiving community feedback, and continuing to work together with city agencies and all stakeholders to make adjustments and finalize it for implementation.

### ***True Cost of Living Measure***

The development of New York City's True Cost of Living measure has also been an important priority for MOERJ.

Per our city charter, the New York City True Cost of Living measure establishes what it costs to meet basic needs in our city *and* live with dignity, without consideration of public, private, or informal assistance. Recognizing the limitations of the federal poverty measure, the True Cost of Living measure will move beyond basic poverty calculations to capture what it costs to meet basic needs, get through emergencies, and have the financial stability necessary to plan for one's future. This should not be a luxury and yet it often feels that way to New Yorkers across this city.

This measure will analyze costs across various household sizes, age groups, and essential areas of need to create a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to thrive in our city. As one of the first cities to create a measure of this type, NYC's True Cost of Living measure can help inform local, state, and national policy priorities as well as help us further advocate for the needs of working people in our city.

To meet the spirit of the charter, MOERJ worked in partnership with NYC Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity and the Urban Institute to:

- Leverage local and national research to best determine costs for NYC across various household sizes and types, age groups, and essential areas of need;
- Incorporate categories critical to economic security and one's ability to thrive, including debt and savings; and
- Look at costs across various age groups, including individuals with disabilities, as well as other areas of costs, such as caregiving.

We look forward to publishing the full report developed by MOERJ to share the measure in the coming weeks.

### ***Pay Equity Cabinet***

We also remain committed to advancing gender equity not only externally for the city's residents, but also internally for the city's workforce. We are proud that the **New York City Commission on Gender Equity (CGE)** and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) co-chair the Pay Equity Cabinet (PEC), which serves as an oversight body to provide accountability for pay equity goals across the city government workforce. In 2025, the cabinet selected and began working with a vendor to execute a pay equity job title evaluation. The first pay equity analysis report will be published in 2027 and identifies occupational segregation and gender- and race-pay disparities within civil service titles.

This June, the job title evaluation will enter the second year of its four-year project to identify occupational segregation, and gender and race pay disparities within the city government workforce.

### ***Programmatic Investments***

MOERJ also makes programmatic investments to serve communities that have experienced disparities and disinvestment to improve outcomes for New Yorkers. I would love to share a few examples of that.

As I shared, **NYC Her Future** is a unit within MOERJ, created to address the disparities that young women of color face across NYC in education, employment, justice, and health, as well as provide them with the tools to be successful by their own definition. Our vision is for every young girl and woman to be empowered with the tools, resources, and support they need to break the cycle of disadvantage and unlock their full potential.

Following the launch of NYC Her Future in the previous fiscal year, the unit got right to work to develop and champion programs and partnerships that support the success of young women of color throughout NYC. Fiscal Year 25 programs and partnerships included, but were not limited to:

- A partnership with CUNY through Health Career Center, which provides vouchers and guidance for participants to pursue health-related certificate programs helping them select courses, confirm eligibility, and apply coursework toward academic credit or future degrees. This citywide program served 356 students in FY25 and achieved a 91 percent completion rate.
- Investment in the Citywide Nursing Residency Program in partnership with Small Business Services (SBS) to support newly licensed nurses, especially from underrepresented communities, through clinical experience, mentorship, and training to enhance critical thinking and patient care skills. Through hands-on clinical training, mentorship, and evidence-based practice, the program served 1,440 participants and achieved a 94.5 percent retention rate in FY25. This initiative builds diversity rooted in community within our healthcare system, expanding equitable access to maternal health and allied health professions.
- Partnering with the Administration of Children Services on Future Force, which empowers young women and teens through mentoring, career exploration, vocational training, financial support, and professional development, including coaching, workshops, and access to mentors. The initiative has provided 57 young people involved in the child welfare system with individualized career coaching, vocational training, and full financial support for certifications and materials as well as a \$3,360 completion stipend. Future Force helps address low post-secondary enrollment, limited professional networks, and high unemployment among youth experiencing the foster system.

NYC Her Future is truly an innovation and investment hub within city government. It serves as a thought partner and funding catalyst to agencies across NYC and we look forward to the work it will continue to do to design, pilot, and evaluate initiatives that serve as a proof of concept for sustained baseline investment and scalable models that advance gender equity citywide.

MOERJ also continued to invest in the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (**TRIE**) **Neighborhood Initiative** in collaboration with the Civic Engagement Commission. The TRIE Neighborhood Initiative is a full year partnership which invests in community-based organizations to strengthen civic engagement and local decision-making. The program was born out of the COVID-19 pandemic through TRIE to address the disparate impacts of COVID-19 on NYC communities of color and support the development of community networks that could connect residents to one another and the city government.

The initiative is implemented by CEC in partnership with **MOERJ** and **YMI**. In FY25, 30 CBOs were awarded funds to serve as TRIE Neighborhood Administrators (TNAs) across 31 TRIE

Neighborhoods and coalition build. During the program, organizations empower community residents to help shape city priorities and resources through civic education and participation in The People's Money.

Over the course of the year, each neighborhood convened at least quarterly to discuss the community needs, strategies to engage community members in The People's Money, and opportunities to collaborate and share resources to support one another in their work. TNAs conducted 124 meetings throughout the year and TRIE Coalition membership increased to 225 partners from different fields including nonprofits, local businesses, and faith institutions. Civic engagement workshops were also organized to promote civic education and community building within TRIE neighborhoods and in FY25 36 workshops were organized with 730 participants. TNAs were also involved in the People's Money process serving as trusted convenors in their communities and providing an equity lens in each phase of the process including:

- Idea generation, facilitating 168 workshops across communities, and generating over 1,300 ideas for projects to strengthen their communities.
- Facilitating conversations with coalition members to build consensus and identify the top priority for their neighborhoods.
- Engaging over 77,000 residents in the voting process by conducting voting activities in schools, libraries, and older adult centers, mobilizing volunteers to knock on doors and table at events, present to community boards, and promote voting online.
- Collaborating with organizations to implement winning projects.

#### **Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)**

##### ***Continuing to Build the Infrastructure for Equity in Government***

In Fiscal Year 2026, MOERJ continued operationally build itself out. MOERJ outgrew its existing space and was able to secure larger office space downtown in partnership with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). MOERJ spent significant time preparing to move its operations to a new space, including ordering supplies and materials, technologically setting up the new space for staff in partnership with the Office of Technology Innovation (OTI), physically moving in, and ensuring our team could continue their work with the least amount of interruption.

##### ***Programmatic Investments***

MOERJ also continued to make programmatic investments, including in service of LGBTQ+ communities as well as young men of color.

This fiscal year, 20 CBOs across New York City were selected through a competitive process to receive funding through the City's Transgender, Gender Nonconforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) Empowerment Fund, a \$2 million investment designed to strengthen community infrastructure and ensure TGNCNB New Yorkers across all five boroughs can access essential services. These organizations provide critical support in areas including health and wellness, legal advocacy, youth and family support, violence prevention and crisis response, community building, and economic empowerment. Each organization receives up to \$92,000 to sustain and expand culturally competent, affirming services that respond to urgent community needs.

Administered by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) in partnership with the **NYC Unity Project** and Citizens Committee for New York City, the Empowerment Fund addresses persistent barriers transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary New Yorkers face when accessing health care, legal protections, and community-based support. The initiative invests directly in trusted community providers that deliver front-line services and helps stabilize organizations facing rising operational costs, increasing demand for services, and an uncertain national funding landscape.

Through this investment, the City is strengthening a network of community-based providers that many TGNCNB New Yorkers rely on for care, safety, and stability. By supporting organizations embedded in neighborhoods across the five boroughs, the fund expands access to affirming services, culturally competent support, and pathways to long-term wellbeing.

This year, we are proud to share that **NYC Men Teach, a program of the NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI)**, also celebrated its 10-year anniversary.

NYC Men Teach (NYCMT) is a partnership between YMI, New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), and City University of New York (CUNY) which aims to improve the diversity of the NYC teaching workforce. NYCMT is open to all academically qualified students interested in teaching in NYCPS, though recruitment efforts specifically target Black, Latino and Asian men. The program focuses on recruiting students into teacher education programs and assisting them through graduation, certification, and the hiring process. Supports include intensive advisement, certification exam support, academic support, and financial assistance.

NYCMT is truly changing the landscape of education in New York City. Through the NYCMT program, NYCPS has successfully recruited over 5,000 educators who are men of color since 2016, strengthening classrooms while reinforcing NYCPS as a destination for purpose-driven educators committed to our students and communities.

Just last month, YMI, in partnership with NYCPS and CUNY, hosted an anniversary event for NYC Men Teach (NYCMT) at BRIC. It recognized and celebrated the accomplishments of the program, as well as looked at the future of diverse recruitment. The event was a special day of reflection, connection, and forward-looking conversations with diverse stakeholders to consider how we continue to innovate, strengthen, and expand this work.

### ***Developing Anti-Racism Training for Human Service Contractors***

MOERJ has also spent time working to implement Local Law 13 of 2024, requiring the creation and administration of anti-racism training for all human services contractors in NYC who provide direct services to the public.

In this fiscal year, MOERJ has worked in partnership with the CUNY School of Professional Studies' Office of Innovative Learning Solutions on course design and development, infrastructure and hosting, and more in preparation for its launch. MOERJ aims to finalize and launch the training by the end of the fiscal year.

### **Staff and Personnel**

As of today, MOERJ has a current headcount of 38 with 26 active staff. Our small, but mighty team is committed to racial and gender equity and continuing to tackle disparities in our communities. Many of us come from, live in, or have experience within the communities we are focused on serving through our work and come from the nonprofit, government, academic, and private sector. We are New Yorkers of all backgrounds and we bring our lived and professional experience to everything we do at MOERJ. We plan to continue to build a team that has the experience to carry out our work and represents the full diversity of this great city.

### **Budget**

The FY 25 budget provided was \$8,098,699. For FY 26, the Preliminary Budget currently provides \$5,627,000. As discussions continue with OMB ahead of the executive budget, we aim to secure program funds included in our previous fiscal year budget.

### **Looking Ahead**

As I continue to get settled into my role as New York City Chief Equity Officer and Commissioner to MOERJ, I recognize the unique nature of this position and office, and more specifically, the incredible opportunity to build on this strong foundation, work to ensure equity reaches every corner of government and informs discussions about City priorities and how they are implemented, as well as identify new opportunities with a focus on the link between affordability and racial and gender equity.

I am proud to continue to advancing equity in NYC government and look forward to:

- Releasing the preliminary and final Citywide Racial Equity Plan, implementing the that work, and measuring as well as reporting on our progress;
- Releasing our first-ever New York City-specific True Cost of Living Measure, and more importantly, activating it as a tool to inform policy, service delivery, and budgeting decisions;
- Rolling out our Anti-Racism training to support thousands of human service provider employees who serve and interact with residents every day, sometimes at their most vulnerable points;
- Continuing to invest in young people, particularly young people of color, and LGBTQ+ communities to tackle disparities experienced by these communities and ensure they have the conditions of thriving, as well New Yorkers should;

And so much more.

### **Closing**

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you about some of the work of the New York City Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice. We look forward to working everyday as part of this Administration to ensure that New Yorkers can live, work, play, and thrive. We appreciate the support and partnership of the New York City Council and this committee. Thank you and I welcome your questions.

## **Addendum A – Bronx Investments**

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### **NYCHA REES: Food Business Pathways Program**

#### **Introduction**

In 2020, the NYC Housing Authority’s Department of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (NYCHA REES) partnered with Grow NYC to pilot meal delivery service to residents impacted by gas outages.

Through grant funding, NYCHA resident business owners were contracted for meal delivery to provide 7,000 free meals to eligible residents. All businesses were owned by graduates from the NYCHA Food Business Pathways (FBP) program, a 10-week incubator and business development program that prepares NYCHA residents to launch or strengthen their food businesses through business planning, permit education, one-on-one coaching, and access to licensed commercial kitchen facilities. Across 12 cohorts the program has graduated 343 NYCHA resident food business entrepreneurs; of which 90 percent are women and 100 percent are African American or Latino.

#### **Bronx Expansion**

In FY23, the NYC Mayor’s Office of Equity & Racial Justice’s (MOERJ) Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity’s (TRIE) funding expanded the Grow NYC meal delivery pilot by an additional 13,000+ meals to provide approximately nine months of emergency food programming.

Through the pilot and initial expansion across all Bronx NYCHA developments, this initiative provided over 30,000 meals and served 400+ impacted families at any given point in time during a gas outage.

To continue to grow the program, in FY24, MOERJ provided additional funds to continue to fill critical gaps in New York City’s food landscape by providing free and nutritious meals to NYCHA residents living in the Bronx who may be facing food insecurity, while also supporting resident-owned, low-income food businesses.

#### **Program Objectives**

Provide additional 15,000 meals to NYCHA residents living in the Bronx, offer training and technical assistance support to FBP vendors who will provide these meals, as well as increase the number of Bronx Food Business Pathways participants.

- Provide NYCHA residents with free healthy, nutritious and culturally appropriate meals of high quality while expanding the base of emergency food suppliers through door-to-door meal delivery.
  - Increasing food access for Bronx NYCHA residents with gas outages and/or without working stoves.
  - Addressing food insecurity in the Bronx by serving NYCHA populations, including residents from vulnerable populations such as older adults living alone, residents with disabilities, and families with young children.
- Support NYCHA resident-owned food businesses in building business capacity and becoming more competitive in securing future city contracts.

- Offering training and technical assistance support to NYCHA resident FBP program graduates' businesses.
- Create market access opportunities for women and communities of color.

Since November 2024, the program has delivered 16,758 free meals to Bronx NYCHA residents living in 18 developments impacted by gas outages—Surpassing the 15,000 meals goal set with funding provided by MOERJ to support the program expansion in the Bronx.

- This achievement has also provided \$301,644 in contracts to NYCHA Food Business Pathways vendors.
- Additionally, 22 NYCHA residents across the city graduated from Cohort 12 of the NYCHA Food Business Pathways program class of Fall 2025, 18 percent of those participants were residents of the Bronx.

## **NYCHA Resident Training Academy**

### **Introduction**

The NYC Housing Authority's Department of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (NYCHA REES) NYCHA Resident Training Academy (NRTA) Construction Track provides employment-linked training opportunities and job placement assistance to authorized NYCHA residents.

Many growing fields, including construction, show high levels of disparities between race and gender. Workforce development training programs like the NRTA Construction track helps create a pathway to high demand, living wages, and union employment for NYCHA residents.

NYCHA REES works with training graduates of the NRTA to provide job placement referrals by focusing on jobs with career paths that lead to self-sufficiency.

- The NRTA's construction pre-apprenticeship training is designed to provide motivated students with the knowledge, skills, and industry recognized certifications required for a successful career in the construction industry.
- Effective August of 2015, the NRTA is an approved NYS Department of Labor direct entry provider pre-apprenticeship program (includes Local 8 Roofers, IBEW Local 3 Electricians, Local 1 Bricklayers, Local 79 General Laborers, Local 1 Plumbers, and Local 12 Mechanical Insulators).
- Open to authorized NYCHA Public Housing and NYCHA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher tenants.
  - Program applicants are required to complete the following multi-step application process to be considered for the NRTA:
    - Complete the NRTA Entrance Exam and meet the minimum passing score.
    - Complete a pre-screening appointment to submit their application with required documents.
    - Attend one NRTA information session.
    - Complete an interview process.
    - Receive acceptance into the program and complete registration to begin training.

### **Program Objectives**

Provide Bronx NYCHA residents with access to training leading to employment and apprenticeship opportunities through an eight-week construction training (250 training hours) to a cohort of 25 participants; utilizing the curriculum outline approved by the New York State Department of Labor including:

- Hard skills construction training
- Soft skills and construction careers exploration
- Contextualized industry mathematics; and
- Green practices and blueprint reading training.

Participants will also earn industry-recognized certifications through this training program.

Since program inception in 2010, across all tracks, the NRTA has enrolled 4,757 NYCHA residents across NYC, with 4,340 graduates (91percent completion rate) and 88 percent of graduates securing employment.

From 2020-2025, 297 NRTA graduates (16 percent of total enrollees from this period) resided in the Bronx.

**Bronx Expansion**

MOERJ is funding an expansion of this program across all Bronx NYCHA developments this fiscal year.

As a NYS-approved direct entry training provider, the NRTA Bronx Initiative- Construction track aims to provide construction training and certifications to Bronx residents to facilitate access to union apprenticeships in the skilled trades, employment in construction and/or Section 3 job opportunities.

- Program recruitment, application, selection and hands-on training takes place in the borough—Reducing travel to out-of-borough training sessions, childcare and other common barriers to support successful program completion by NYCHA Bronx residents.
- Funding is reserved for training, staff support, and transit cards for student transportation.

## **Family Self-Sufficiency Program**

### **Introduction**

The NYC Housing Authority's Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) is a voluntary program that helps NYCHA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Holders make progress toward economic independence and self-sufficiency. The program supports families' and individual's efforts to pursue self-sufficiency and financial independence through education, job training, employment and financial capabilities, while building an escrow savings account.

The program is an initiative under the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which awards funding to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) Owners to hire or retain FSS Program Coordinators who, through case management, work with participants to identify and pursue financial and employment goals. All participating family members must meet their goals within five years.

A key component of the program is an escrow savings account which allows participants to save money when their rent goes up because of an increase in earned income. As participating households earned income rises, the difference between their old rent amount and new rent amount is deposited into an interest-bearing escrow savings account maintained by NYCHA.

To graduate from the program and receive their escrow savings, participants must be:

- Suitably employed.
- Completion of all final and interim goals.
- All obligations of the Contract of Participation met by the end of the contract (including any approved extensions).
- No household member receives cash public assistance at the time of graduation.
- When participants meet their goals as established in their Individual Service plans, they graduate and receive the money in their escrow savings account, tax free.

NYCHA's FSS program is administered by their Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability (REES). REES' mission to support residents with increasing their income and assets through programs, policies, and collaboration in four key areas:

- Adult Education and Vocational Training
- Employment and Career Advancement
- Financial Empowerment
- Resident Business Development

To date, there are 408 NYCHA active participants enrolled in the program, and 267 participants have escrow accounts totaling \$1.69M. The average escrow account totaled \$6,337.

- In 2025, 34 NYCHA participants graduated, total \$477,366 dispersed. The highest individual disbursement was \$57,302 and the average was \$13,639.

### **Program Objectives**

Build capacity of program through case management support for Bronx residents that will:

- Assist FSS Bronx-based participants in meeting individualized program goals.

- Assist FSS participants in accessing new employment opportunities or enhancing existing employment.
- Help FSS participants to earn escrow or increase earned escrow by increasing their earned income.
- Help FSS Bronx-based participants to improve their finance and credit profiles.
- Facilitate FSS Bronx-based participants access to home ownership opportunities.

### **Bronx Expansion**

To fill the gap in staffing, build capacity and support residents in meeting their goals, this fiscal year, the NYC Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice (MOERJ) is funding the expansion of this program across all Bronx NYCHA developments.

- The goal of the Bronx expansion of the FSS is to provide focus and tailored services for Bronx NYCHA FSS members who have enrolled in the program, but who are not yet earning escrow because they have not experienced an increase in earned income.
  - Currently 44 percent of active NYCHA FSS participants reside in the Bronx, with 64 percent earning escrow (totaling \$871,882)
  - In 2025, the average amount for Bronx NYCHA residents was \$4,898.
  - These individuals would benefit from case management and financial counseling support to achieve their economic opportunity goals. Upon program completion Bronx residents with escrow earnings may use those funds toward asset building such as increasing savings, paying down debt, planning for their family's future (i.e. 529 college accounts) and/or providing a downpayment on a home.

In November 2025, Radical Mama Housing LLC was procured to support FSS participants in reaching their goals through cohort-based (peer) and one-on-one coaching, group workshops, resources, direct referrals, and ongoing follow-ups.

- Radical Mama Housing LLC is a housing and food insecurity entity with experience working with FSS providers in Upstate NY and across the country. Their innovative case management plan that includes services delivered in the context of a cohort model through which participants were grouped and mentored according to their needs and preferences, including Education and Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Financial Literacy & Homeownership.

Outreach and Informational sessions took place in Late December 2025 and continued in early January 2026 to recruit participants for the Radical Mama program. The cohorts kicked off in February with a 6-week Financial Literacy series.

**NYCHA Bronx Developments**

The NYCHA REES programs funded to expand in the Bronx by MOERJ cover NYCHA residents across all 70+ Bronx NYCHA residential developments.

Featured in the [NYCHA Development Interactive Map](#).

<b>City Council District 8: 13 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b>		
<u>NYCHA Betances I</u> 10454 1. 400 Brook Avenue  2. 511 East 143rd Street  3. 515 East 143rd Street  4. 525 East 143rd Street  5. 531 East 143rd Street  6. 535 East 143rd Street  7. 545 East 143rd Street  8. 551 East 143rd Street  9. 560 East 144th Street  10. 550 East 144th Street  11. 540 East 144th Street  12. 530 East 144th Street	<u>NYCHA Betances II</u> 10454 1. 505 East 144th Street  2. 509 East 144th Street  3. 517 East 144th Street  4. 700 East 140th Street  <u>NYCHA Betances III</u> 10454 1. 427 Saint Anns Avenue  2. 423 Saint Anns Avenue  3. 695 East 139th Street  4. 699 East 139th Street	<u>NYCHA Betances IV</u> 10454 1. 480 East 143rd Street  10455 2. 433 East 146th Street  3. 435 East 146th Street  4. 437 East 146th Street  5. 439 East 146th Street  6. 441 East 146th Street  7. 511 East 146th Street  8. 417 East 146th Street  9. 419 East 146th Street  10. 421 East 146th Street  11. 423 East 146th Street  12. 425 East 146th Street

<p>13. 520 East 144th Street</p>		<p>13. 427 East 146th Street</p> <p>14. 429 East 146th Street</p> <p>15. 431 East 146th Street</p> <p>16. 545 East 146th Street</p> <p>17. 510 East 146th Street</p> <p>18. 510 East 146th Street</p> <p>19. 455 East 146th Street</p>
<p><u>NYCHA Betances V</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 409 East 146th Street</li> <li>2. 413 East 146th Street</li> <li>3. 445 East 146th Street</li> </ol>	<p><u>NYCHA (President John) Adams</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 745 East 152nd Street</li> <li>2. 700 Westchester Avenue</li> <li>3. 720 Westchester Avenue</li> <li>4. 721 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>5. 710 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>6. 680 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>7. 815 East 152nd Street</li> </ol>	<p><u>Bronxchester, 10455</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 510 East 156th Street</li> <li>2. 520 East 156th Street</li> </ol>

<p><u>Mill Brook Houses</u> 10454</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 180 Brook Avenue</li> <li>2. 520 East 137th Street</li> <li>3. 165 Saint Anns Avenue</li> <li>4. 530 East 137th Street</li> <li>5. 164 Saint Anns Avenue</li> <li>6. 584 East 137th Street</li> <li>7. 600 East 137th Street</li> <li>8. 620 East 137th Street</li> <li>9. 640 East 137th Street</li> </ol> <p><u>Mill Brook Extension</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. 169 Cypress Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Mitchel Houses</u> 10454</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 303 East 135th Street</li> <li>2. 300 East 138th Street</li> <li>3. 215 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>4. 205 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>5. 175 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>6. 350 East 137th Street</li> <li>7. 360 East 137th Street</li> <li>8. 225 Willis Avenue</li> <li>9. 177 Willis Avenue</li> <li>10. 190 Lincoln Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Moore Houses</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 694 East 149th Street</li> <li>2. 674 East 149th Street</li> <li>3. 535 Jackson Avenue</li> <li>4. 525 Jackson Avenue</li> </ol> <p><u>Mott Haven Houses</u> 10454</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 388 East 141st Street</li> <li>2. 383 East 141st Street</li> <li>3. 353 East 141st Street</li> <li>4. 340 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>5. 350 East 143rd Street</li> <li>6. 380 East 143rd Street</li> <li>7. 355 East 143rd Street</li> <li>8. 383 East 143rd Street</li> </ol>
<p><u>Saint Mary's Park Houses</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 550 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>2. 595 Trinity Avenue</li> <li>3. 645 Westchester Avenue</li> </ol>		

- 4. 665 Westchester Avenue
- 5. 671 Westchester Avenue
- 6. 700 East 156th Street

Patterson Houses

10451

- |                           |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 2595 3rd Avenue        | 13. 308 East 145th Street | 21. 314 East 143rd Street |
| 2. 2615 3rd Avenue        | 14. 291 East 143rd Street | 22. 324 East 143rd Street |
| 3. 300 Morris Avenue      | 15. 301 East 143rd Street | 23. 2645 3rd Avenue       |
| 4. 320 Morris Avenue      | 16. 328 East 145th Street | 24. 2635 3rd Avenue       |
| 5. 340 Morris Avenue      | 17. 338 East 145th Street | 25. 2635 3rd Avenue       |
| 6. 340 Morris Avenue      | 18. 2715 3rd Avenue       |                           |
| 7. 340 Morris Avenue      | 19. 325 East 143rd Street |                           |
| 8. 300 East 143rd Street  | 20. 315 East 143rd Street |                           |
| 9. 281 East 143rd Street  |                           |                           |
| 10. 271 East 143rd Street |                           |                           |
| 11. 414 Morris Avenue     |                           |                           |
| 12. 424 Morris Avenue     |                           |                           |

**City Council District 17: 9 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments**

East 152<sup>nd</sup> Street-Cortlandt Avenue, 10455  
 1. 372 East 152<sup>nd</sup> Street, 10455  
 2. 370 East 153<sup>rd</sup> Street, 10455

- East 165<sup>th</sup> Street-Bryant Avenue, 10459
- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 1084 Bryant Avenue     | 10. 1034 Bryant Avenue     |
| 2. 1080 Bryant Avenue     | 11. 1030 Bryant Avenue     |
| 3. 1074 Bryant Avenue     | 12. 1024 Bryant Avenue     |
| 4. 1070 Bryant Avenue     | 13. 1020 Bryant Avenue     |
| 5. 1134 East 165th Street | 14. 1080 East 165th Street |
| 6. 1130 East 165th Street | 15. 1084 East 165th Street |
| 7. 1124 East 165th Street | 16. 1090 East 165th Street |
| 8. 1120 East 165th Street | 17. 1094 East 165th Street |
| 9. 1040 Bryant Avenue     | 18. 1100 East 165th Street |
|                           | 19. 1110 East 165th Street |

Hunts Point Avenue Rehab, 10474  
 1. 823 Hunts Point Avenue  
 2. 827 Hunts Point Avenue  
 3. 831 Hunts Point Avenue  
 4. 835 Hunts Point Avenue  
 5. 839 Hunts Point Avenue

Jackson Houses, 10451  
 1. 3080 Park Avenue  
 2. 300 East 158th Street  
 3. 785 Courtlandt Avenue  
 4. 765 Courtlandt Avenue  
 5. 301 East 156th Street  
 6. 285 East 156th Street

Longfellow Avenue Rehab, 10459  
 1. 1091 Longfellow Avenue  
 2. 1102 Longfellow Avenue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. 843 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>7. 847 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>8. 851 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>9. 855 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>10. 859 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>11. 863 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>12. 867 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>13. 875 Irvine Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. 3050 Park Avenue</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Melrose Houses, 10451</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 681 Courtlandt Avenue</li> <li>2. 346 East 156th Street</li> <li>3. 321 East 153rd Street</li> <li>4. 320 East 156th Street</li> <li>5. 305 East 153rd Street</li> <li>6. 304 East 156th Street</li> <li>7. 281 East 153rd Street</li> <li>8. 700 Morris Avenue</li> </ul>	<p><u>South Bronx Area (Site 402), 10456</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 845 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>2. 851 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>3. 855 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>4. 861 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>5. 865 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>6. 821 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>7. 825 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>8. 829 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>9. 611 East 158th Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. 615 East 158th Street</li> <li>11. 625 East 158th Street</li> <li>12. 635 East 158th Street</li> <li>13. 645 East 158th Street</li> <li>14. 854 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>15. 850 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>16. 844 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>17. 840 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>18. 834 Eagle Avenue</li> </ul>

	19. 830 Eagle Avenue	
<u>Stebbins Avenue-Hewitt Place, 10459</u> 1. 839 Rev James A Polite Avenue 2. 845 Rev James A Polite Avenue 3. 851 Rev James A Polite Avenue 4. 857 Rev James A Polite Avenue 5. 863 Rev James A Polite Avenue 6. 869 Rev James A Polite Avenue 7. 875 Rev James A Polite Avenue	8. 881 Rev James A Polite Avenue 9. 820 Hewitt Place 10. 826 Hewitt Place 11. 832 Hewitt Place 12. 840 Hewitt Place 13. 846 Hewitt Place 14. 852 Hewitt Place	<u>West Farms Road Rehab, 10459</u> 1. 1203 Westchester Avenue 2. 1209 Westchester Avenue 3. 1002 East 167th Street 4. 998 East 167th Street 5. 1317 West Farms Road 6. 1321 West Farms Road 7. 1323 West Farms Road
<b>City Council District 10: <u>1 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</u></b>		
<u>Marble Hill Houses</u> 10463 1. 5210 Broadway 2. 69 West 225th Street 3. 49 West 225th Street 7. 5480 Broadway 8. 5360 Broadway 9. 5240 Broadway		

4. 2811 Exterior Street	10. 125 West 228th Street	
5. 2831 Exterior Street	11. 210 West 230th Street	
6. 2861 Exterior Street		
<b>Bronx City Council District 12: 6 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b>		
<u>Baychester Houses, 10466</u>		<u>Boston Secor Houses, 10475</u>
1. 1870 Schieffelin Avenue	7. 1861 Schieffelin Place	1. 3475 Bivona Street
2. 1880 Schieffelin Avenue	8. 1881 Schieffelin Place	2. 3555 Bivona Street
3. 1890 Schieffelin Avenue	9. 1851 Schieffelin Place	3. 3550 Bivona Street
4. 1920 Schieffelin Avenue	10. 1871 Schieffelin Place	4. 2175 Reeds Mill Lane
5. 1930 Schieffelin Avenue	11. 1891 Schieffelin Place	
6. 1900 Schieffelin Avenue		
<u>Edenwald Houses, 10466</u>		
1. Multiple Residential Buildings on Grenada Place, Baychester Avenue, Schieffelin Avenue, 229th Drive North/South, East 229th Street, Laconia Avenue, 226th Drive, & East 225th Street		
<u>Eastchester Gardens</u> 10469	<u>Gun Hill Houses</u> 10467	<u>Parkside Houses</u> 10467
1. 1134 Burke Avenue	1. 711 Magenta Street	1. 2910 Bronx Park East
2. 1140 Burke Avenue	2. 3444 White Plains Road	11. 650 Adee Avenue
3. 1160 Burke Avenue	3. 712 Gun Hill Road	2. 2970 Bronx Park East
4. 1166 Burke Avenue	4. 740 Gun Hill Road	12. 666 Adee Avenue
5. 1210 Burke Avenue	5. 3445 Holland Avenue	13. 670 Adee Avenue
		3. 640 Adee Avenue
		14. 680 Adee Avenue

**NYCHA Bronx Developments**

The NYCHA REES programs funded to expand in the Bronx by MOERJ cover NYCHA residents across all 70+ Bronx NYCHA residential developments.

Featured in the [NYCHA Development Interactive Map](#).

<b>City Council District 8: 13 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b>		
<u>NYCHA Betances I</u> 10454 1. 400 Brook Avenue  2. 511 East 143rd Street  3. 515 East 143rd Street  4. 525 East 143rd Street  5. 531 East 143rd Street  6. 535 East 143rd Street  7. 545 East 143rd Street  8. 551 East 143rd Street  9. 560 East 144th Street  10. 550 East 144th Street  11. 540 East 144th Street  12. 530 East 144th Street	<u>NYCHA Betances II</u> 10454 1. 505 East 144th Street  2. 509 East 144th Street  3. 517 East 144th Street  4. 700 East 140th Street  <u>NYCHA Betances III</u> 10454 1. 427 Saint Anns Avenue  2. 423 Saint Anns Avenue  3. 695 East 139th Street  4. 699 East 139th Street	<u>NYCHA Betances IV</u> 10454 1. 480 East 143rd Street  10455 2. 433 East 146th Street  3. 435 East 146th Street  4. 437 East 146th Street  5. 439 East 146th Street  6. 441 East 146th Street  7. 511 East 146th Street  8. 417 East 146th Street  9. 419 East 146th Street  10. 421 East 146th Street  11. 423 East 146th Street  12. 425 East 146th Street

<p>13. 520 East 144th Street</p>		<p>13. 427 East 146th Street</p> <p>14. 429 East 146th Street</p> <p>15. 431 East 146th Street</p> <p>16. 545 East 146th Street</p> <p>17. 510 East 146th Street</p> <p>18. 510 East 146th Street</p> <p>19. 455 East 146th Street</p>
<p><u>NYCHA Betances V</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 409 East 146th Street</li> <li>2. 413 East 146th Street</li> <li>3. 445 East 146th Street</li> </ol>	<p><u>NYCHA (President John) Adams</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 745 East 152nd Street</li> <li>2. 700 Westchester Avenue</li> <li>3. 720 Westchester Avenue</li> <li>4. 721 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>5. 710 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>6. 680 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>7. 815 East 152nd Street</li> </ol>	<p><u>Bronxchester, 10455</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 510 East 156th Street</li> <li>2. 520 East 156th Street</li> </ol>

<p><u>Mill Brook Houses</u> 10454</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 180 Brook Avenue</li> <li>2. 520 East 137th Street</li> <li>3. 165 Saint Anns Avenue</li> <li>4. 530 East 137th Street</li> <li>5. 164 Saint Anns Avenue</li> <li>6. 584 East 137th Street</li> <li>7. 600 East 137th Street</li> <li>8. 620 East 137th Street</li> <li>9. 640 East 137th Street</li> </ol> <p><u>Mill Brook Extension</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. 169 Cypress Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Mitchel Houses</u> 10454</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 303 East 135th Street</li> <li>2. 300 East 138th Street</li> <li>3. 215 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>4. 205 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>5. 175 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>6. 350 East 137th Street</li> <li>7. 360 East 137th Street</li> <li>8. 225 Willis Avenue</li> <li>9. 177 Willis Avenue</li> <li>10. 190 Lincoln Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Moore Houses</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 694 East 149th Street</li> <li>2. 674 East 149th Street</li> <li>3. 535 Jackson Avenue</li> <li>4. 525 Jackson Avenue</li> </ol> <p><u>Mott Haven Houses</u> 10454</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 388 East 141st Street</li> <li>2. 383 East 141st Street</li> <li>3. 353 East 141st Street</li> <li>4. 340 Alexander Avenue</li> <li>5. 350 East 143rd Street</li> <li>6. 380 East 143rd Street</li> <li>7. 355 East 143rd Street</li> <li>8. 383 East 143rd Street</li> </ol>
<p><u>Saint Mary's Park Houses</u> 10455</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 550 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>2. 595 Trinity Avenue</li> <li>3. 645 Westchester Avenue</li> </ol>		

- 4. 665 Westchester Avenue
- 5. 671 Westchester Avenue
- 6. 700 East 156th Street

Patterson Houses

10451

- |                           |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 2595 3rd Avenue        | 13. 308 East 145th Street | 21. 314 East 143rd Street |
| 2. 2615 3rd Avenue        | 14. 291 East 143rd Street | 22. 324 East 143rd Street |
| 3. 300 Morris Avenue      | 15. 301 East 143rd Street | 23. 2645 3rd Avenue       |
| 4. 320 Morris Avenue      | 16. 328 East 145th Street | 24. 2635 3rd Avenue       |
| 5. 340 Morris Avenue      | 17. 338 East 145th Street | 25. 2635 3rd Avenue       |
| 6. 340 Morris Avenue      | 18. 2715 3rd Avenue       |                           |
| 7. 340 Morris Avenue      | 19. 325 East 143rd Street |                           |
| 8. 300 East 143rd Street  | 20. 315 East 143rd Street |                           |
| 9. 281 East 143rd Street  |                           |                           |
| 10. 271 East 143rd Street |                           |                           |
| 11. 414 Morris Avenue     |                           |                           |
| 12. 424 Morris Avenue     |                           |                           |

**City Council District 17: 9 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments**

East 152<sup>nd</sup> Street-Cortlandt Avenue, 10455

1. 372 East 152<sup>nd</sup> Street, 10455
2. 370 East 153<sup>rd</sup> Street, 10455

East 165<sup>th</sup> Street-Bryant Avenue, 10459

- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 1084 Bryant Avenue     | 10. 1034 Bryant Avenue     |
| 2. 1080 Bryant Avenue     | 11. 1030 Bryant Avenue     |
| 3. 1074 Bryant Avenue     | 12. 1024 Bryant Avenue     |
| 4. 1070 Bryant Avenue     | 13. 1020 Bryant Avenue     |
| 5. 1134 East 165th Street | 14. 1080 East 165th Street |
| 6. 1130 East 165th Street | 15. 1084 East 165th Street |
| 7. 1124 East 165th Street | 16. 1090 East 165th Street |
| 8. 1120 East 165th Street | 17. 1094 East 165th Street |
| 9. 1040 Bryant Avenue     | 18. 1100 East 165th Street |
|                           | 19. 1110 East 165th Street |

Hunts Point Avenue Rehab, 10474

1. 823 Hunts Point Avenue
2. 827 Hunts Point Avenue
3. 831 Hunts Point Avenue
4. 835 Hunts Point Avenue
5. 839 Hunts Point Avenue

Jackson Houses, 10451

1. 3080 Park Avenue
2. 300 East 158th Street
3. 785 Courtlandt Avenue
4. 765 Courtlandt Avenue
5. 301 East 156th Street
6. 285 East 156th Street

Longfellow Avenue Rehab, 10459

1. 1091 Longfellow Avenue
2. 1102 Longfellow Avenue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. 843 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>7. 847 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>8. 851 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>9. 855 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>10. 859 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>11. 863 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>12. 867 Hunts Point Avenue</li> <li>13. 875 Irvine Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. 3050 Park Avenue</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Melrose Houses, 10451</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 681 Courtlandt Avenue</li> <li>2. 346 East 156th Street</li> <li>3. 321 East 153rd Street</li> <li>4. 320 East 156th Street</li> <li>5. 305 East 153rd Street</li> <li>6. 304 East 156th Street</li> <li>7. 281 East 153rd Street</li> <li>8. 700 Morris Avenue</li> </ul>	<p><u>South Bronx Area (Site 402), 10456</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 845 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>2. 851 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>3. 855 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>4. 861 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>5. 865 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>6. 821 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>7. 825 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>8. 829 Cauldwell Avenue</li> <li>9. 611 East 158th Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. 615 East 158th Street</li> <li>11. 625 East 158th Street</li> <li>12. 635 East 158th Street</li> <li>13. 645 East 158th Street</li> <li>14. 854 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>15. 850 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>16. 844 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>17. 840 Eagle Avenue</li> <li>18. 834 Eagle Avenue</li> </ul>

	19. 830 Eagle Avenue	
<u>Stebbins Avenue-Hewitt Place, 10459</u> 1. 839 Rev James A Polite Avenue 2. 845 Rev James A Polite Avenue 3. 851 Rev James A Polite Avenue 4. 857 Rev James A Polite Avenue 5. 863 Rev James A Polite Avenue 6. 869 Rev James A Polite Avenue 7. 875 Rev James A Polite Avenue	8. 881 Rev James A Polite Avenue 9. 820 Hewitt Place 10. 826 Hewitt Place 11. 832 Hewitt Place 12. 840 Hewitt Place 13. 846 Hewitt Place 14. 852 Hewitt Place	<u>West Farms Road Rehab, 10459</u> 1. 1203 Westchester Avenue 2. 1209 Westchester Avenue 3. 1002 East 167th Street 4. 998 East 167th Street 5. 1317 West Farms Road 6. 1321 West Farms Road 7. 1323 West Farms Road
<b>City Council District 10: <u>1 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</u></b>		
<u>Marble Hill Houses</u> 10463 1. 5210 Broadway 2. 69 West 225th Street 3. 49 West 225th Street 7. 5480 Broadway 8. 5360 Broadway 9. 5240 Broadway		

4. 2811 Exterior Street	10. 125 West 228th Street	
5. 2831 Exterior Street	11. 210 West 230th Street	
6. 2861 Exterior Street		
<b>Bronx City Council District 12: 6 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b>		
<u>Baychester Houses, 10466</u>		<u>Boston Secor Houses, 10475</u>
1. 1870 Schieffelin Avenue	7. 1861 Schieffelin Place	1. 3475 Bivona Street
2. 1880 Schieffelin Avenue	8. 1881 Schieffelin Place	2. 3555 Bivona Street
3. 1890 Schieffelin Avenue	9. 1851 Schieffelin Place	3. 3550 Bivona Street
4. 1920 Schieffelin Avenue	10. 1871 Schieffelin Place	4. 2175 Reeds Mill Lane
5. 1930 Schieffelin Avenue	11. 1891 Schieffelin Place	
6. 1900 Schieffelin Avenue		
<u>Edenwald Houses, 10466</u>		
1. Multiple Residential Buildings on Grenada Place, Baychester Avenue, Schieffelin Avenue, 229th Drive North/South, East 229th Street, Laconia Avenue, 226th Drive, & East 225th Street		
<u>Eastchester Gardens</u> 10469	<u>Gun Hill Houses</u> 10467	<u>Parkside Houses</u> 10467
1. 1134 Burke Avenue	1. 711 Magenta Street	1. 2910 Bronx Park East
2. 1140 Burke Avenue	2. 3444 White Plains Road	11. 650 Adee Avenue
3. 1160 Burke Avenue	3. 712 Gun Hill Road	2. 2970 Bronx Park East
4. 1166 Burke Avenue	4. 740 Gun Hill Road	12. 666 Adee Avenue
5. 1210 Burke Avenue	5. 3445 Holland Avenue	13. 670 Adee Avenue
		3. 640 Adee Avenue
		14. 680 Adee Avenue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. 1216 Burke Avenue</li> <li>7. 1236 Burke Avenue</li> <li>8. 1240 Burke Avenue</li> <li>9. 1260 Burke Avenue</li> <li>10. 3055 Bouck Avenue</li> <li>11. 1255 Adee Avenue</li> <li>12. 1245 Adee Avenue</li> <li>13. 1219 Adee Avenue</li> <li>14. 3020 Yates Avenue</li> <li>15. 3010 Yates Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. 735 Magenta Street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. 635 Arnow Avenue</li> <li>5. 660 Arnow Avenue</li> <li>6. 669 Arnow Avenue</li> <li>7. 665 Arnow Avenue</li> <li>8. 649 Arnow Avenue</li> <li>9. 645 Arnow Avenue</li> <li>10. 646 Adee Avenue</li> <li>15. 2975 White Plains Road</li> <li>16. 2955 White Plains Road</li> <li>17. 2959 White Plains Road</li> <li>18. 2945 White Plains Road</li> <li>19. 2950 Bronx Park East</li> <li>20. 2825 Olinville Avenue</li> </ul>
<b>Bronx City Council District 13: 5.Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b>		
<u>Boston Road Plaza, 10467</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2440 Boston Road</li> </ul>	<u>Middletown Plaza, 10461</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3033 Middletown Road</li> </ul>	<u>Randall Avenue-Balcom Avenue Houses, 10465</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2700 Randall Avenue</li> <li>2. 650 Buttrick Avenue</li> <li>3. 2705 Schley Avenue</li> </ul>

Pelham Parkway Houses, 10467 & 10469

1. Multiple residential buildings on Mace Avenue, Bronxwood Avenue, Waring Avenue, Williamsbridge Road, Paulding Avenue, Astor Avenue, Wallace Avenue, & Pelham Parkway North

Throggs Neck Houses & Addition, 10465

1. Multiple residential buildings on Sampson Avenue, Dewey Avenue, Swinton Avenue, Calhoun Avenue, Schley Avenue, Randall Avenue, & Balcom Avenue

**Bronx City Council District 14: 6 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments**

Bailey Avenue-West 193rd Street, 10463

1. 2663 Heath Avenue

Fort Independence Street-Heath Avenue, 10463

1. 3340 Bailey Avenue
2. 3353 Fort Independence Street

Harrison Avenue Rehab, 10453  
Group A

1. 1930 Harrison Avenue

Group B

1. 1886 Harrison Avenue
2. 1920 Harrison Avenue
3. 1925 Harrison Avenue
4. 1934 Harrison Avenue

University Avenue Rehab, 10453

1. 1865 University Avenue
2. 1875 University Avenue
3. 1895 University Avenue
4. 1925 University Avenue
5. 1927 University Avenue

West Tremont Avenue-Sedgwick Avenue Area, 10453

1. 228 West Tremont Avenue

Sedgwick Houses, 10453

1. 140 West 174th Street
2. 150 West 174th Street
3. 160 West 174th Street
4. 1551 University Avenue
5. 156 West 174th Street
6. 1535 University Avenue
7. 164 West 174th Street

**Bronx City Council District 15: 5 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments**

<p><u>1010 East 178th Street, 10460</u> 1. 1010 East 178th Street</p>	<p><u>East 180th Street-Monterey Avenue, 10457</u> 1. 2111 Lafontaine Avenue 2. 558 East 181st Street</p>	<p><u>Murphy Houses, 10457</u> 1. 1805 Crotona Avenue 2. 611 Crotona Park North</p>
<p><u>Twin Peaks West (Sites 1 &amp; 2), 10457</u> 1. 365 Ford Street 2. 365 Ford Street 3. 365 Ford Street 4. 365 Ford Street 5. 365 East 183rd Street 6. 365 East 183rd Street 7. 365 East 183rd Street</p>	<p><u>Twin Peaks East (Site 9), 10457</u> 1. 2070 Clinton Avenue</p>	

**Bronx City Council District 16: 12 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments**

<p><u>1162-1176 Washington Avenue, 10456</u> 1. 1162 Washington Avenue</p>	<p><u>Butler Houses, 10456</u> 1. 1330 Webster Avenue 2. 1348 Webster Avenue 3. 1368 Webster Avenue 4. 1408 Webster Avenue 5. 1428 Webster Avenue 6. 1458 Webster Avenue</p>	<p><u>Claremont Parkway-franklin Avenue 10457</u> 1. 1525 Fulton Avenue 2. 1531 Fulton Avenue 3. 1535 Fulton Avenue 4. 1545 Fulton Avenue 5. 560 Claremont Parkway 6. 550 Claremont Parkway 7. 544 Claremont Parkway 8. 3820 3rd Avenue 9. 3812 3rd Avenue 10. 3808 3rd Avenue 11. 3804 3rd Avenue 12. 3800 3rd Avenue</p>
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		10456 13. 1325 Franklin Avenue
<u>Claremont Rehab, 10456</u> Group 2 1. 1115 Clay Avenue 2. 1195 Clay Avenue 3. 1232 Clay Avenue 4. 1236 Clay Avenue 5. 1244 Clay Avenue 6. 1278 Clay Avenue  Group 3 7. 1052 Teller Avenue 8. 1064 Teller Avenue 9. 1072 Teller Avenue 10. 1105 Teller Avenue 11. 1129 Teller Avenue	Group 4 12. 1252 Clay Avenue 13. 1248 Clay Avenue 14. 1240 Clay Avenue 15. 1228 Clay Avenue 16. 1128 Findlay Avenue 17. 1114 Findlay Avenue 18. 335 East 166th Street 19. 1068 Teller Avenue 20. 1046 Teller Avenue  Group 5 21. 1150 College Avenue 22. 1131 Findlay Avenue 23. 1113 Findlay Avenue	<u>Morris I &amp; II</u> <u>Morris I, 10456</u> 1. 1385 Washington Avenue 2. 1373 Washington Avenue 3. 1357 Washington Avenue 4. 1343 Washington Avenue 5. 1309 Washington Avenue 6. 3603 3rd Avenue 7. 1350 Washington Avenue 8. 1358 Washington Avenue 9. 1372 Washington Avenue 10. 3673 3rd Avenue  <u>Morris II</u> 11. 1420 Washington Avenue, 10456 12. 1460 Washington Avenue, 10456 13. 500 East 171st Street, 10457 14. 1480 Washington Avenue, 10456 15. 1481 Washington Avenue, 10456 16. 1465 Washington Avenue, 10456 17. 1451 Washington Avenue, 10456
<u>Morrisania Air Rights, 10451</u> 1. 3071 Park Avenue 2. 3073 Park Avenue 3. 3125 Park Avenue 4. 3135 Park Avenue 5. 3204 Park Avenue	<u>College Avenue-East 165th Street, 10456</u> 1. 1020 College Avenue	<u>Franklin Avenue I Conventional, 10456</u> 1. 1381 Franklin Avenue 2. 1377 Franklin Avenue 3. 1373 Franklin Avenue
<u>Highbridge Gardens, 10452</u> 1. 1065 University Avenue	<u>Highbridge Rehabs, 10452</u> Anderson Avenue	<u>Teller Avenue-East 166<sup>th</sup> Street, 10456</u> 1. 1100 Teller Avenue

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 1075 University Avenue</li> <li>3. 1095 University Avenue</li> <li>4. 1135 University Avenue</li> <li>5. 1145 University Avenue</li> <li>6. 1125 University Avenue</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1085 Anderson Avenue</li> <li>2. 130 West 166th Street</li> <li>3. 134 West 166th Street</li> <li>4. 125 West 166th Street</li> </ol> <p>Nelson Avenue</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. 1184 Nelson Avenue</li> <li>6. 1144 Nelson Avenue</li> <li>7. 1139 Nelson Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Webster Houses, 10456</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1270 Webster Avenue</li> <li>2. 420 East 169th Street</li> <li>3. 1260 Webster Avenue</li> <li>4. 421 East 168th Street</li> <li>5. 1230 Webster Avenue</li> </ol>
<p><b>Bronx City Council District 17: 11 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b></p>		
<p><u>1471 Watson Avenue, 10472</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1471 Watson Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Davidson Houses, 10459</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1150 Union Avenue</li> <li>2. 818 Home Street</li> </ol>	<p><u>McKinley Houses, 10456</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 730 East 163rd Street</li> <li>2. 731 East 161st Street</li> <li>3. 750 East 163rd Street</li> <li>4. 751 East 161st Street</li> <li>5. 905 Tinton Avenue</li> </ol>
<p><u>Bronx River Houses, 10472</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1455 Harrod Avenue</li> <li>2. 1435 Harrod Avenue</li> <li>3. 1635 East 174th Street</li> <li>4. 1460 Bronx River Avenue</li> <li>5. 1609 East 174th Street</li> <li>6. 1440 Bronx River Avenue</li> <li>7. 1575 East 174th Street</li> <li>8. 1595 East 174th Street</li> <li>9. 1420 Bronx River Avenue</li> </ol> <p><u>Addition</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. 1350 Manor Avenue</li> <li>11. 1630 East 174th Street</li> </ol>	<p><u>Bryant Avenue-East 174th Street, 10460</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1705 Bryant Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Eagle Avenue-East 163rd Street, 10456</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 905 Eagle Avenue</li> </ol>
<p><u>East 173rd street-Wyse Street, 10460</u></p>		<p><u>Forest Houses, 10456</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1000 Trinity Avenue</li> </ol>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1463 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>2. 1465 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>3. 1467 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>4. 1469 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>5. 1471 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>6. 1475 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>7. 1477 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>8. 1479 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>9. 1481 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>10. 1485 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>11. 1487 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>12. 1489 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>13. 1491 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>14. 1493 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>15. 1520 Hoe Avenue</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. 1520 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>17. 1528 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>18. 1550 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>19. 1554 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>20. 1558 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>21. 1566 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>22. 1570 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>23. 1572 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>24. 1576 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>25. 1580 Hoe Avenue</li> <li>26. 1579 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>27. 1575 Vyse Avenue</li> <li>28. 1571 Vyse Avenue</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 1020 Trinity Avenue</li> <li>3. 735 East 165th Street</li> <li>4. 730 East 166th Street</li> <li>5. 750 East 166th Street</li> <li>6. 760 East 166th Street</li> <li>7. 765 East 165th Street</li> <li>8. 770 East 165th Street</li> <li>9. 975 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>10. 765 East 163rd Street</li> <li>11. 965 Tinton Avenue</li> <li>12. 730 East 165th Street</li> <li>13. 735 East 163rd Street</li> <li>14. 695 East 163rd Street</li> <li>15. 980 Trinity Avenue</li> </ol>
<u>Hoe Avenue-East 173rd street, 10460</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1700 Hoe Avenue</li> </ol>	<u>Union Avenue-East 166th Street, 10459</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1135 Prospect Avenue</li> <li>2. 819 East 167th Street</li> <li>3. 817 East 167th Street</li> <li>4. 815 East 167th Street</li> <li>5. 813 East 167th Street</li> <li>6. 811 East 167th Street</li> <li>7. 1104 Union Avenue</li> <li>8. 1102 Union Avenue</li> <li>9. 1100 Union Avenue</li> <li>10. 1098 Union Avenue</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. 1096 Union Avenue</li> <li>12. 815 East 166th Street</li> <li>13. 817 East 166th Street</li> <li>14. 819 East 166th Street</li> <li>15. 822 East 167th Street</li> <li>16. 820 East 167th Street</li> <li>17. 818 East 167th Street</li> <li>18. 1111 Prospect Avenue</li> <li>19. 1113 Prospect Avenue</li> <li>20. 1115 Prospect Avenue</li> </ol>
<u>West Farms Square Conventional Houses, 10459</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1143 Longfellow Avenue</li> </ol>		
<b>Bronx City Council District 18: 8 Bronx NYCHA Residential Developments</b>		
<u>Boynton Avenue Rehab, 10472</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1044 Boynton Avenue</li> </ol>	<u>Clason Point Gardens, 10473</u>	<u>Castle Hill Houses, 10473</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2140 Seward Avenue</li> </ol>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 1048 Boynton Avenue</li> <li>3. 1057 Boynton Avenue</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 Residential Buildings on Noble Avenue, Clason Point Lane North/South, Lafayette Avenue, Story Avenue, Metcalf Avenue, Croes Place, &amp; Seward Avenue</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 2160 Seward Avenue</li> <li>3. 2125 Randall Avenue</li> <li>4. 635 Castle Hill Avenue</li> <li>5. 2120 Randall Avenue</li> <li>6. 575 Castle Hill Avenue</li> <li>7. 530 Olmstead Avenue</li> <li>8. 2175 Lacombe Avenue</li> <li>9. 2245 Randall Avenue</li> <li>10. 2275 Randall Avenue</li> <li>11. 580 Castle Hill Avenue</li> <li>12. 2280 Randall Avenue</li> <li>13. 2225 Lacombe Avenue</li> <li>14. 535 Havemeyer Avenue</li> </ol>
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<p><u>Glebe Avenue-Westchester Avenue, 10462</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2125 Glebe Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Monroe Houses, 10473</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1785 Story Avenue</li> <li>2. 1790 Story Avenue</li> <li>3. 1770 Story Avenue</li> <li>4. 1770 Story Avenue</li> <li>5. 800 Soundview Avenue</li> <li>6. 805 Taylor Avenue</li> <li>7. 877 Taylor Avenue</li> <li>8. 875 Taylor Avenue</li> <li>9. 1802 Story Avenue</li> <li>10. 1800 Story Avenue</li> <li>11. 1760 Story Avenue</li> <li>12. 1762 Story Avenue</li> <li>13. 872 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>14. 870 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>15. 1755 Story Avenue</li> <li>16. 1757 Story Avenue</li> <li>17. 1815 Story Avenue</li> <li>18. 1817 Story Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Sack Wern Houses, 10473</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1785 Story Avenue</li> <li>2. 1790 Story Avenue</li> <li>3. 1770 Story Avenue</li> <li>4. 810 Soundview Avenue</li> <li>5. 800 Soundview Avenue</li> <li>6. 805 Taylor Avenue</li> <li>7. 877 Taylor Avenue</li> <li>8. 875 Taylor Avenue</li> <li>9. 1802 Story Avenue</li> <li>10. 1800 Story Avenue</li> <li>11. 1760 Story Avenue</li> <li>12. 1762 Story Avenue</li> <li>13. 872 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>14. 870 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>15. 1755 Story Avenue</li> <li>16. 1757 Story Avenue</li> <li>17. 1815 Story Avenue</li> <li>18. 1817 Story Avenue</li> </ol>
<p><u>Sotomayor Houses, 10472</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multiple residential buildings on Rosedale Avenue, Bruckner Boulevard, Soundview Avenue, Watson Avenue, &amp; Beach Avenue</li> </ol>	<p><u>Soundview Houses, 10473</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 639 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>2. 661 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>3. 1704 Seward Avenue</li> <li>4. 1710 Seward Avenue</li> <li>5. 1682 Seward Avenue</li> <li>6. 1686 Seward Avenue</li> <li>7. 1670 Seward Avenue</li> <li>8. 1676 Seward Avenue</li> <li>9. 1665 Randall Avenue</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. 1715 Randall Avenue</li> <li>15. 1725 Randall Avenue</li> <li>16. 615 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>17. 541 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>18. 551 Rosedale Avenue</li> <li>19. 1704 Randall Avenue</li> <li>20. 1710 Randall Avenue</li> <li>21. 1680 Randall Avenue</li> <li>22. 1686 Randall Avenue</li> </ol>

	10. 1669 Randall Avenue 11. 1685 Randall Avenue 12. 1689 Randall Avenue 13. 1711 Randall Avenue	23. 1711 Lacombe Avenue 24. 1715 Lacombe Avenue 25. 515 Rosedale Avenue 26. 525 Rosedale Avenue
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## **Addendum B – NYC Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE) Neighborhoods**

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The Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE) has focused on since its launch include those most impacted by COVID-19, in addition to communities that have a high percentage of other health and socioeconomic disparities. At the time the Taskforce was established, these communities accounted for over 50 percent of all the City's COVID-19 cases



	<b>Neighborhoods</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>ZIP Codes</b>
1	<b>Lower East Side and Chinatown</b>	Manhattan	10002, 10003, 10009, 10013
2	<b>Morningside Heights and Hamilton Heights</b>	Manhattan	10025, 10027 10031, 10032
3	<b>Central Harlem</b>	Manhattan	10026, 10027, 10030, 10037 10039
4	<b>East Harlem</b>	Manhattan	10029, 10035
5	<b>Washington Heights and Inwood</b>	Manhattan	10032, 10033, 10034, 10040
6	<b>Mott Haven and Melrose</b>	Bronx	10451, 10454, 10455, 10456
7	<b>Hunts Point and Longwood</b>	Bronx	10455, 10459, 10474
8	<b>Morrisania and Crotona</b>	Bronx	10456, 10459, 10460
9	<b>Highbridge and Concourse</b>	Bronx	10452
10	<b>Fordham and University Heights</b>	Bronx	10453, 10458
11	<b>Belmont and East Tremont</b>	Bronx	10457, 10458
12	<b>Kingsbridge</b>	Bronx	10463, 10468
13	<b>Parkchester and Soundview</b>	Bronx	10472, 10473
14	<b>Williamsbridge and Baychester, Edenwald</b>	Bronx	10466, 10467, 10469

	<b>Neighborhoods</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>ZIP Codes</b>
15	<b>Bedford Stuyvesant</b>	Brooklyn	11205, 11206, 11216, 11221, 11233, 11238
16	<b>Bushwick</b>	Brooklyn	11206, 11207, 11221, 11237
17	<b>East New York and Starrett City</b>	Brooklyn	11207 11208, 11239
18	<b>Sunset Park</b>	Brooklyn	11220, 11232
19	<b>Coney Island</b>	Brooklyn	11224, 11235
20	<b>Flatbush and Midwood</b>	Brooklyn	11226
21	<b>Brownsville</b>	Brooklyn	11212, 11233
22	<b>East Flatbush</b>	Brooklyn	11203, 11226
23	<b>Flatlands and Canarsie</b>	Brooklyn	11236
24	<b>Queensbridge and Astoria</b>	Queens	11101
25	<b>Jackson Heights</b>	Queens	11368, 11369
26	<b>Elmhurst and Corona</b>	Queens	11368
27	<b>Briarwood, Flushing South</b>	Queens	11435
28	<b>Kew Gardens and Woodhaven</b>	Queens	11419, 11421
29	<b>Woodhaven, Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park</b>	Queens	11419, 11420

	<b>Neighborhoods</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>ZIP Codes</b>
30	<b>Jamaica and Hollis</b>	Queens	11412, 11423, 11432, 11433, 11434, 11435, 11436
31	<b>Queens Village</b>	Queens	11429
32	<b>Rockaway and Broad Channel</b>	Queens	11691, 11692, 11693, 11694
33	<b>St. George, Stapleton, Port Richmond</b>	Staten Island	10301, 10303, 10304, 10310

### **Addendum C – Follow Up on MOERJ Employees**

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MOERJ has about fifteen (15) staff members with budgeting experience. This includes past experience with budget related matters like developing, managing, and overseeing budgets, overseeing spending, tracking expenditures, conducting analysis, and preparing financial reports.

**March 13, 2026**  
**New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on**  
**The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027**  
**The Preliminary Capital Plan for FY 2027-2030 and**  
**The Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report**

**Testimony of the Equal Employment Practices Commission (EEPC)**  
**Jimmy Pan, Esq., Executive Director of the EEPC**

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Good afternoon Chair Nurse and members of the Council’s Committee on Civil and Human Rights. My name is Jimmy Pan, Executive Director of the Equal Employment Practices Commission. Joining me today are Chair Aldrin Bonilla, Director of Audits Menelik Allsop, and Director of Research Russell Ferri. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and introduce ourselves to the esteemed Councilmembers. I would like to thank the previous Chair, Deputy Speaker Williams, who has been a great champion of the EEPC, as well as our previous Executive Director, Jeanne Victor, who left last June. I also thank the staff of the EEPC, who carried out our mandate for eight Director-less months, and our EEPC Commissioners for their support of the team.

**Voters Created EEPC to Bring Government into the Modern Era**

New York City voters established the EEPC to provide independent, non-mayoral, oversight over the City’s employment practices. The new Charter, approved in 1989, required all City agencies to establish "a fair and effective

affirmative employment plan." Voters approved the Equal Employment Practices Commission to review and monitor the effectiveness of the City's practices; to assist agencies; to make policy, legislative and budgetary recommendations, and to issue annual public reports on the state of equal opportunity. In short, the new Charter created the EEPC to exercise every accountability tool possible. It recognized that a government, even in a place like New York City, would not likely change on its own.

For decades, the EEPC has navigated shifting political climates, fiscal constraints, and evolving legal standards. We have maintained our constant charge: promoting accountability, transparency, and fairness in the largest municipal workforce in the United States. National and local challenges and opportunities today give our responsibility particular weight.

### **The Modern Era Context and the Importance of EEPC**

New Yorkers swept several officials into office on an agenda of economic justice, including Mayor Zohran Mamdani. Record numbers of voters recognized that existing policies and practices have not led to economic security or the promise of a good life. Their reaction to widespread unaffordability and accelerating wealth inequality reminds us of the circumstances that led voters to create the EEPC. Those who drafted our mandate said that "a Charter that failed to address race relations ... would leave behind a ticking time bomb for the City."<sup>1</sup> They thus left us a broad mandate and a vision of a future inclusive City.

Unfortunately, the times of today present greater existential economic jeopardy than the 1980s. In 1989, the top 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of Americans already controlled an incommensurate 8 ½ percent of the nation's total wealth; by 2025, it had almost doubled to an unconscionable 14 ½ percent. The entire bottom half of Americans already went down from a meager 3 ½ percent of the nation's wealth to an impossible 2 ½ percent of its wealth.<sup>2</sup> We have worse wealth inequality than any similar democracies, and inequality is worsening faster here than in those countries. It has for fifty years increasingly squeezed nearly everyone out of an affordable life, even those families who were once

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick A.O. Schwarz Jr. and Eric Lane, *The policy and politics of Charter making: the story of New York City's 1989 Charter*, 42 N.Y.L. Sch. L. Rev. 723 (1998). [https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/faculty\\_scholarship/740](https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/faculty_scholarship/740)

<sup>2</sup> *Distribution of Household Wealth in the U.S. since 1989*. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/z1/dataviz/dfa/distribute/table/>.

solidly middle class. Our national choices of law and policy have put housing, health, and education in the concentrated hands of a few, which enables them to charge higher prices for the rest. This economic squeeze also allows employers to offer lower salaries for those hung out to dry. Today, our city reckons not just with an impoverishment of people of color, women, or other historically oppressed groups. We face an epidemic of impoverishment of the people. As we learned in the 1930s, “[p]eople who are hungry, people who are out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.”<sup>3</sup>

As the tide of economic injustice rolls forward, the EEPC has a small but valuable role to play in reversing the tide. Workforce equity leads directly to affordability and security. For hundreds of thousands of municipal employees and their families, access to equitable hiring, promotion, and retention practices shapes their economic security and intergenerational opportunity. We want more than simply to get marginalized groups into City positions. City government must become a place where people of all backgrounds can make a dignified living serving their community. The EEPC plays a part in pushing government to be a place that counteracts the economic compression of families. As we humbly ask for budget to fulfill our mandate, it is so we can promote economic justice citywide.

As part of our broad Charter mandate to review the City’s policy and its effectiveness, the EEPC must audit the employment practices of approximately 145 City entities at least once every four years. Charter §1151-a also requires auditing agencies to examine how the policies and programs we review have fulfilled the City’s foundational values in the Preamble to the Charter. We must audit all mayoral and non-mayoral agencies; the offices of elected officials, non-pedagogical employees of the Department of Education, NYCHA, and more. As part of the audit—or any other of the EEPC’s oversight functions—the Charter authorizes us to determine that the programs, policies, or procedures we reviewed do not provide equal employment opportunity. The EEPC can then require appropriate corrective action and monitor the entity’s implementation.

Yet the breadth of our Charter mandate extends far beyond audits alone. We must review and evaluate whether the City has succeeded overall in promoting equal employment. Our skilled research team analyzes municipal workforce data to identify trends in employment. It can use expansive City data

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<sup>3</sup> *State of the Union Message to Congress, January 11, 1944.* Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

to perform research into economic trends that we cannot perform elsewhere. Our independence allows us to provide credible research on whether the City has met its mark. The Charter also requires us to recommend reforms, monitor corrective actions, and foster interagency collaboration. To fully modernize data systems, deepen analytic capacity, and expand proactive policy engagement, the budget must fund the EEPC commensurate to its statutory charge.

The Charter puts EEPC and the City Council in the position to push in the court of public opinion to pay agency workers more, improve any poor conditions, or reduce unfairness in city hiring or promotion. On the other hand, the City's financial agencies face a tension. Improving worker pay and conditions would almost certainly improve the government's long-term efficiency, but would also run up against the structural role these agencies play in reducing personnel costs.

### **Recent Findings from the EEPC**

Our recent findings from this past year shed light on the City's trajectory.

Local Law 13 of 2019 added tangibility our mandate. It requires us to analyze underutilization of racial and ethnic workers every year. We analyze when the City under-employs, under-promotes, or under-retains certain groups compared to what we would expect based on the existing labor market. Unsurprisingly, agencies continued to underutilize marginalized workers, and those workers continued to separate from the workforce at disproportionate rates.

We also know underutilization gives only a glimpse into much larger issues. The United States, including our city government, has concentrated women and people of color into lower-paying or less-prestigious job categories while underrepresenting them in higher-paying classifications. Occupational segregation leads to wage segregation. When we only examine underutilization, we ignore all the upstream root causes that divert people away from career paths. Thus, we will expand our research portfolio, especially if we are given the resources and stability to do so.

The EEPC's latest quadrennial audit cycle focused on employment practices related to underutilization. Our work reveals four main systemic gaps in agency practice: accessing and complying with necessary training, analyzing workforce composition, collecting applicant data, and filling mandated EEO

roles (e.g., the principal EEO professional or Career Counselor roles). Compared to the previous four-year cycle, agencies overall showed modest improvement complying with the EEPC's core audit standards.

Our upcoming audits focuses on EEO complaints and reasonable accommodation requests. We want to streamline our audits, out of consideration for our agency partners and for our own efficiency. However, our severe budget constraints make improvements slower.

### **Budget, Equity, and Independence for Oversight Agencies**

The City has severely, chronically under-resourced the EEPC since its creation in 1989. According to Comptroller standards, the EEPC has only recently managed to audit all required entities within the statutory time period. Even still, that success in audits represents only one of our many Charter mandates.

We thank the Council and the Mayor's Office for recent staff additions, but our budgeted headcount remains a modest fifteen (15) full-time employees. We also have a Board of five (5) per diem Commissioners, who the Mayor and City Council appoint. The Commissioners appointed me to serve as Executive Director in February of this year. I have been honored to join the EEPC after several years of work in the world of structural racial justice.

Each year the EEPC must contest with the budget office for resources, despite the import of the EEPC's work for all current and potential City employees, and frankly for the local economy and government. The EEPC's staffing and funding levels remain modest and unsustainable relative to the scale of its responsibilities.

These budgeting dynamics threaten accountability to New Yorkers. Because of the EEPC's small size, all cuts represent potential existential threat to our ability to oversee the branches of government, especially the Executive Branch. We have no redundancy in our staffing. We have the opposite. We estimate that agencies need at least six full time administrative and operational staff as the absolute minimum to keep an agency surviving, but including myself we have only four. Our operational staff are overloaded, and if anyone leaves, we have no backup option or way to retain institutional knowledge. It puts our Charter mandates on hold. For example, the EEPC had no Executive

Director for eight months, without a deputy to step in. Nor do we have redundancy in non-operational staff, all of whom carry out Charter and Council-legislated responsibilities.

This year, like in many recent years, OMB has directed the EEPC to participate in blanket citywide cuts to vacancies and budget, notwithstanding that the EEPC is a non-mayoral agency and that therefore Executive Order 12, requiring such cuts, should not apply to the EEPC. Every year, we divert scarce resources from our Charter mandates to push back on such actions. Every year, these exercises introduce unnecessary risk and instability to our infrastructure, even if we do not end up losing staff. At our size, any fragility makes it hard to carry out the oversight tasks that voters democratically willed.

From fiscal year 2018 to now, the EEPC’s headcount has seen a net increase of only one (1), despite the Council charging our agency to do more with our Charter mandate than ever before, including new local law mandates that make our monitoring more concrete. In fact, if OMB goes through with its vacancy reduction exercise, we would return to the same headcount that we had in FY 2018.

While we would not purport that OMB’s actions intend to threaten or to limit the EEPC’s oversight capacity, we respectfully point out that including small oversight bodies in broad-based cuts presents a structural risk to holding a Mayor accountable.

<b>Fiscal Year (FY)</b>	<b>EEPC Headcount</b>
2018	14
2019	14 <b>(-1)</b> → 13
2020	13 <b>(+1)</b> → 14
2021	14
2022	14 <b>(+1)</b> → 15
2023	15 <b>(-1)</b> → 14
2024	14 <b>(-2)</b> → 12
2025	12 <b>(+3)</b> → 15
2026	15 <b>(-1)</b> → 14 (OMB proposed cuts)
2027	14 (as proposed)

### **Specific Budget Asks to Fulfill Charter Mandates**

The EEPC has five major staffing shortfalls that make it impossible to effectuate our full Charter mandate.

First, for our work to actually improve the lives of New Yorkers, we must communicate our findings and recommendations with clarity. The EEPC has no funding for a communications professional. We need to translate dense research findings and audit investigations into practical lessons for policymakers. More important, having a communications professional at the EEPC would allow us to reach those who we ultimately aim to serve: the New Yorkers who provide public service for their neighbors and those wishing to do so. Our oversight powers only help New Yorkers if we can make findings both widespread and digestible. To push for a better city, New Yorkers must know about existing issues and potential fixes.

Outside of our mandated activities, a robust communications capacity also helps us contribute to a better and more unified New York. We want to show our fellow workers that an independent government agency champions their behalf, especially when many public servants feel that their work is going unseen or even villainized. We have the distant hope that our efforts can bring City workers together in support of a better and fairer economic future.

Second, to execute our mandate with precision, we must increase our legal and policy capacities. Many outside our agency expect that a New York City Equal Employment Practices Commission would be filled with lawyers. In fact, we have few on our staff. To monitor local and federal developments in employment and labor law, we must add more employment and labor law capacity. To ensure that the preliminary determinations we issue to entities or the Mayoralty meet legal muster, we must be able to incorporate attorney review back into our audit process. For us to make effective employment policy recommendations to the City, we need additional capacity in analyzing the City's law and structure. And while we do not need to embed all of these responsibilities in the same person, it may make sense at our size to do so.

Third, we need intergovernmental capacity because our independent agency has limited ability to foster working relationships. Although we may belong to both branches of city government, we need concrete partnerships to exert policy influence and help agencies improve. The Charter contemplates an

especially close relationship with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), both as a partner and as a subject of our monitoring. Without closer relationships to the Mayor's Office, City Council, the Budget Office, Law Department, Labor Relations, unions, and others, we face uphill challenges in improving the government employee experience. We also wish to partner better with our peer investigative agencies, such as City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) or Department of Investigation (DOI), increasing the effectiveness of and reducing redundancies in oversight.

Fourth, as mentioned earlier, we have so few staff to administer the functions of the agency that we remain perpetually at risk of institutional catastrophe. As the Committee can appreciate, sometimes it is more costly to be poor, especially when misfortune strikes. Long-term economic prudence would mean funding backup staff to train in our HR, Finance, and Software needs. While these positions would not directly work on Charter mandates, they shore up our ability to operate at all. We can establish these as part-time roles or combine them with other needed functions.

Fifth, the EEPC's low salaries jeopardize its Charter Mandates. These salary levels impair our retention, hiring, and institutional knowledge. Because of the structural reasons mentioned earlier, many oversight agencies probably have lower salaries than the agencies they oversee. We would argue for Council to generally raise the salaries of all oversight agencies and backstop accountability for the people. Nevertheless, the EEPC still has the lowest salary per person of all comparable oversight agencies, besides also having the lowest PS budget. We analyzed a panel of eight other agencies having similar oversight roles: on a per agency level, they average an extra \$15K per staff compared to the EEPC.<sup>4</sup> If we took a more conservative estimate by combining all staff at those comparator agencies together into a single pool, they would still earn on average more than \$11K compared to the mean individual salary at the EEPC. And among these agencies, the more directly the agency's mandate touches on racial issues, the lower the agency's mean salary, which should not surprise the Council.

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<sup>4</sup> Comparator agencies were COIB, IBO, BOC, DOI, CORE, CSC, CCHR, and CCRB. Not all are non-mayoral, but we consider them generally to have similar oversight roles. We include CSC for its size rather than an oversight role per se, and while we consider EEPC the smallest agency, we recognize others may consider CSC the smallest. Salaries were calculated using FY25 Payroll from NYC OpenData, excluding hourly-paid staff, which usually includes interns or Commissioners. For fairer comparison, we manually added the salary of the EEPC Executive Director, even though there was no ED at the time of the OpenData payroll data. Calculations available upon request. (Unabbreviated: Conflicts of Interest Board, Independent Budget Office, Board of Correction, Department of Investigation, Commission on Racial Equity, Civil Service Commission, Human Rights Commission, Civilian Complaint Review Bd). *Expense Budget*, OMB. NYC OpenData. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Expense-Budget/mwzb-yiwb>

Common sense would tell us that the smaller the agency, the higher the mean salary should be, since individual staff would shoulder multiple baseline administrative roles. It defies common sense that the EEPC is both the smallest agency and the lowest paid oversight agency. Bringing the EEPC up to the agency average would cost \$230K, using FY25 salaries. We then add a small buffer room to provide room to account for slight raises since FY25 and provide headroom for staff growth. Just as the Council would recognize that the poorest families have the least power to advocate for their own resources, we ask that Council step in to rectify the EEPC's fundamental salary challenges.

Finally, at \$86K, the EEPC's OTPS budget remains the smallest of any freestanding agency.<sup>5</sup> The next smallest OTPS budget is nearly double that. We request a modest \$100K additional OTPS to improve training for our staff, to host symposia as contemplated in our Charter, to run media campaigns for city workers, and to support limited operational contracts where we lack sufficient staff capacity. This request is so small it puts us just past the next lowest OTPS budget, and on similar footing with the Office of Administrative Tax Appeals.

**Table: Summary of Budget Requests**

(,000)	
<i>Charter Mandate Needs (PS)</i>	
\$ 150	Labor and Policy Attorney
\$ 130	Communications Lead
\$ 130	Intergovernmental Lead
<i>Core Operation &amp; Sustainability Needs (PS)</i>	
\$ 275	Agency Retention & Hiring Salary Parity Increase
\$ 60	Software Trainee (part-time)
\$ 55	HR & Finance Trainee (part-time)
<i>OTPS</i>	
\$ 100	Training, Media, contracting core needs not funded through PS
<b><u>Total</u></b>	
\$ 900	

EEPC's budget has been so low for so long that today's budget requests comprise a sizeable fraction of our existing budget. We request an amount that pales in comparison to the cost of underfunding EEPC's work: the cost of

<sup>5</sup> Expense Budget, OMB, NYC OpenData. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Expense-Budget/mwzb-yiwb>.

lawsuits, the cost of low morale, the cost of losing talented public servants and knowledge, and the ultimate cost of missing out on New Yorkers who want to serve.

### **Conclusion**

The government performs best when it attracts the best talent possible. It cannot do so if workers perceive hiring and promotion as unfair. Nor can it do so if structural barriers discourage whole swaths of New Yorkers from working for the City. “An efficient government that is unjust is worth little,” said the Chair of the 1989 Charter Revision Commission that created the EEPC.<sup>6</sup> At the EEPC, we also believe that building a just government is the best way to build an efficient one.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the EEPC at this Preliminary Budget Hearing. I will now take any questions you may have.

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<sup>6</sup> Frederick A.O. Schwarz JR. *Twenty-Five Years Later: Reflections on New York City's 1989 Charter Revision Commission and on Charter Commissions in General*, 58 N.Y.L. SCH. L. REV. (2012-2013).  
[https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=nyls\\_law\\_review](https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=nyls_law_review)

## **Appendix**

### **Audit Info 2025:**

In 2025, the EEPC completed the fourth and final year of its quadrennial audit cycle, an Employment Practices Audit with a Focus on Underutilization. We aimed to see if agencies had effectively recruited, developed, and retained a diverse and qualified workforce. Overall, the EEPC issued 724 corrective actions, 466 (64%) of which we monitored for agency compliance. Of the 143 city entities we audited this cycle, we completed 35 in 2025.

The 2025 audit year included nine (9) mayoral agencies and non-mayoral entities. In total, EEPC assigned 85 corrective actions, with 54 (64%) requiring compliance monitoring. All nine agencies/entities have since completed the monitoring period, with an average monitoring duration of 3 months.

Furthermore, in 2025 the EEPC conducted twenty-six (26) Community Board Employment Practices Audits (a shorter form audit) of the Manhattan and Queens Community Boards. The EEPC assigned 152 corrective actions to those Boards, with 105 (69%) requiring compliance monitoring. Seventeen (17) of the 26 boards have completed the monitoring period, with an average completion period of 4 months.

### **Underutilization in the City's Workforce, Fiscal Year 25**

Below we highlight some areas of greatest shortfall due to underutilization, during FY25. In other words, these are the agencies and roles that have the greatest shortfall of people hired compared to their expected labor market availability, which takes into account demographics, civil service testing, and other factors.

## **Appendix (Continued)**

### **Police (NYPD)**

- Black Workers (3,730, 8%): Health Professionals, Social Workers, Police Officers, Craft

### **Fire (FDNY)**

- Black Workers (764, 4%): Science Professionals, Health Professionals, Technicians, Craft
- Women Workers (700, 4%): Health Professionals, Technicians, Craft

### **Education (non-pedagogical DOE)**

- Black Workers (873, 6%): Health Professionals, Social Workers, Craft

### **Environmental Protection (DEP)**

- Black Workers (558, 10%): Managers, Police, Craft
- Women Workers (377, 6%): Managers, Police, Craft

### **Parks & Recreation (DPR)**

- Asian Workers (279, 3%): Science Professionals, Laborers
- Black Workers (470, 5%): Science Professionals, Social Workers, Guards
- Women Workers (283, 3%): Social Workers, Craft

### **Housing Authority (NYCHA)**

- Asian Workers (347, 3%): Technicians, Building Services, Laborers
- Hispanic Workers (538, 4%): Building Services

(Numbers in parentheses represent the shortfall of workers hired or retained compared to labor market estimates. Percentages represent the ratio of the shortfall compared to total agency workers included in our analysis. For example, the 3,730 additional Black staff that NYPD would have hired if hiring matched expected market availability would represent 8% of the NYPD personnel in the job groups we analyzed. These numbers underestimate total shortfall because they only include job groups above a certain size. Additionally, they use outdated labor market availability data.)

In Fiscal Year 2025, our research team found that agencies continued to place Asian, Black, Hispanic, and women employees below labor market availability estimates. Although agencies made modest improvements in some areas, the data shows persistent disparities in hiring, promotion, and retention—particularly for Black workers—and women workers. They continue to separate from City employment at rates higher than their representation in the workforce. However, bear in mind that DCAS has not updated the labor market estimates for over ten years, and thus year-to-year comparisons do not capture the actual change in underutilization.



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**TESTIMONY OF:**

**Anna Arkin-Gallagher, Associate Director  
Civil Justice Practice**

**BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES**

**Presented before**

**The New York City Council  
Committee on Civil and Human Rights**

**Preliminary Budget Hearing – Civil and Human Rights**

**March 11, 2026**

My name is Anna Arkin-Gallagher, and I am the Associate Director of the Civil Justice Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. For 30 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. After 29 years of serving Brooklyn, we expanded our criminal defense services in Queens. We are proud to bring the same dedication and excellence to Queens. We thank the Committee on Civil and Human Rights and Chair Nurse for the opportunity to address the Council about the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) budget. Increasing the CCHR's budget will enable the agency to enforce the city's anti-discrimination laws to protect the right to affordable housing and stable employment for all New Yorkers.

BDS's Civil Justice Practice aims to reduce the civil collateral consequences for the people we serve who are involved with the criminal, family, or immigration legal systems. Our practice combats housing instability in a variety of ways: we defend people from eviction in housing court, provide proactive relocation assistance and benefits advocacy, and help people navigate the shelter system. We also fight for the people we serve to keep their jobs and overcome employment discrimination. Through this work we see the profound challenges New Yorkers face in securing safe, affordable, and permanent housing and meaningful employment.



## **Discrimination Based on Criminal Records**

For many of the people we represent who are experiencing housing or employment insecurity, their options are limited by an old arrest or conviction history. Because of long-standing racial inequities in our criminal legal system, Black and brown people have been disproportionately impacted by employment and housing discrimination on the basis of an arrest or conviction record. By shutting people out of both the city's limited affordable housing stock and the competitive job market, discriminatory background checks prevent people from stabilizing their lives and perpetuate cycles of homelessness.

New York City's Fair Chance Act establishes vital protections for New Yorkers with conviction and arrest histories from employment discrimination. However, many of the people we serve still face immediate adverse employment consequences from an arrest or conviction. Even though the Fair Chance Act came into effect over 10 years ago, in our experience, employers remain either unaware of their responsibilities under the Fair Chance Act or know that enforcement of the law is sporadic and slow. Often our best chance at getting redress for New Yorkers facing employment discrimination is to get involved quickly and – if we cannot get a person we represent back to work – to negotiate a settlement outside of the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) complaint process. Even when we file a CCHR complaint, the employer is able to continue its discriminatory practices while the case is pending before the Commission while the person we represent often remains suspended or terminated from their job for the duration of the years-long legal process. As wait times at the Commission have grown over the past several years, we have seen employers less willing to negotiate settlements, as they know that they are unlikely to face any repercussions as a result of our filing a complaint at the CCHR for years – if ever.

Similarly, the Council's passage of the Fair Chance for Housing Act in 2024 was an important milestone to combat housing discrimination against New Yorkers with conviction and arrest histories. This is crucial because access to housing lowers recidivism, allows people to support themselves and their families, and makes our city safer. We know that access to housing is the foundation of thriving communities. However, as with all of our robust anti-discrimination laws, these laws are only as strong as our ability to enforce them and to educate the public on their rights and responsibilities.

## **Source of Income Discrimination**

BDS works with New Yorkers who are experiencing housing insecurity or are unhoused and works to help them find secure and stable housing. Through this work, the largest and most pervasive obstacle the people we represent face is source-of-income discrimination. The majority of people we work with in this capacity are voucher-holders. The housing search process typically starts with a voucher-holder reaching out to brokers via listings websites and private brokerage firms. Brokers then request a credit score and proof of income of at least 40 times the monthly rent. Prospective tenants who respond with proof of their voucher rarely

# Brooklyn Defenders

receive a response from the broker or they are told explicitly that the landlord does not accept vouchers. Despite New York City’s protections against source-of-income discrimination, landlords and brokers know that enforcement is weak, and they are unlikely to be held accountable for denying housing to voucher-holders. Due to this unchecked source-of-income discrimination, the people we serve regularly spend six months or longer attempting to secure housing with their vouchers, unnecessarily prolonging homelessness and housing instability.

Vouchers such as CityFHEPS and Section 8 are described by the city as the ticket to finding safe, affordable, and permanent housing. But vouchers themselves are meaningless if the agencies tasked with limiting discrimination by landlords and brokers are unable, due to lack of resources, to provide meaningful enforcement of these protections. Without this enforcement, our anti-discrimination laws are merely cosmetic, and the people we represent are unable to search for housing in any meaningful way. The Commission on Human Rights must be fully funded to enable voucher-holders to secure stable housing.

## **Recommendations**

In light of these challenges faced by those seeking assistance from the CCHR, we urge the city to increase funding to the CCHR and to make the following investments and policy changes:

**The City Must Adequately Fund the CCHR.** The City Commission on Human Rights, which is tasked with enforcing and educating the public about the city’s anti-discrimination laws, has been systemically underfunded. It is both underfunded and understaffed compared to similar agencies in smaller cities.<sup>1</sup> We have seen how the current Fiscal Year 2026 budget of \$14.9 million has been drastically insufficient to enforce these laws and prosecute claims of discrimination, let alone engage in vital preventative and educational outreach.

The Commission’s staff has consistently decreased, leading to ballooning workloads and delays in investigating complaints.<sup>2</sup> Our understanding is that a significant backlog of complaints began at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many staff members left, and this backlog persists due to staff shortages. Although the Commission is supposed to conduct an investigation once a complaint is filed and answered, the case backlog results in significant delays. We have felt the CCHR’s diminished capacity in our practice. BDS has complaints that have been pending at the CCHR for years, with little to no progress made and no CCHR staff assigned. An investment of an additional \$10 million dollars will allow CCHR to hire additional staff, and more quickly investigate and prosecute claims.

**Appropriately Staff the CCHR to Allow for Early Resolution of Claims.** We believe that many of the cases we file would benefit from early resolution of cases through an early intervention team or through mediation. Early resolution or mediation – where appropriate –

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<sup>1</sup> The Seattle Office of Civil Rights had a budget of \$7,863,947 in 2025 and serves a city of about 755,000.

<sup>2</sup> The City Council’s “Report on the Fiscal 2026 Executive Plan and the Fiscal 2026 Executive Capital Commitment Plan for the New York City Commission on Civil and Human Rights,” *available at* <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/05/Commission-on-Civil-and-Human-Rights.pdf>, indicates that the CCHR had a vacancy rate of 24.6% as of March 2025.



would be an efficient use of funding because it would allow the CCHR to resolve complaints without the need for a full investigation or litigation.

**Ensure that the CCHR has sufficient funding to allow it to provide community outreach and education.** It is critical that the CCHR receive full funding across the entire agency, which must also ensure that the Commission has resources to conduct comprehensive and ongoing community outreach and education about our anti-discrimination laws. The CCHR is charged with preventing discrimination by informing the public of their rights and responsibilities under our laws but is not equipped with the resources to do so. Therefore, responsibility for public education and outreach about the new Fair Chance for Housing law has fallen predominantly on advocates, including BDS. However, our organizations are not in a position to reach private housing providers. Until the Commission is adequately funded, housing providers will continue to conduct discriminatory background checks and violate the law simply because they are unaware of it.

### **Conclusion**

The Commission continues to make laudable efforts to combat discrimination in New York City but cannot be expected to meet its mandate without a meaningful increase in funding. The mayor's preliminary budget reduces the Commission's funding by almost 10 percent, at a time when additional investments are needed to allow the CCHR to fulfill its mission. The Council passed the city's Human Rights Law in order to provide broad and comprehensive protections for vulnerable populations, but it can only do so if the Commission is given the resources to enforce those protections.

BDS is grateful to New York City Council's Civil and Human Rights Committee for your time and consideration of our comments. We look forward to further discussing these and other issues that impact the people and communities we serve. If you have any additional questions, please contact Anna Arkin-Gallagher at [aarkingallagher@bds.org](mailto:aarkingallagher@bds.org).



**Powering a  
more equitable  
New York**

## **New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings Civil and Human Rights**

March 13, 2026 Testimony of  
Paul Keefe, VP of Legal Services

Over its 180 years, the Community Service Society of New York (“CSS”) has powered a more equitable New York with a unique combination of research, policy advocacy, and direct services. CSS strongly encourages the Council to significantly increase funding to the New York City Commission on Human Rights (“CCHR”). CCHR’s budget should be raised to \$25 million, which will allow CCHR to offer competitive salaries and expand its Law Enforcement Bureau to become a nimble and impactful enforcement agency.

In 2015, as an attorney at CSS, I was the lead legal advocate behind the Fair Chance Act, which amended the City Human Rights Law to prohibit employers from inquiring into an applicant’s criminal history until after a conditional offer of employment and mandated a “Fair Chance Process” before someone could be denied employment based on their conviction history. I then left CSS for CCHR to enforce that law and other employment protections. I value the agency and its potential. Now back at CSS, a strong Commission is vital to protect our core constituency of low- and moderate-income people, particularly those searching for housing with vouchers and people with criminal histories seeking housing and employment.

Unfortunately, the Commission remains among the top five agencies with the highest percentage of vacancies: Over 25% of its funded positions remain unfilled.<sup>1</sup> CCHR wants to fill these positions, and people want to work there—now more than ever because of the decimation of federal civil rights enforcement. The problem, which could be fixed by the Mayor’s Office today, is the City Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”).

Even when titles are vacant and budgeted, OMB has imposed “allotment” on CCHR, meaning it can only hire one person for every two who leave. Also, in an attempt to save money, OMB delays individuals’ start dates. According to the Commission, five people accepted offers to work at CCHR last October. Zero have started work. Two withdrew their applications because they could not afford to go so long without employment. Three others still wait. What a waste

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<sup>1</sup> N.Y.C. Comptroller, N.Y.C. Agency Staffing Dashboard, *available at* [comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/dashboard/](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/dashboard/) (last visited Mar. 13, 2026).

of Commission resources reviewing all of those applications, interviewing candidates, and making hiring decisions.

OMB maintains these policies despite CCHR's ability to generate revenue for the City. When the Commission obtains civil penalties in an enforcement action, that money goes into the general fund. Over the past six years, LEB's penalties have earned the City an average of over one million dollars each year. Not measured are the fiscal gains of moving people out of shelters and into housing—or preventing their entry into a shelter in the first place—through strong source-of-income enforcement.

The Mayor's preliminary budget is the first *decrease* in agency funding in the past five years. Longstanding and continued underfunding sets CCHR up to fail, and important benchmarks are headed in the wrong direction: Between 2025 and 2026, the average age of its caseload has increased to 692 days, up 15% from 592 days, and there were 1,591 open matters, up 26% from 1,262.<sup>2</sup> When "inquiry volumes remain historically high,"<sup>3</sup> the City can expect these numbers to rise absent a funding increase that allows CCHR to dramatically increase its staff and a change in OMB policy that permits the agency to spend its budgeted funds immediately.

The Commission's jurisdiction covers all 8.8 million residents of New York City, plus anyone working in or visiting the City, and it does so in the three main spheres of our lives: at work, at home, and in public. Discrimination is rightfully prohibited in all of those areas; yet the City spends one ten-thousandth (0.0001%) of its budget to CCHR. Meanwhile, the NYPD takes up almost six percent when justice for a crime victim is no less important than that for a person who was sexual harassed; or a disabled person's right to access their home and public spaces; or a person seeking a home with a housing voucher. The \$10 million addition we request to the Mayor's preliminary budget amounts to .01% of the NYPD's budget—just for overtime.

With rollbacks to worker and civil rights protections across the federal government, it is more important than ever that New York City maintains an effective Commission on Human Rights.

Sincerely,



Paul Keefe  
VP of Legal Services

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<sup>2</sup> JULIA KERSON & DANIEL STEINBERG, PRELIMINARY MAYOR'S MGMT. REPORT MARCH 2026 at 77, available at [www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2026/2026\\_pmmr.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2026/2026_pmmr.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*



**Testimony of Jonathan Eber  
Program Officer, Policy and Communications  
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.**

**To the New York City Council  
Committee on Civil and Human Rights  
Preliminary Budget Hearing  
March 13, 2026**

My name is Jonathan Eber, and I am a Program Manager on the New York Policy and Communications team at Enterprise Community Partners. Enterprise is a national nonprofit that exists to make a good home possible for the millions of families without one. We support community development organizations on the ground, aggregate and invest capital for impact, advance housing policy at every level of government, and build and manage communities ourselves. Since our New York office opened in 1987, we have committed more than \$4.7 billion in equity, loans and grants to affordable housing and community to create or preserve over 69,800 affordable homes across New York City. I would like to welcome Chair Nurse as the new Chair of the Committee on Civil and Human Rights and thank her and the rest of the committee for the opportunity to testify on the FY27 Preliminary budget and the funding needs of the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR).

As a member of the Human Rights Law Working Group, Enterprise joins a broad coalition of advocates who work in housing, employment, healthcare, immigration and more in highlighting the critical work that CCHR does to enforce our City's Human Rights Law.

As an affordable housing nonprofit, we are acutely aware of how important fair housing enforcement is. Discrimination worsens our city's housing and homelessness crises, entrenching segregation and inequality. Source of Income (SOI) discrimination, in which a landlord refuses to rent to a prospective tenant based on their lawful non-wage income, undermines New York City's critical investment in the rental assistance programs that are a pathway to housing stability for so many.

Despite local protections in New York City for over a decade, SOI discrimination remains pervasive. Voucher holders are outright rejected, ghosted or told they don't meet income requirements that would be impossible to meet by virtue of qualifying for a voucher. Analysis of NYCHA Section 8 voucher holders by the NYU Furman Center found that in 2022, only 53% of recipients found housing within the allotted time frame of 180 days, suggesting major barriers to utilizing vouchers as intended. As the city implements the new Housing Access Voucher program and invests in CityFHEPS, it must confront source of income discrimination to make these programs effective.

All of this speaks to the need for adequate enforcement by the City. CCHR has come a long way since 2022, when it briefly had [zero attorneys](#) on staff in its Source of Income Unit. The agency is being reinvented with a new Commissioner who deeply understands fair housing, and their



innovative early-intervention unit has resolved housing disputes quickly for thousands of New Yorkers and inspired a similar early-intervention unit focused on SOI on the State level. Yet the agency remains underfunded and too slow to respond to New Yorkers needs. In FY25, it took an average time of 614 days to close a case, up over 100 days since FY21. Meanwhile, the number of inquiries CCHR receives has only increased each year, from 10,015 in FY20 to 15,532 in FY25. In 2025, an audit by New York State Comptroller DiNapoli found that inadequate case tracking has led to significant delays in intake, case resolution and complaint filing.

At the same time, the administration is proposing to cut funding for CCHR by 8% in its preliminary budget, despite increasing the budget overall. This would halt the slow rebuilding of the agency at this critical moment. We call on the Council and Mayor to reverse course, abandon the proposed budget cut and instead increase the FY26 budget for the Commission by \$10 million so that it is funded at \$25 million in FY27. Increasing funding would allow the agency to expand its successful early intervention unit to resolve cases quickly so that New Yorkers can move into housing faster and utilize our precious voucher resources, and would also allow CCHR to adequately fund newly enacted protections for New Yorkers impacted by the criminal legal system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on the need for adequate funding for CCHR. We look forward to working with you this year to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to fair, affordable and stable housing.



**New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights  
Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Testimony of Britny McKenzie, Policy Director  
Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC)  
March 13, 2026**

My name is Britny McKenzie, and I am the Policy Director at the Fair Housing Justice Center. I would like to thank Chair Sandy Nurse and the Committee on Civil and Human Rights for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of increased funding for the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). Specifically, we:

- Urge the Mayor to reverse the proposed budget cut and instead call on him and City Council to increase the CCHR budget by \$10 million to bring the agency's budget to \$25 million; this increase can meaningfully improve the lives of countless New Yorkers in the areas of employment, public accommodations and housing, by addressing years of under-funding that have left CCHR without the ability to meaningfully enforce fair housing laws.
- Affirm that CCHR has a critical role in enforcing NYC's Fair Housing Laws to eliminate source of income and disability discrimination and implement the Fair Chance in Housing Law.

**About the FHJC**

The FHJC is a non-profit civil rights organization based in Queens, NY. The FHJC service area covers over 8 million people across the five boroughs of New York City. Our mission is to eliminate housing discrimination, promote policies that foster open, accessible, and inclusive communities, and strengthen the enforcement of fair housing laws. The FHJC primarily serves low-income individuals and communities that have experienced historic and continuing patterns of segregation, discrimination, and exclusion in housing. The FHJC's services are provided to the public free of charge and without regard to household income. Its investigations have led to over 170 successful legal challenges to discriminatory housing policies and practices by private housing providers and government agencies to bring them into compliance with fair housing laws. FHJC's work has led to a monetary recovery of over \$55 million and has opened over 81,000 housing units to people that were previously excluded.

## **About the NYC Human Rights Law Working Group**

FHJC is a member of the Human Rights Law Working Group, a coalition of over 20 New York City nonprofits, grassroots organizations, think tanks, and legal services providers. The breadth of our coalition illustrates the critical work of CCHR in enforcing the City's comprehensive Human Rights Law. The New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL), administered by CCHR, prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and protects against discriminatory lending practices, retaliation, discriminatory harassment, and bias-based profiling by law enforcement. The NYCHRL is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the country and its list of protected classes goes beyond those recognized by the federal and New York State governments, including sexual orientation, height, weight and status as a veteran or active military service member.<sup>1</sup>

We are at a critical time for civil rights in New York as executive actions on the federal level have threatened and will continue to threaten civil and human rights protections and enforcement. The Working Group asks the City to fund the Commission at \$25 million, a level commensurate with its heightened importance and to compensate for years of under-funding. The agency's budget grew every fiscal year under the previous Adams administration and this is the first agency budget decrease in four years. CCHR's current budget, less than \$15 million, is less than 0.1% of the City's budget. With an increased budget, the Working Group recommends the following actions:

1. Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.
2. Appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications with appropriate staff.
3. Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.

In addition to increasing CCHR's budget, the agency needs the ability to spend their money immediately and roll over unspent money from year-to-year. To fulfill their mission, CCHR requires adequate staffing, which is hampered by the Office of Management and Budget's practice of allotment, the two-for-one hiring policy where the agency is only allowed to hire for half the number of people who left in the last two months. Currently, CCHR has 32 vacancies and needs the ability to staff these positions promptly.

## **CCHR Has a Critical Role in Enforcing NYC's Fair Housing Laws**

CCHR serves a civil law-enforcement role like that of the district attorney's office in criminal matters, with both prosecutorial and punitive responsibilities. CCHR can investigate complaints, resolve cases, and refer matters to the New York City Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). It may also assess fines, secure monetary

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<sup>1</sup> [The New York City Human Rights Law](#).

damages, negotiate remedies such as rehiring, policy changes, training, and accessibility modifications, and mediate reasonable accommodation requests.

Unfortunately, CCHR currently operates with limited funding, which constrains its staffing and capacity and negatively affects NYC residents. Effective fair housing enforcement should foster accessible, inclusive communities, free of discrimination. While CCHR has a baseline infrastructure to support its mission, its impact depends on adequate resources. We have seen CCHR do commendable work, and its settlements have led to meaningful resolutions for victims of housing discrimination. For example, in 2024, CCHR reached a landmark \$1 million settlement with Parkchester Preservation Management and held the company responsible for an unjustified minimum income requirement that prevented voucher holders from accessing critical affordable housing opportunities.<sup>2</sup> As a result of CCHR's work and the City's commitment to protecting the housing rights of New Yorkers, the settlement secured 850 apartment units to be set aside for housing voucher holders, the most ever secured in a CCHR settlement.

We know from this experience that CCHR holds great promise to enforce fair housing laws; however, they are impeded by a lack of funding and staffing which has led to alarming delays. An audit by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli in December 2025 found that CCHR cases experience substantial waiting periods and New Yorkers experiencing housing discrimination are not receiving timely action or prompt resolution.<sup>3</sup> Auditors found significant delays in case resolution, intake appointments, and filing complaints; the average time frame to resolve a discrimination case took nearly three years. The FHJC's intake department has heard from NYC residents who have been turned away after attempting to work with the agency on numerous occasions due to lack of efficiency. Only by bolstering funding and staff capacity can CCHR develop policies and implement the necessary procedures to process housing discrimination complaints and help victims in a timely manner.

### ***CCHR Needs Sufficient Funding to Eliminate Source of Income (SOI) discrimination***

The law has prohibited SOI discrimination since 2008; but despite this, landlords continue to refuse to rent to voucher holders. SOI discrimination is CCHR's most common form of complaint with over 600 claims filed in the last fiscal year.<sup>4</sup> Without the staffing needed to process claims quickly, proper enforcement of the city's fair housing laws remains impossible. The delay in processing these cases increases the likelihood that the vouchers are not utilized. This undermines the city's investment in rental assistance programs, such as CityFHEPs and FHEPS, meaning that the City is not in fact expanding

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<sup>2</sup> [Mayor Adams Announces Largest Civil Rights Settlement in City History, Protecting New Yorkers from Housing Discrimination. August 22, 2024.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Office of the New York State Comptroller, Thomas P. DiNapoli. "New York City Commission on Human Rights: Oversight of Housing Discrimination Complaints." December 2025.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [NYCCHR FY 2025 Annual Report.](#)

opportunities as intended for New Yorkers facing housing instability. To realize CCHR's full potential, the city must take immediate steps to ensure it is adequately funded and staffed.

### ***CCHR Needs Sufficient Resources Because Disability Discrimination is Rampant***

New York City Human Right's Law goes beyond the requirement of state or federal civil rights law, is a bulwark for thousands of New Yorkers with disabilities who need reasonable modifications to their apartments to be able to enter their apartment building or use their bathroom. Disability discrimination is the second most common form of housing complaint—CCHR receives an average of one report per day.<sup>5</sup> In FHJC's experience, it is difficult to find attorneys to help individuals with reasonable modification requests, making CCHR the ideal venue for investigating and resolving such claims. But because reasonable modification requests are so time-sensitive, CCHR and their Project Equal Access (PEA) team, which is focused on accessibility for New Yorkers, needs to be adequately staffed to process these claims quickly. Otherwise, individuals can wait months or years to have access to their apartment building's front entrance with a ramp, or use their toilet safely with the assistance of grab bars.

### ***The Commission Needs an Increase in its Budget to Enforce the New Fair Chance in Housing Law (FCHA)***

The Fair Chance in Housing provision of the City's Human Rights Law, which took effect on January 1, 2025, requires a housing provider to follow a specific process if they choose to conduct a background check after a conditional offer has been made. Given the new expansion to the NYCHRL, CCHR requires an increased budget necessary to prevent discrimination under the law; CCHR submitted a fiscal impact statement in 2023 that indicated a need for \$1.4 million to hire new staff and conduct a public education campaign for the new provision.<sup>6</sup> The Commission is primarily responsible for informing housing providers and the public about their rights and obligations under the law, processing FHCA complaints, mediating cases, and filing enforcement actions, but the Commission has not received an increase in its budget to support this new protection. Early investigation of and enforcement of this law by FHJC has demonstrated that providers are either ignoring or uneducated about their obligations under the law. In 2025, FHJC filed its first complaint under the Fair Chance in Housing Act after finding systemic discriminatory screening practices that categorically excluded certain applicants with criminal records.<sup>7</sup> CCHR has yet to file any cases, even with housing providers blatantly disobeying the law and discouraging prospective applicants from housing opportunities

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<sup>5</sup> [ibid.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Testimony by The Fortune Society at the Committee on Civil and Human Rights Oversight Hearing – Budgeting for Equity.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Criminal History Discrimination Alleged at Multiple NYC Apartment Buildings.](#)

because of their criminal background. As the primary city agency charged with this duty, the lack of action sends a clear message that CCHR is an enforcement agency without teeth. Staffing to educate, investigate and enforce discrimination under this law is critical to making the law a relevant tool in the City's aspirations to fight discrimination and create meaningful housing opportunities for a historically marginalized and penalized group of NYC residents.

We reiterate the NYC Human Right Law Working Group's call to increase the budget to \$25 million. With a well-funded CCHR, we believe that the Commission can properly investigate complaints and provide meaningful relief to New Yorkers experiencing discrimination. Adequate resources and staffing will ensure that CCHR's enforcement keeps pace with the scope and complexity of housing discrimination facing New Yorkers. We need this enforcement to ensure that key city programs are not being undermined by discriminatory practices and that the promise of the NYCHRL is realized for all.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this year's budget. We look forward to working with you this year to ensure that there is increased funding and staffing for this vital agency. To connect with us or for further questions regarding this testimony contact Britny Mckenzie, Policy Director at [bmckenzie@fairhousingjustice.org](mailto:bmckenzie@fairhousingjustice.org) and/or Yvette Chen, Policy Associate at [ychen@fairhousingjustice.org](mailto:ychen@fairhousingjustice.org).



**Testimony of FPWA**

**Presented to:  
Committee on Civil and Human Rights  
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Civil and Human Rights  
Hon. Chair Sandy Nurse  
March 13, 2026**

**Jennifer Jones Austin  
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We are grateful to Chair Sandy Nurse and the New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights for holding this hearing concerning the Preliminary Budget for the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) and for the opportunity to provide written comments on behalf of FPWA (Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies).

FPWA is a leading anti-poverty, social policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening human services organizations and faith institutions and advancing economic security and justice for all New Yorkers. Since 1922, FPWA has driven groundbreaking policy reforms to better serve those in need. We work to dismantle the structural and systemic barriers that impede economic security and well-being, and we strengthen the capacity of human services agencies and faith organizations so New Yorkers with lower incomes can thrive and live with dignity.

In addition to our capacity as advocates for economic opportunity and security, we offer this testimony as members of the Human Rights Law Working Group, a coalition of over 20 nonprofits, grassroots organizations, think tanks, and legal services providers that have met regularly for the past decade to advocate and strengthen our City Human Rights Law (CHRL) and Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). We are excited to work with CCHR's recently appointed leader, Commissioner Christine Clarke, to ensure that New Yorkers are both preemptively protected from civil rights infractions and have access to CCHR to enforce their rights when violated.

The CHRL, administered by CCHR, prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and it protects against discriminatory lending practices, retaliation, discriminatory harassment, and bias-based profiling by law enforcement. It is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the country and extends the list of protected classes beyond those recognized by the federal and New York State governments.<sup>1</sup> We commend City Council for its commitment to an expansive view of civil and human rights, amending the CHRL almost 40 times since 2016 to add additional protections for New Yorkers.<sup>2</sup> However, we must express our alarm at the chronic underfunding of CCHR, which prevents New Yorkers from receiving justice when faced with discrimination, and also reduces the ability of CCHR to create public education campaigns, trainings, and other preemptive work. We ask for the following meaningful improvements in support of CCHR:

- 1) **Increase the budget of CCHR to \$25 million, up \$10 million from the Mayor's current proposal.**
- 2) **Release Funds and Exempt CCHR from PEGs:** Immediately require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release CCHR's entire FY26 budget so that it can fill all vacant staffing positions. Exempt CCHR from any future Programs to Eliminate the Gap (PEGs) so that its staff is not further diminished through attrition and turnover and exempt the Commission from having to appoint a savings officer to recommend further cuts to its budget. Over the last five fiscal years, CCHR has had

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<sup>1</sup> NYC Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *Human Rights*. Retrieved March 10, 2026.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/the-law.page>

<sup>2</sup> NYC Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *Amendments to NYC Human Rights Law*. Retrieved March 10, 2026.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/amendments.page#:~:text=A%20Local%20Law%20to%20amend,%2C%20housing%2C%20and%20public%20accommodations>

a budgeted headcount of under 150 employees.<sup>3</sup> Due to the small size of this office and its low level of funding, PEGs can be particularly destructive by drastically reducing staff capacity.

- 3) **Facilitate Hiring:** Immediately exempt line staff hires from the OMB approval process to allow hiring to proceed without bureaucratic delay, and permit CCHR to hire at the top of its salary ranges for all lines, including both investigators and attorneys to ensure that CCHR does not lose quality candidates to higher paying legal services organizations who are not subject to the sometimes months-long OMB hiring approval process.
- 4) **Establish a Team Within the Law Enforcement Bureau (LEB) to Resolve the Case Backlog.** This team, led by experienced attorneys, would review all cases that are more than 18 months old and put them on a path towards resolution within a year.
- 5) **Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.** Early intervention can be the difference between having or losing a job or a place to live. With a permanent staff of at least 20 well-compensated and experienced advocates, the Commission would be able to help secure apartments, keep people in their jobs by requiring reasonable accommodations, and end harassment and retaliation for people complaining about discriminatory treatment.
- 6) **Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.** Ensure patterns identified by early intervention efforts, public reporting, and case investigations are pursued by the Commission.
- 7) The Human Rights Law Working Group has laid out a complete list of recommendations for the new administration. For year one, we have asked the Administration to include the following changes:
  - a) Appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications with appropriate staff in the Office of the Chair.
  - b) Authorize CCHR to Appear in Court.
  - c) Ensure the Office of Policy Counsel is adequately staffed.
  - d) Create a New York City Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) Division specifically for CCHR cases.

### **New Yorkers' Civil Rights are Under Threat**

CCHR plays a singular role in investigating, prosecuting, and resolving complaints of discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. The Commission also conducts public education, issues legal guidance, and works to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity for all New Yorkers. The work of CCHR has always been urgent, not only because anti-discrimination work is essential, but because there are protections that New York City residents enjoy that do not exist on the state or federal level. However, the urgency has increased substantially under a federal administration that is not only abdicating its duty to protect its citizens from discrimination but is, in fact, actively hostile to such claims.<sup>4</sup> We are currently in a civil and human rights crisis, and New York City government must act with

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<sup>3</sup> New York City Council. (2025). *Report on the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan for the Committee on Civil and Human Rights*. <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/03/Commission-on-Civil-and-Human-Rights-2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Agathocleous, A., Conway, K., & Moore, R. (2024). *Trump on DEI and Anti-Discrimination Law*. American Civil Liberties Union. <https://www.aclu.org/trump-on-dei-and-anti-discrimination-law>

urgency as the last line of defense against discrimination in a context where New Yorkers cannot rely on federal anti-discrimination law and policy.

Over the last year, the Trump Administration has made several detrimental policy changes to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which is tasked at the federal level with protecting workers against discrimination. The EEOC has shifted its priorities toward attacking diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, addressing “anti-American bias,” and removing protections from LGBTQIA, and in particular transgender, workers.<sup>5,6</sup> The EEOC is also changing its data collection policies and ultimately dismantling its data and analytics office, which provides critical data necessary for it to investigate and address discrimination.<sup>7</sup> The Trump administration has signed an executive order directing federal agencies to eliminate the use of “disparate impact” standards making it more difficult to enforce anti-discrimination law.<sup>8</sup> This impacts not only the EEOC, but also the Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division as well as the Department of Education (DOE) Office of Civil Rights, both of which experienced extensive cuts during the first year of the Trump Administration. By May of 2025, 70-75 percent of DOJ Civil Rights Division attorneys had either left or planned to leave.<sup>9</sup> According to the Government Accountability Office, between March and September of 2025 the DOE Office of Civil Rights received over 9,000 complaints of alleged discrimination and resolved over 7,000. About 90 percent of these were resolved by DOE Office of Civil Rights dismissing the complaints.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Maye, A., & Wilson, V. (2025). *Trump is making it easier for employers to discriminate. This stifles equity and hurts economic growth*. Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/blog/trump-is-making-it-easier-for-employers-to-discriminate-this-stifles-equity-and-hurts-economic-growth/>

<sup>6</sup> Goldman T. (2026). *The Trump Administration is Weaponizing the EEOC to Attack Civil Rights*. National Partnership for Women & Families. <https://nationalpartnership.org/trump-administration-weaponizing-eeoc-to-attack-civil-rights/#:~:text=The%20agency%20scrubbed%20references%20to,these%20workers'%20civil%20rights%20protections.>

<sup>7</sup> Goldman T. (2026). *The Trump Administration is Weaponizing the EEOC to Attack Civil Rights*. National Partnership for Women & Families. <https://nationalpartnership.org/trump-administration-weaponizing-eeoc-to-attack-civil-rights/#:~:text=The%20agency%20scrubbed%20references%20to,these%20workers'%20civil%20rights%20protections.>

<sup>8</sup> Guillén, A., & Ali Kanu, H. (December 9, 2025). DOJ rolls back anti-discrimination rules. *Politico*.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/12/09/justice-department-discrimination-disparate-impact-00683362>

<sup>9</sup> Lucas, R. (2025, May 19). 70% of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division lawyers are leaving because of Trump's reshaping. *National Public Radio*.

<https://www.npr.org/2025/05/19/g-s1-66906/trump-civil-rights-justice-exodus#:~:text=toggle%20caption,to%20current%20and%20former%20officials.>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2026, February 6). *Department of Education: Full costs and savings estimate needed for reduction-in-force and restructuring of the Office for Civil Rights*.

<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-26-108320>

Anticipating continued attacks against immigrants and essential funding streams, both New York City Council members and Mayor Mamdani have expressed a desire to “Trump Proof” the City.<sup>11,12,13</sup> Those efforts must include a fully funded CCHR.

### **Underfunding and Understaffing Limit CCHR’s Ability to Resolve Cases and Enforce the Law**

CCHR’s current budget is under \$15 million, or less than .01 percent of the city’s budget. This paltry amount does not reflect its importance as the main civil enforcer of the city’s anti-discrimination laws. CCHR’s function as law enforcement in a civil context parallels that of the district attorney’s office in a criminal context, with both serving dual roles as investigator and prosecutor by initiating matters and handing down punishment. However, CCHR has a fraction of the funding of the district attorney. This limits agency staff’s capacity to fulfill their mandate of investigating complaints, settling cases, referring cases to the New York City Office of Administrative Trial and Hearing (OATH) for resolution, assessing fines, obtaining monetary damages, negotiating additional remedies including rehiring, policy change, training, and modifications for accessibility, and mediating reasonable accommodation requests.<sup>14,15</sup>

Further, capacity issues within CCHR are leaving New Yorkers with potentially viable discrimination claims without a forum to address them due to the backlog in cases. Cases in the CCHR may be closed one of two ways: by deciding the case on the merits, or by administrative closure. Cases are terminated through administrative closure when CCHR staff initiate a case because they determine there may be a viable claim, but are unable to determine in a timely fashion whether those cases should be dismissed or referred.<sup>16</sup> In FY25, CCHR administratively closed 44 percent of the 379 cases that it closed that year, or approximately 167 cases. While this percentage is down from a 5-year high of 56 percent in FY22, the high rate of administrative closures means that these 167 cases were shelved without being decided on the merits. If New Yorkers must wait for years to have their discrimination cases reviewed, only to have them administratively closed, they are not adequately protected from discrimination.<sup>17</sup> Without sufficient

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<sup>11</sup> New York City Council. (2025, April 16). *New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, Finance Committee Chair Justin Brannan, and Governmental Operations Committee Chair Lincoln Restler Release Plan to Help Trump Proof New York City* [Press release]. <https://council.nyc.gov/press/2025/04/16/2839/>

<sup>12</sup> McGibney, M. (2025, July 14). Council Members celebrate adoption of 'Trump Proof' budget. *City & State*. <https://www.cityandstateny.com/nyn-media/2025/07/council-members-celebrate-adoption-trump-proof-budget/406683/>

<sup>13</sup> Meditz, S. G. (2025, November 13). Mamdani to ‘Trump-proof’ NYC from ICE. *Queens Chronicle*. [https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/mamdani-to-trump-proof-nyc-from-ice/article\\_9033eb7a-f703-5574-b79b-c2bb02f83da1.html](https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/mamdani-to-trump-proof-nyc-from-ice/article_9033eb7a-f703-5574-b79b-c2bb02f83da1.html)

<sup>14</sup> NYC Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *2024 Settlement Highlights*. Retrieved March 10, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/enforcement/2024-settlements.page>.

<sup>15</sup> NYC Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *The New York City Administrative Code, Title 8: Civil Rights Chapter 1 - Commission on Human Rights*. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/chapter-1.page>

<sup>16</sup> New York City Mayor’s Management Report (2025). City Commission on Human Rights. New York City Mayor’s Office of Operations. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/cchr.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> New York City Mayor’s Management Report (2025). City Commission on Human Rights. New York City Mayor’s Office of Operations. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/cchr.pdf>

funding, CCHR cannot fulfill its mission to investigate and prosecute alleged violations of the law. The cost of this underfunding falls on New Yorkers who may have no other recourse for justice.

Additional funding could both improve the capacity of existing teams within CCHR and allow for the creation of new ones. For example, increasing the capacity of the CCHR Law Enforcement Bureau (LEB) could both allow CCHR to resolve early intervention cases more quickly, and create the capacity for specialized teams to focus on reducing CCHR's backlog and initiating affirmative litigation that focuses on pattern or practice cases.<sup>18,19</sup> At the same time, improving case resolution will also require increased capacity at OATH. After LEB reviews a complaint and determines that there is cause for consideration, the case is referred to OATH for adjudication. There, an Administrative Judge oversees the trial and issues a Report and Recommendation that may include remedies.<sup>20</sup> Establishing a division within OATH dedicated to CCHR cases could help ensure that these matters are heard and resolved more quickly, improving access to justice for New Yorkers at each stage in the process.

Properly funded and resourced, CCHR has the opportunity to increase the safety and responsiveness to community concerns about discrimination in housing, employment, and general life to New Yorkers. However, the capacity issues within CCHR are leaving New Yorkers with potentially viable discrimination claims without a forum to address them due to the backlog in cases.

### **Underfunding CCHR Undermines Affordability by Leaving Housing and Workplace Discrimination Claims Unresolved**

Underfunding CCHR exacerbates affordability issues by limiting recourse for New Yorkers facing workplace and housing discrimination claims. It is well documented that New Yorkers are experiencing an affordability crisis. FPWA co-founded the National True Cost of Living coalition to address the widespread nature of economic insecurity. The coalition commissioned the Urban Institute to develop a True Cost of Economic Security (TCES) measure, which provides a comprehensive view of households' costs and resources detailed at the county level. Unfortunately, according to TCES, a staggering 62 percent of New Yorkers do not have the resources necessary to meet a comprehensive set of regular household costs, set aside savings both for future planning and for short-term emergencies, and manage debt. For families with children, the rate is even higher: 72 percent are economically insecure.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> New York City Mayor's Management Report (2025). City Commission on Human Rights. New York City Mayor's Office of Operations. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/cchr.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> The New York Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *The New York City Administrative Code, Title 8: Civil Rights Chapter 4 - Civil Action to Eliminate Unlawful Discriminatory Practices*. Retrieved March 16, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/chapter-4.page>

<sup>20</sup> The New York Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.) *Steps in the Complaint Process*. Retrieved March 16, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/enforcement/steps-in-the-complaint-process.page>

<sup>21</sup> Martin, B., & Launius, J. (2025). *True Cost of Economic Security: Policy Implications for New York City*. Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. [https://www.fpwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/True-Cost-of-Economic-Security-Policy-Implications-for-New-York-City\\_9.29.25-1.pdf](https://www.fpwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/True-Cost-of-Economic-Security-Policy-Implications-for-New-York-City_9.29.25-1.pdf)

Employment discrimination is costly to workers and limits their ability to attain economic security. It undermines career trajectories due to lack of promotions, loss of wages, job turnover, and the adverse physical and mental health outcomes associated with employment discrimination.<sup>22,23,24</sup> Workers facing discrimination are put in a vulnerable position, afraid to speak out due to fears that they might not be able to find a new job if they are retaliated against and fired. These fears are rational when so many New Yorkers lack the emergency savings needed to sustain them during periods of unemployment.

New York City's workforce development programs and initiatives are equally undermined by the pervasiveness of employment discrimination. Providing training and education may prove to ultimately be meaningless if these workers are not hired or promoted or are unfairly disciplined because of illegal discrimination. Right now, job seekers across the country are struggling to find permanent positions, with 20 percent of job seekers who were looking for employment in 2024 still looking as of 2025, and many reporting that they are applying for more jobs than ever and hearing back less. Among its many protections, CHRL protects workers against discriminatory practices including sexual harassment, retaliation, lack of disability accommodations, or failing to provide a place and time for lactating employees to pump breast milk. Female employees, workers of color, and LGBTQIA employees are some of the groups most vulnerable to these insidious and illegal practices. They are also groups with lower labor force participation and therefore most likely to be targeted by the city's workforce development programs.

FPWA has been conducting research concerning occupational segregation, which refers to the systematic sorting of workers into different industries and roles along lines of race, gender, immigration status, disability, and other marginalized identities. It results in the overrepresentation of workers from historically marginalized groups in low-wage, exploitative, and precarious jobs or industries, as well as the underrepresentation of those workers in higher-wage, secure, and influential occupations. Much of New York's low-wage essential workforce, including home care workers and child care workers, are largely carved out of federal anti-discrimination protections due to working in domestic settings which often have under 15 employees. Anti-discrimination law, administered by the EEOC, generally does not apply to businesses with fewer than 15 employees, which excludes the majority of these workers.<sup>25,26</sup> As New York

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<sup>22</sup> Sanchez Cumming, C. (2021). *The importance of anti-discrimination enforcement for a fair and equitable U.S. labor market and broadly shared economic growth*. Washington Center for Equitable Growth. <https://equitablegrowth.org/the-importance-of-anti-discrimination-enforcement-for-a-fair-and-equitable-u-s-labor-market-and-broadly-shared-economic-growth/#:~:text=The%20effective%20enforcement%20of%20anti%2Ddiscrimination%20laws%20is%20essential%20to,affects%20workers'%20labor%20market%20outcomes>.

<sup>23</sup> New York City Talent and Workforce Development. (n.d.). *Recent Initiatives*. Retrieved March 10, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/wkdev/recent-initiatives/recent-initiatives.page>

<sup>24</sup> Blake, S. (2025, January 27). Americans are struggling to find new jobs as market changes. Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/americans-are-struggling-find-new-jobs-market-changes-2021742>

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (n.d.). *Coverage*. Retrieved March 10, 2026. <https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/coverage-0>

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (n.d.). *Small Business Requirements*. Retrieved March 10. <https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/small-business/small-business-requirements>.

City expands its child care program and home care continues to be one of its fastest growing industries we must have a robust CCHR to protect the workers in these essential fields.<sup>27</sup>

Stable housing is another foundational requirement for individuals and families to thrive. CCHR is responsible for overseeing cases dealing with housing discrimination due to source of income and illegal denials due to the race or other qualifying characteristics of the tenant.<sup>28</sup> Housing discrimination undermines both the budgetary investment that the New York City government has made to increase affordable housing, as well as the administration of the City's services for low-income New Yorkers to improve housing security. Housing represents 28 percent of the average New York City resident's budget, and for New York City families falling under the threshold of economic security, housing costs are a staggering 45 percent of their annual resources.<sup>29</sup> In 2021, over 30 percent of NYC households were considered severely rent burdened, meaning they spent over 50 percent of their income on rent.<sup>30</sup> This makes housing security a core economic security issue. This massive cost burden forces households to make trade-offs with other essentials, like food and health care, or can force households to live in crowded, poorly maintained or even hazardous conditions, which have a negative impact on economic security and health outcomes.<sup>31</sup>

Source-of-income discrimination, when lenders and brokers refuse to rent to low-income New Yorkers because they are using housing subsidies to pay rent, is a key barrier to solving New York City's affordability and capacity crisis and has been a priority for CCHR in recent years.<sup>32</sup> The prevalence of this discriminatory practice is not only an injustice against the individuals and families who struggle to find permanent housing due to source-of-income discrimination, but creates an administrative issue for New York City that undermines housing voucher and subsidy programs and exacerbates homelessness.<sup>33</sup>

At a time when civil rights are under real threat, a well-funded CCHR is more important than ever to both inform New Yorkers about those rights and comprehensively enforce them. A \$25 million investment would stabilize and expand the capacity of the CCHR to adequately staff its office, review claims in a timely

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<sup>27</sup> Shapiro, E. (2026, March 6). Mamdani announces first 2-K seats in Universal Child Care expansion. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/03/nyregion/mamdani-2k-nyc-child-care.html>  
<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/spotlight-care-workers-and-the-new-york-city-economy/>

<sup>28</sup> New York City Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *Source of Income Discrimination*. Retrieved March 10, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/source-of-income.page>

<sup>29</sup> Martin, B., & Launius, J. (2025). *True Cost of Economic Security: Policy Implications for New York City*. Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. <https://www.fpwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/True-Cost-of-Economic-Security-Policy-Implications-for-New-York-City-9.29.25-1.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Office of the New York State Comptroller. (n.d.). *The Cost of Living in New York City: Housing*. Retrieved March 10, 2026. <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-17-2024.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. (February 2024). *New Yorkers in Need: The Housing Insecurity Crisis*. Office of the New York State Comptroller, Office of Budget and Policy Analysis. <https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/new-yorkers-need-housing-insecurity-crisis>

<sup>32</sup> New York City Commission on Human Rights. (n.d.). *Source of Income Discrimination*. Retrieved March 10, 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/source-of-income.page>

<sup>33</sup> Zaveri, M. (2022, May 25). Discrimination Weakens Tool for Reducing N.Y. Homelessness, Lawsuit Says. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/nyregion/ny-vouchers-homeless-discrimination.html>

manner, and better enforce critical protections. As the city moves towards an affordability model, it must not overlook the impact discrimination can have on raising the cost of living even further by continuing to underfund this office. At FPWA, we are committed to advancing justice for those who face discrimination in New York City and look forward to continuing to work with the City Council to champion increased funding and staffing for this vital agency. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to this hearing.



**Testimony from Ella Grace Downs, Deputy Director of Policy & Advocacy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) before the New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights  
March 13, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Nurse and Members of the Committee. My name is Ella Grace Downs, and I am the Deputy Director of Policy & Advocacy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). GGE is a Black feminist, intergenerational Brooklyn-based organization, reshaping culture and policy through advocacy, youth-centered programming, and narrative shift.

As a small, Black, queer and immigrant-led nonprofit doing critical racial, gender and sexuality justice and liberation work in the context of today's hostile world, the funding we receive is imperative to the development and growth of Black girls and gender-expansive youth of color across NYC. We request continued support from City Council for our FY27 youth programming, so that GGE may continue to address the needs of young people across all five boroughs during this critical period.

We are facing democratic erosion nationally and the normalization of sexual violence against girls and gender-expansive youth. The lack of accountability for perpetrators in the Epstein files paired with the continual presence of ICE in our communities is impacting the mental health of youth that attend our programs. Young people feel powerless, which our staff has to respond to in real-time by shifting program curricula, increasing 1:1's, updating safety protocols, and developing a whole new organizing arm and campaign to tend to current, real-world needs and re-empower our young people.

Furthermore, attacks against "DEI" and racial justice work have led foundations to steer away from funding our work. This year, GGE is facing decreased funding from

across the sector, with funders reducing investment away from gender and racial justice organizations. In response to these challenges, GGE has restructured by reducing staff and scaling back certain programs. This current FY, we are projecting a budget deficit of approximately \$1M, which underscores the urgency of securing multi-year, flexible funding and a stronger partnership with City Council to stabilize operations and sustain impact not just for GGE, but for **ALL** small organizations doing this critical work.

This is why we have formally launched the Alliance on Gender Equity, or AGE, and are requesting \$300,000 in the form of a new City Council initiative to sustain this work. AGE is a youth-led space for political education, civic engagement, leadership development and community-building for Black girls, queer and gender-expansive youth of color. The coalition consists of our GGE youth participants, adult co-conspirators and non-profit allies. We convene with partner organizations on a monthly basis to see how we can support and uplift each other with our unique and shared priorities as we face growing attacks against our work and our communities.

To help build the youth alliance, we held a Town Hall In November 2025 centering young BIPOC girls, gender-expansive and LGBTQIA+ youth from all five boroughs. We heard from them in six priority areas, with many issues coming up that are of direct interest to this Committee, specifically discrimination in school practices. AGE turned these grievances and recommendations into a List of Demands for New York City and State, which is now the School G\*rls Demand campaign, launched this month. We will share our demands and list of city-specific requests in the written submission, to keep this brief.

GGE is continuing to do the work and expanding our reach, despite financial constraints. With \$300k in support from City Council through the AGE initiative, we hope to continue equipping young Black girls, queer and gender-expansive youth to fight for a NYC that is resilient against harmful national forces working against them.

1. \$350,000 towards our Young Women's Advisory Council program funded by Young Women's Leadership Development Initiative (YWLD) for political education and empowerment,

2. \$200,000 towards our Sisters in Strength survivor program funded by the Domestic Violence and Empowerment Initiative (DoVE) initiative to support young survivors,
3. \$100,000 towards the Sports Training and Role Models for Success (STARS) Initiative to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of youth ages 12-24, and
4. \$250,000 in ATI funding to continue our youth organizing work surrounding racial disparities in disciplinary actions and school policies, and promotion of restorative and healing justice measures and Alternatives to Incarceration.

We hope you consider supporting us in these endeavors. Thank you.



## TESTIMONY OF LEGAL SERVICES NYC

### New York City Council, Budget Hearing for the New York City Human Rights Commission March 13, 2026

My name is Nicole Salk. I have been a Senior Staff Attorney at Brooklyn Legal Services (BLS) for more than 29 years and have spent the last 20 years in the Workers' Rights and Benefits Unit. I am also a proud member of UAW local 2320. As part of my job, I provide advice and representation to low-wage workers who have experienced employment discrimination. I am testifying today regarding the preliminary budget for the New York City Human Rights Commission (CCHR) and the importance of CCHR to enforce the New York City Human Rights Law.

BLS is part of Legal Services NYC, which is the largest civil legal services provider in the country and is dedicated to fighting poverty and seeking justice for more than 100,000 low-income New Yorkers annually. Legal Services NYC is part of the New York City Human Rights Law Working Group, a coalition of legal services organizations, civil rights advocates, and others which formed in 2014 to address the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)' failure to enforce the New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL) effectively.

Thanks to the City Council, New York City has the strongest anti-discrimination laws in the country. The CCHR is tasked with enforcing the NYCHRL and for most working and poor residents of NYC, who may not be able to afford private attorneys to represent them in court, the

### **Demand Justice.**

Commission is one of the few places that they can turn to when they are the victims of discrimination.

The Preliminary Budget for the CCHR is only \$14,961,000. This would be the first budget decrease in five years for the CCHR. To provide historical perspective, the CCHR has 109 staff members, which is less than half the number of staff that the CCHR had under the Dinkins administration in 1992 - a time when the CCHR served fewer people and enforced less expansive laws. Under both the Giuliani and Bloomberg administrations, funding for the CCHR was decimated (in 2013 the CCHR had less than 60 employees) and the CCHR gained the reputation of a place to avoid if you wanted justice. While funding increased during the DeBlasio administration and the CCHR was able to begin to work toward fulfilling its mandates, the CCHR has never been able to properly investigate many cases of discrimination or do the affirmative anti-discrimination work it has been tasked to do. From the beginning of 2022 through the end of 2025, the budget for the CCHR actually increased slightly each year. However, the CCHR was unable to fill many vacancies due to the City's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) slowdowns, which cost them qualified candidates who were forced to wait months for approval, and the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEGS). CCHR currently has 30 vacancies because of this.

The inadequacy of the CCHR budget is born out in my own experiences advising and representing clients who bring cases to the CCHR only to have them languish for years. As an example, I filed a case at the CCHR in 2022 for a client who experienced severe sexual harassment at a job where she is still employed. Up until very recently, the CCHR failed to investigate the case. During the last almost 4 years, the case was transferred several times and then left unassigned due to understaffing. As a result of the case sitting for so many years, the

employer has not been held accountable, which is particularly problematic as my client continues to face sexual harassment at this same job.

I also represented a client, sick with cancer, who experienced source of income (SOI) discrimination when she attempted to use a voucher for a new apartment as she was being evicted from her old apartment. CCHR is the main agency tasked with enforcing SOI discrimination, which is an epidemic problem in NYC. This epidemic has worsened because of a recent Appellate Court decision striking down the State law which will only embolden landlords to further discriminate against voucher holders. Rather than file a complaint with the CCHR, with the likelihood of a long wait for an uncertain result, the client was forced to move to a location that was both precarious and far away from her son's school. My client's situation showcases the need for additional resources to enable pre-complaint intervention by the CCHR. The failure of the City to properly fund the CCHR means that housing insecure individuals are forced to make hard choices and/or remain in shelters for long periods of time.

I want to be clear, the CCHR staff are both dedicated and talented. It is not for lack of commitment that cases are not resolved -- it is a question of inadequate resources. The Commission must be staffed up to properly investigate and prosecute the complaints it is receiving in a timely manner. Cases filed with the Commission are taking far too long to come to resolution – not for lack of effort but for lack of personnel. The Commission must increase mediation to resolve cases quickly but cannot do so without adequate staffing and the funding this requires.

It is crucial for all New Yorkers that the Commission be fully staffed so that it can properly investigate and adjudicate violations of the Human Rights Law, particularly now when the Commission may be one of the few places that low-income New Yorkers can seek justice.

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**Make the Road New York**  
**Testimony on the Preliminary Budget**  
**Committee on Civil and Human Rights**

March 11, 2026

My name is Cristobal Gutierrez and I am a Lead Attorney for the Workplace Justice and Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, Intersex and Queer (TGNCIQ) Justice Projects at Make the Road New York ("MRNY").

We are grateful to Council Member and Chair Sandy Nurse and the New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights for holding this hearing concerning the Preliminary Budget for the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), and for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of Make the Road New York.

MRNY is a non-profit community-based membership organization with over 28,000 low-income members dedicated to building the power of immigrant and working-class communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services, including legal services for workplace justice, immigration, and housing issues. MRNY's five community centers, including centers in the New York City neighborhoods of Jackson Heights, Bushwick, and Port Richmond, provide a broad array of support to thousands of New Yorkers every year. Our workplace justice legal team represents hundreds of workers each year in cases to enforce their workplace rights and provides community rights education that reaches thousands more.

The Trans Immigrant Project (TriP) at Make the Road New York is dedicated to supporting TGNCIQ people of color who disproportionately face high levels of poverty, police brutality, and workplace discrimination. Against the backdrop of a worsening political climate, incidents of

<b>BROOKLYN</b> 301 GROVE STREET BROOKLYN, NY 11237 718 418 7690	<b>QUEENS</b> 92-10 ROOSEVELT AVENUE JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372 718 565 8500	<b>STATEN ISLAND</b> 161 PORT RICHMOND AVENUE STATEN ISLAND, NY 10302 718 727 1222	<b>LONG ISLAND</b> 1090 SUFFOLK AVENUE BRENTWOOD, NY 11717 631 231 2220	<b>WESTCHESTER</b> 46 WALLER AVENUE WHITE PLAINS, NY 10605 914 948 8466
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[WWW.MAKETHEROADNY.ORG](http://WWW.MAKETHEROADNY.ORG)

hate violence are on the rise, with various states across the U.S. introducing new anti-TGNCIQ legislation. In response, MRNY is actively engaged in resisting these injustices by advocating for inclusive policies, providing vital support services to individual community members, and cultivating a nurturing environment where TGNCIQ lives are valued and honored.

As a member of the Human Rights Law Working Group (HRL WG), a coalition of legal service providers and advocacy organizations, we are committed to advocating in support of a sufficiently resourced and staffed CCHR. The New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL), enforced by CCHR, prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and protects against discriminatory lending practices, retaliation, discriminatory harassment, and bias-based profiling by law enforcement. It is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the country and applies to a long list of protected classes beyond those recognized by the federal and New York State governments. We commend the City Council for its expansive view of civil and human rights, amending the NYCHRL over 40 times since 2013 to include additional protections for New Yorkers.<sup>1</sup> However, we must express our significant alarm at the chronic underfunding of CCHR, which prevents New Yorkers from accessing justice when faced with discrimination, particularly given the horrendous attack on our civil liberties from the federal administration at this moment.

The Federal Government has increased immigration enforcement against undocumented workers to a level that has not been seen in our country.<sup>2</sup> Their surveillance of undocumented workers has included sharing information between federal agencies that had been protected as private for decades.<sup>3</sup> As advocates, we cannot in good conscience advise our clients to go to federal enforcement agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development because of the risk that they could share our client's personal information with immigration enforcement authorities. Further, the Division of Human Rights, New York State's agency in charge of enforcing anti-discrimination law, does not

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<sup>1</sup> *Amendments*, N.Y.C. Commission on Human Rights, available at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/amendments.page>.

<sup>2</sup> *New Report Details ICE's Expanding and Increasingly Unaccountable Detention System*. *American Immigration Council* (Jan 23, 2026), available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-expanding-detention-system/#:~:text=New%20Report%20Details%20ICE's%20Expanding%20and%20Increasingly%20Unaccountable%20Detention%20System,-Published:%20January%202023&text=The%20American%20Immigration%20Council%20is,of%20its%20mass%20deportation%20push.>

<sup>3</sup> Even though it was blocked later by Courts, the Internal Revenue Service provided certain information about taxpayers to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), such as people filing with an Identification Tax Number (ITIN). *ICE and IRS reach agreement to share taxpayer information of suspected undocumented immigrants*. *Economic Policy Institute* (Nov 24, 2025), available at <https://www.epi.org/policywatch/ice-and-irs-reach-agreement-to-share-taxpayer-information-of-suspected-undocumented-immigrants/>

have the capacity to take on these cases and advocates have been reticent to file there for years due to their lack of capacity.<sup>4</sup>

New York City needs to protect all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable members, from discrimination. “Perceived Immigration Status,” “Gender Identity,” “Gender,” “Race,” and “National Origin” are all protected categories under the NYCHRL that demand CCHR’s protection in the current political climate and when immigrant workers of color, trans and gender-non-binary New Yorkers cannot seek the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws at the EEOC.

Effective enforcement of the NYCHRL is key to protecting New Yorkers who are under attack and to advancing many of the City’s priorities including housing affordability and workforce development.

Further, existing capacity issues within CCHR are leaving New Yorkers with potentially viable discrimination claims without a forum to address them due to the backlog in cases. Cases in the CCHR may be closed one of two ways: by deciding the case on the merits, or by administrative closure. Cases are terminated through administrative closure when CCHR staff initiated a case because they determined there may be a viable claim, but were unable to determine in a timely fashion whether those cases should be dismissed or referred.<sup>5</sup> In FY25, CCHR administratively closed 44 percent of the 379 cases that it closed that year, or approximately 167 cases. While this percentage is down from a 5-year high of 56 percent in FY22, the high rate of administrative closures means that these 167 cases were shelved without being decided on the merits. If New Yorkers must wait for years to have their discrimination cases reviewed, only to have them administratively closed, they are not adequately protected from discrimination.<sup>6</sup> Without sufficient funding, CCHR cannot fulfill its mission to investigate and prosecute alleged violations of the law. The cost of this underfunding falls on New Yorkers who may have no other recourse for justice.

In 2019, Theresa,<sup>7</sup> who worked at a massage parlor, was brutally raped by her employer. Fearing retaliation and the loss of her sole source of income, she was forced by her employer into performing sex work under threat of being accused of infidelity to her husband and termination. Despite earning just \$60 per day plus tips, Theresa could not afford to miss a single payment. It took nearly a year of suffering before Theresa found the courage to report her employer's actions. He was tried and convicted in criminal court, but Theresa's journey to justice is far from over.

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<sup>4</sup> *Auditors found lost human rights cases in file labeled 'Twilight Zone'*. Brendan J. Lyons. Times Union (Oct 17, 2024), available at

<https://www.timesunion.com/capitol/article/auditors-lost-human-rights-cases-file-called-19843703.php>

<sup>5</sup> City Commission on Human Rights 2025 Report, available at

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/cchr.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Alias. Name has been changed to protect her privacy.

Nearly five years later, her discrimination case remains unresolved before the Commission, leaving her to endure the lasting trauma.

Stories like Theresa's are unacceptable in our city. Passing laws to protect the vulnerable is not enough - we must ensure those laws are swiftly and effectively enforced. The chronic underfunding of the Commission on Human Rights has allowed injustice to fester, eroding public faith and emboldening bad actors who know they can act with impunity. The time for change is now. As our city faces potential increases in the need for the Commission's services, we must act with urgency to provide the resources necessary for timely, robust enforcement of our anti-discrimination protections. The dignity and livelihoods of New Yorkers like Theresa depend on it. We ask you to prioritize increased funding for the Commission on Human Rights. Our requests of City Council, as a member of the HRL WG, regarding CCHR are as follows:

As a member of HRL WG we are asking the Mayor and City Council for the following:

1. **Increase the budget of CCHR to \$25 million, up \$10 million from the Mayor's current proposal.**
2. **Release Funds and Exempt CCHR from PEGs:** Immediately require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release CCHR's entire FY26 budget so that it can fill all vacant staffing positions. Exempt CCHR from any future Programs to Eliminate the Gap (PEGs) so that its staff is not further diminished through attrition and turnover and exempt the Commission from having to appoint a savings officer to recommend further cuts to its budget. Over the last five fiscal years, CCHR has had a budgeted headcount of under 150 employees.<sup>8</sup> Due to the small size of this office and its low level of funding, PEGs can be particularly destructive by drastically reducing staff capacity.
3. **Facilitate Hiring:** Immediately exempt line staff hires from the OMB approval process to allow hiring to proceed without bureaucratic delay, and permit CCHR to hire at the top of its salary ranges for all lines, including both investigators and attorneys to ensure that CCHR does not lose quality candidates to higher paying legal services organizations who are not subject to the sometimes months-long OMB hiring approval process.
4. **Establish a Team Within the Law Enforcement Bureau (LEB) to Resolve the Case Backlog.** This team, led by experienced attorneys, would review all cases that are more than 18 months old and put them on a path towards resolution within a year.
5. **Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.** Early intervention can be the difference between having or losing a job or a place to live. With a permanent staff of at least 20 well-compensated and experienced advocates, the Commission would be able to help secure apartments, keep people in their jobs by requiring reasonable accommodations, and end harassment and retaliation for people complaining about discriminatory treatment.

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<https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/03/Commission-on-Civil-and-Human-Rights-2.pdf>

6. **Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.** Ensure patterns identified by early intervention efforts, public reporting, and case investigations are pursued by the Commission.
7. **Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.** Early intervention can be the difference between having or losing a job or a place to live. With a permanent staff of at least 20 well-compensated and experienced advocates, the Commission would be able to help secure apartments, keep people in their jobs by requiring reasonable accommodations, and end harassment and retaliation for people complaining about discriminatory treatment.
8. **Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.** Ensure patterns identified by early intervention efforts, public reporting, and case investigations are pursued by the Commission.
9. As a working group, we have laid out a complete list of recommendations for the new administration. For year one, we have asked the Administration to include the following changes:
  - a. Appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications with appropriate staff in the Office of the Chair.
  - b. Authorize CCHR to Appear in Court.
  - c. Ensure the Office of Policy Counsel is adequately staffed.
  - d. Create an OATH Division specifically for CCHR cases.

The survival of MRNY's clients and members requires decisive action from the City Council to invest in combating the rampant discrimination of those who feel emboldened by the Trump Administration and its anti-diversity and anti-immigrant rhetoric. Our City prides itself in being a beacon of diversity in the world, which gives the city its economic, cultural, and social vitality. We ask you to act now and prevent further damage.



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON

New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on The Preliminary Budget for  
Fiscal Year 2027, The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2027-2030 and  
The Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report

PRESENTED BEFORE:

THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
HON. SANDY NURSE, CHAIR, CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

PRESENTED BY:

BERNADETTE JENTSCH, SUPERVISING ATTORNEY  
WORKPLACE JUSTICE PROJECT  
MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE, INC.

MARCH 13, 2026

Mobilization for Justice, Inc. (MFJ) submits this written testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights.

MFJ's mission is to achieve justice for all. MFJ prioritizes the needs of people who are low-income, disenfranchised, or have disabilities as they struggle to overcome the effects of social injustice and systemic racism. We provide the highest-quality free, direct civil legal assistance, conduct community education and build partnerships, engage in policy advocacy, and bring impact litigation. In fiscal year 2025, we handled more than 10,000 cases benefitting more than 23,000 New Yorkers, partnered with over 150 pro bono attorneys and other volunteers, and secured \$16 million in judgments for low-income individuals and families.

As you know, the NYC Human Rights Law (NYCHRL) is one of the most comprehensive anti-discrimination laws in the nation, protecting individuals from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on a broad set of characteristics or protected classes. The majority of MFJ's clients in the four key areas we focus on – Housing, Disability and Aging Rights, Children's Rights, and Economic Justice - fall under these protected classes and would significantly benefit if the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), the agency charged with enforcing these laws, is functioning properly and able to fulfill its mission.

MFJ's Workplace Justice Project, which advocates on behalf of low-income and immigrant workers, including individuals with a prior criminal record, experienced significant delays when it last filed a discrimination case based on race and gender with the CCHR. The Law Enforcement Bureau (LEB) took five years to investigate the case before ultimately issuing a Notice of Probable Cause, but the case was never scheduled for a trial before the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. We took the lead in negotiating a settlement with the employer, but the LEB further delayed this process by another three years, insisting that the employer pay civil penalties to the City. Our client, who suffered race and gender discrimination, had to wait nine years from the time she experienced discrimination to the time she received any payment for backpay.

In another case, CCHR referred to our office an unrepresented older worker with a disability for representation in mediation. The worker had previously filed a complaint with CCHR just a few months earlier against the same employer and then filed a retaliation complaint for denying his reasonable accommodation request and for his subsequent job termination due to his disability. The worker's goal was to return to his job with the reasonable accommodation he requested. But after a year-and-a-half delay from CCHR, the case was never scheduled for mediation because the worker passed away while the case languished.

These are appalling examples of an overburdened agency that is simply unacceptable. CCHR's inability to promptly intervene to address discrimination in employment and housing, or to secure reasonable accommodations, results in homelessness and unemployment for vulnerable New Yorkers. In Dr. Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail, he writes "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

MFJ urges the Council to add \$10 million to CCHR's current budget so it can resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks, continue to enforce rights and educate New

Yorkers and employers about the city's robust human rights laws, and it should expand the mediation program by establishing partnerships with law schools, legal services providers, bar associations and private mediators to ensure mediation is available to all interested parties and in appropriate cases.

*For any questions about this testimony, please feel free to contact Bernadette Jentsch at [bjentsch@mjllegal.org](mailto:bjentsch@mjllegal.org) or 212-417-3772.*



DEDICATED TO SERVING WORKERS FOR 40 YEARS

**Testimony on behalf of National Employment Lawyer Association/New York  
to the New York City Council**

**Submitted March 2, 2026**

The National Employment Lawyers Association (NELA) is a national organization of attorneys dedicated to the vindication of workers' rights. NELA/NY, incorporated as a bar association under the laws of New York State, is NELA's New York State affiliate, has more than 450 members across the state who represent workers—enforcing their rights under federal, State, and City laws. NELA/NY is a member of the Human Rights Law Working Group, a coalition of legal service providers and advocacy organizations who advocate in support of a well-funded and sufficiently staffed CCHR.

We submit this testimony to call on the Administration and the City Council to fully fund the New York City Commission on Human Rights, (CCHR) to ensure that it is able to fulfill its crucial mission to protect New York City workers from discrimination, especially the most vulnerable.

The Mayor has proposed a reduction in the CCHR's budget, despite pledging to fully fund it during his campaign so that staffing decimated by the Adams administration could be fully restored.<sup>1</sup> We urge the City Council not only to reject this proposed reduction, but to increase the Commission's FY 2026 budget by \$10 million, so that it is funded at \$25 million in FY 2027. This small investment in the Commission — just 10% of the \$250 million increase the mayor proposes for the NYPD budget — would have an oversized impact on the lives of New Yorkers.

Funding at this level will allow the Commission to address four urgent priorities.

1. ***Hiring New Staff & Addressing Backlogged Cases.*** Without adequate funding or staffing, the CCHR's backlog of cases has grown significantly. Many of our members have experienced this first-hand, with cases they have filed taking years to get any response at all from CCHR. Restoring staffing levels is critical so that the CCHR can aggressively tackle its backlog—because justice delayed is justice denied.
2. ***Early Intervention.*** With adequate funding, the CCHR could expand its early intervention program, and resolve cases early – keeping people in their jobs, allowing them to pay their rent and support their families.
3. ***Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications.*** With adequate funding, CCHR could appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications, so that OATH decisions can be issued promptly and timely. Under the prior administration, OATH decisions have languished

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<sup>1</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Dvs1d2mlFUostowEZzfr0CoCrbUQw99a/view> at 6.

for months and years at CCHR while awaiting decision, delaying monetary and injunctive relief for discrimination victims. Again, justice delayed is justice denied.

4. ***Affirmative Litigation.*** With adequate funding, the CCHR could establish an affirmative litigation team, to ensure that patterns identified by early intervention efforts, public reporting, and case investigations, are pursued by the CCHR.

The New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL), administered by CCHR, is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the country and applies to a long list of protected classes beyond those recognized by the federal and New York State governments.<sup>2</sup> We commend City Council for its expansive view of civil and human rights, amending the NYCHRL over 40 times since 2013 to add additional protections for New Yorkers.<sup>3</sup>

The consequences of the chronic underfunding of CCHR, which prevents New Yorkers from receiving justice when faced with discrimination, is particularly acute right now. The recent announcement by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that it intends to stop or limit the acceptance, processing and investigation of charges brought by those who suffer from workplace gender identity discrimination, means that New Yorkers who experience workplace discrimination based on gender identity will look to New York State courts and the New York City Commission on Human Rights for protection of their rights. In addition, there are press reports that EEOC has instructed its staff to halt processing of all sexual orientation claims.<sup>4</sup>

This, of course, is occurring in the larger context of the new Administration's stance on discrimination in general, which led former EEOC Commissioner Jocelyn Samuels to recently comment, "I am deeply worried that the EEOC will no longer be an agency that is committed to protecting and vindicating the rights of vulnerable workers, and will instead be a barrier to their ability to be protected from discrimination."<sup>5</sup>

## **Background**

The New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL) has prohibited discrimination based on gender identity since 2002, with the passage of the Transgender Rights Bill. It ensured legal protection for people whose "gender and self-image do not fully accord with the legal sex assigned to them at birth, "with the intent to make explicit that the law prohibits discrimination against people based on gender identity. Recognizing the profoundly debilitating impact of gender-based discrimination on transgender, non-binary, and other gender non-conforming people, the amendment makes clear that "gender-based discrimination—including, but not limited to, discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived sex, and discrimination based on a person's gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression—constitutes a violation of the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/the-law.page>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/amendments.page#:~:text=A%20Local%20Law%20to%20amend,%20C%20housing%20and%20public%20accommodations>

<sup>4</sup> Some reports indicate that the EEOC has decided to halt processing not just gender identity discrimination claims, but sexual orientation claims as well. <https://www.hrdiver.com/news/eec-tells-employees-halt-lgbtq-discrimination-cases/738853/#:~:text=Dive%20Brief%3A,with%20knowledge%20of%20the%20situation.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/09/nx-s1-5287582/trump-eeoc-dei-civil-rights-diversity>

City’s Human Rights Law.” In 2018, City Council amended the definition of “gender” in the NYCHRL to reflect a broader and inclusive understanding of gender.”<sup>6</sup>

The United States Supreme Court held 2020, in *Bostock v. Clayton County*<sup>7</sup> that discrimination on the basis of gender identity was barred by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC, the federal agency charged with enforcing federal workplace discrimination laws, subsequently issued guidance consistent with *Bostock*: Commission’s Enforcement Guidance on Harassment in the Workplace<sup>8</sup>; the EEOC Strategic Plan (2022-2026); and the EEOC Strategic Enforcement Plan Fiscal Years 2024-2028, which included specifically, “targeting discrimination, bias, and hate directed against ... LGBTQI+ individuals.”<sup>9</sup> The EEOC in fiscal year 2023 received more than 3000 charges alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, up more than 36% from the previous year.<sup>10</sup>

### **The EEOC Reneges on Its Obligation to Trans and Non-Binary Americans.**

All this changed after January 20, 2025. In a press release dated January 28, 2025, Acting EEOC Chair Lucas announced that pursuant to Executive Order 14168, one of her priorities for compliance, investigations, and litigation—is to “defend the biological and binary reality of sex and related rights, including women’s rights to single-sex spaces at work” in other words, not only to abandon claims of discrimination on the basis of gender identity, but to actively support those who carry out such discrimination.

“The Commission’s harassment guidance was fundamentally flawed,” said Lucas. “It ignored biological reality, effectively eliminated single-sex workplace facilities, and impinged on all employees’ rights to freedom of speech and belief. In unlawfully expanding past *Bostock*’s dictates, the EEOC exceeded its authority. The EEOC must rescind the guidance and protect the sex-based privacy and safety needs of women.”<sup>11</sup>

The EEOC wasted no time to put these words into action. On February 18, 2025, the news media reported that the EEOC moved to dismiss six of its own cases on behalf of workers alleging gender identity discrimination.<sup>12</sup> One of these cases, *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Boxwood Hotels, LLC* (1:24-cv-00902), involved a housekeeper in a New York hotel who was fired after she complained about being the target of multiple derogatory comments by her supervisor, including being referred to as “it”.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/legal-guidances-gender-identity-expression.page>

<sup>7</sup> 590 U.S. 644 (2020)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace#\\_Toc164808005](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace#_Toc164808005)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/strategic-enforcement-plan-fiscal-years-2024-2028>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/eeoc-transgender-discrimination-cases/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/removing-gender-ideology-and-restoring-eeocs-role-protecting-women-workplace>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/eeoc-transgender-discrimination-cases/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-boxwood-and-related-hotel-franchises-discriminating-against-transgender-employee>

The EEOC has explicitly chosen, in direct violation of its mandate under Title VII and Supreme Court doctrine, to simply stop pursuing cases based on gender identity discrimination. Whether this takes the form of absolutely refusing to accept new complaints of gender identity discrimination, completely eviscerating employee rights under Title VII, or simply refusing to investigate them, the EEOC’s message is clear: the federal government can no longer be relied upon to protect trans and non-binary New Yorkers. Moreover, there have been press reports that sexual orientation claims are being “paused”, again in violation of Title VII. And, as described above, as former Commissioner Samuels has warned, there is reason to believe that the EEOC in general will be shifting its focus away from protecting historically disadvantaged populations and even targeting them for discrimination.

And just last week, the EEOC issued a decision allowing federal agencies to bar employees from using the bathroom that fits their gender identity. The first sentence of the decision quotes from Executive Order 14168 and reads, in derogation of the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Bostock*: “It is the policy of the United States that ‘intimate spaces [in federal workplaces] ... are designated by sex and not identity.’”<sup>14</sup>

While the EEOC believes that is the “policy of the United States” it is not the policy of the City of New York. Now, more than ever, NYC’s trans and non-binary workers need a robust and fully funded CCHR.

### **The EEOC Abandons Disparate Impact Liability**

Disparate impact liability – one important type of civil rights protection – has been an important tool in targeting policies that result in unjust discrimination. More than 50 years ago, the Supreme Court adopted the disparate impact framework for proving discrimination, which Congress codified in 1991 in our federal civil rights laws.<sup>15</sup>

Discriminatory workplace policies persist today. For example, disparate impact liability successfully challenged Walmart’s physical ability tests for certain warehouse grocery jobs, which were not correlated to a person’s ability to do the work, making it more difficult for women to be hired for the positions. The case resolved with a \$20 million settlement, and Walmart agreed to stop using the tests, allowing more women to compete for relatively high-paying entry-level jobs at grocery distribution centers.<sup>16</sup>

In another example, in *Johnson v. AK Steel Corp*, a federal court allowed the disparate impact discrimination claim of a female crane operator to continue after she explained that crane operators had to urinate off the back of their cranes instead of taking restroom breaks. The court

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2026-02/2025003976.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, 401 U.S. 424, 424 (1971); 42 U.S.C. § 2000e–2(k).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Equal Emp. Opportunity Comm’n, [\*Walmart, Inc. to Pay \\$20 Million to Settle EEOC Nationwide Hiring Discrimination Case\*](#) (Sept. 10, 2020).

found that this practice would have a significant discriminatory impact on women given the anatomical differences between men and women and women’s hygienic needs.<sup>17</sup>

Disparate impact liability is an important element of the NYCHRL.<sup>18</sup> But as of today, it is no longer an element of federal anti-discrimination law. On April 23, 2025, President Trump announced a policy directive to eliminate the use of disparate impact liability “to the maximum degree possible” and directed federal agencies to deprioritize enforcement of laws and regulations that rely on the doctrine—undermining a cornerstone of civil rights protections that has expanded equal opportunity for decades.<sup>19</sup> The EEOC did as instructed and stopped pursuing disparate impact claims.<sup>20</sup>

As it did for protecting the workplace rights of trans and non-binary workers, the EEOC has now also closed its doors to claims of workplace discrimination based on discriminatory policies. Here, too, and now more than ever, the NYCHRL’s disparate impact liability coverage is an essential tool for workplace equity, and the Commission an essential part of securing that protection for NYC workers.

### **The Role of the City Commission on Human Rights**

While filing with the EEOC is a prerequisite for bringing a lawsuit under federal anti-discrimination workplace laws, New Yorkers may also exercise their rights under New York City’s Human Rights Law, by filing a lawsuit, or by making an administrative complaint to the NYCCHR. Until the EEOC reversed its stance, New York employees could choose to file either with the EEOC or the NYCCHR (or with NYS State Division of Human Rights.) For many employees, an administrative agency such as the EEOC or NYCCHR is the forum of choice – when working properly, these agencies can offer a faster, less expensive, more private alternative to litigation in court.

Now that the federal government in general, and the EEOC in particular, have announced that they no longer protect the rights of employees to be free of gender identity discrimination, we can only expect that New Yorkers suffering from such discrimination will be forced to turn to state and local agencies. With the EEOC turning back on victims of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination, and its anticipated policy shift away from protecting members of disadvantaged communities, the CCHR will become a, if not the, critical administrative locus for protection of these New Yorkers and the vindication of their rights.

### **Underfunding CCHR Undermines City Government Priorities and Services**

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<sup>17</sup> *Johnson v. AK Steel Corp.*, No. 1:07-CV-291, 2008 WL 2184230 (S.D. Ohio May 23, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-107(17).

<sup>19</sup> Exec. Order No. 14281, 90 F.R. 17537 (2025).

<sup>20</sup> Rebecca Klar, [EEOC to Close Workers’ Disparate Impact Discrimination Charges](#), *Bloomberg Law News* (Sept. 19, 2025).

Effective enforcement of the NYCHRL is key to advancing many of the City’s priorities including workplace rights. This requires a well-funded CCHR that has the capacity to take on these cases.

Among its many protections, the NYCHRL protects workers against discriminatory practices such as sexual harassment, retaliation, lack of disability accommodations, or not providing a place and time for lactating employees to pump breast milk. Female employees, workers of color, and LGBTQIA employees, are some of the groups most vulnerable to these insidious and illegal practices. They are also groups with lower labor force participation<sup>21</sup> and therefore most likely to be targeted by the City's workforce development programs. Providing training and education may prove to ultimately be meaningless if these workers are not hired, promoted, or unfairly disciplined because of illegal discrimination.

New York City workers should be able to rely on CCHR to address their discrimination claims in a timely manner. Unfortunately, CCHR adjudications are not timely, and during FY24, CCHR had an “average age of complaint closed” of 593 days, up from 515 days in FY20 and a 5-year low of 427 days in FY21.<sup>22</sup> New Yorkers cannot afford to wait so long for workplace justice. In the experience of NELA/NY’s members, investigations often lag for many months, creating significant hardship for complainants, especially those who are still employed by the employer. By not effectively staffing and resourcing CCHR, the City does a disservice to all employees, but those who are already most vulnerable will bear the brunt of the agency's lackluster performance due to its lack of resources.

By not fully resourcing a critical tool in its arsenal, NYC countermands its own initiatives and commitment to workplace justice. The NYCHRL is not simply a pledge for the City to be more equitable; it is a law that should be enforced with the full weight of the government behind it. Leaving workers exposed to the whims of discriminatory actors in the employment space will not only impede the City's goals of equity but undermine the resources it invests in these crucial areas.

### **CCHR’s Enforcement Capacity is Limited by Its Underfunding and Understaffing**

CCHR has a law enforcement function in a civil context, that parallels that of the district attorney’s office in a criminal context serving both a prosecutorial and punitive role through initiating matters and handing down punishment. However, it has a fraction of the funding of the DA, which limits the agency staff’s capacity. At its best, law enforcement should garner a sense of safety within communities. CCHR has the infrastructure necessary to grant that for NYC workers, but that is meaningless if it’s not backed by sufficient resources to power its enforcement capacity.

CCHR has the power to investigate complaints, settle cases, and refer cases to the New York City Office of Administrative Trial and Hearing (OATH) for resolution. It also has the authority to assess fines, obtain monetary damages, and negotiate additional remedies including

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/osdc/new-york-citys-uneven-recovery-mothers-workforce#:~:text=Child%20care%20issues%20may%20have,raises%20for%20women%20of%20color.&text=While%20self%20employment%20can%20provide,benefits%20such%20as%20health%20insurance.](https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/osdc/new-york-citys-uneven-recovery-mothers-workforce#:~:text=Child%20care%20issues%20may%20have,raises%20for%20women%20of%20color.&text=While%20self%20employment%20can%20provide,benefits%20such%20as%20health%20insurance.;); <https://nysdolreports.com/2023-tgncnb/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2024/cchr.pdf>

rehiring, policy change, training, and modifications for accessibility.<sup>23</sup> CCHR plays an important role in mediating reasonable accommodation requests. Under the NYCHRL employers are required to engage in “cooperative dialogue” with employees who make reasonable accommodation requests, and CCHR can mediate these matters in the settlement process.<sup>24</sup> However, the capacity issues within CCHR are leaving New Yorkers with potentially viable workplace discrimination claims without a forum to address them, due to the backlog in cases. In FY24 CCHR administratively closed 40% of the 447 cases that it closed that year or approximately 179 cases. While this percentage is down from a 5-year high of 56% in FY22, the high rate of administrative closures means that CCHR staff initiated some cases, because they determined there may be a viable claim, but failed to decide if the cases should be dismissed or referred, or CCHR staff were unable to settle those cases.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, these 179 cases were shelved without being decided on the merits. If New Yorkers must wait for years to have their discrimination cases reviewed, only to have them administratively closed, they don’t have adequate protection from discrimination.<sup>26</sup> When it comes to discrimination CCHR is the administrator of justice, but City government has not funded or staffed this agency sufficiently to meet that mandate. Consequently, New Yorkers are living in an acute state of lawlessness concerning discrimination, because their enforcement agency is under-resourced.

CCHR’s settlement capacity is also limited by the agency only employing one mediator. Mediation often speeds up settlement, but the limited capacity of CCHR due to having a single mediator, and limitation that *pro se* litigants, those who are unrepresented, do not have access to CCHR’s mediation, contributes to CCHR’s backlog of cases. These problems undermine the deterrent effect of having a watchdog agency with the power to enforce penalties against those who violate the NYCHRL, because failing to sufficiently fund CCHR cuts the teeth of the agency. It also wastes the efforts of the City Council to continuously amend the NYCHRL and expand civil rights to New Yorkers, because CCHR’s responsibilities continue to expand without sufficient staff and funding to carry out the work. In FY24 CCHR administratively closed approximately 6X more cases (179) than it mediated (31).<sup>27</sup> The need for a sufficiently staffed and funded CCHR is also about creating proactive enforcement, to keep the caseload and backlog down through both deterrence and timely enforcement of the NYCHRL.

CCHR also needs funding to dedicate staff to publicizing its work and offering policy positions within its guidance. This policy guidance would clarify how the NYCHRL will be applied by CCHR and create a deterrent effect for those looking to discriminate against New Yorkers, while also educating New Yorkers about their rights. Without sufficient funding and staffing CCHR does not have the capacity to enforce these laws, leaving New Yorkers without essential protection.

While it is clear that CCHR is underfunded and understaffed, it can be difficult to gauge the extent of the problem due to gaps in reporting. In FY24, CCHR received 13,360 inquiries up from 10,015 in FY20 and a 5-year low of 9,055 in FY21, and it initiated 868 matters, down from 1,307 in FY20. CCHR also reported having 1,206 open matters in FY24, down from 2,398 in FY20

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/enforcement/2024-settlements.page>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/chapter-1.page>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2024/cchr.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2024/cchr.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2024/cchr.pdf>

and a 5-year high of 2,411 in FY21.<sup>28</sup> While there could be several reasons why the number of matters initiated by CCHR has plummeted, including an attempt to address the backlog of open matters, the reporting from the agency is insufficient to draw a clear picture. There is a need for greater transparency in reporting, because it is not clear how many of CCHR's cases are held over from year to year. A worker experiencing discrimination at their job does not have years to wait for relief. This type of backlog is unacceptable and needs to be addressed with increased funding and staffing.

### **CCHR's Limited Capacity Leaves New Yorkers without Justice**

We are in the middle of a crisis, and the New York City government must act with the urgency of the last line of defense against discrimination in a context where federal anti-discrimination law and policy can no longer be relied upon.

To be clear, the work of CCHR has always been urgent, not only because anti-discrimination work is essential for all the reasons mentioned in this testimony, but also because there are protections that New York City residents enjoy that don't exist on the federal level. However, the urgency has obviously increased under a federal administration that is dismantling decades of anti-discrimination law.<sup>29</sup> New Yorkers cannot afford a budget issue to stand between them and possibly their only forum for asserting many of their civil rights. City government must be accountable to its constituents. In this moment, recognizing a potential increased need for the services of CCHR, City government must act to increase funding.

### **Creating a More Responsive and Better Resourced CCHR**

We ask that City Council allocate **\$25 million** to give CCHR the resources necessary to work through its caseload to decide cases on the merits, including through a robust mediation process, prepare for the possibility of an influx of cases due to the changes at the federal level, and put resources towards educating the public about their rights and the work of CCHR.

In the years immediately prior to the pandemic, CCHR's budget peaked at \$14 million, which adjusted for inflation is approximately \$16.2 million today. This funding was clearly not sufficient before the pandemic, and City government has failed to allocate this level of funding since. With that amount of funding CCHR was administratively closing 51% of the cases it closed in FY20, 60% in FY19, 68% in FY18, 65% in FY17, and 62% in FY16.<sup>30</sup> CCHR should also be staffed to address at least 10% of its cases through mediation to reduce the waiting times for complainants with viable claims. We believe the increase in both funding and mediation capacity is necessary to protect the civil rights of New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to this hearing. NELA/NY's members are invested in advancing workplace justice for those who face discrimination in New York City. CCHR serves an important role in the protection of civil rights of New Yorkers. We look forward to continuing to work with the City Council to champion increased funding and staffing for this vital agency.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2024/cchr.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.axios.com/2025/01/22/trump-dei-lbj-rollback>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2020/cchr.pdf>



## **New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights Preliminary Budget Hearing**

**Testimony by Neighbors Together  
Written by Amy Blumsack, Director of Organizing & Policy**

**March 13, 2026**

Neighbors Together would like to thank the Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights, Council Member Nurse, as well as the other council members on the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony.

### **About Neighbors Together**

Neighbors Together is a community based organization located in central Brooklyn. Our organization provides hot meals five days per week in our Community Café, offers a range of one-on-one stabilizing services in our Empowerment Program, and engages members in community organizing, policy advocacy and leadership development in our Community Action Program. We serve approximately 125,000 meals to over 12,000 individuals per year. Over the last five years, the number of meals we serve daily has increased fourfold. Our members come to us from across the five boroughs of New York City, with the majority living in central Brooklyn. Over 80% of our Community Action Program members have a rental assistance voucher, and have experienced homelessness.

Over the last decade, our members increasingly report that homelessness and lack of affordable housing options are their primary concern. In our recent 2025 Community Action Program survey, over 85% of respondents said that housing is the main source of their instability. Our data backs the anecdotal evidence we see and hear from our members daily: an increasing number of our members are either living in shelter with vouchers for years at a time, ineligible for a voucher, or unable to find permanent housing due to rampant source of income discrimination and a vacancy rate of under 1% for affordable housing units in New York City.<sup>1</sup> The intense need for housing that is affordable for low-income and extremely low-income New Yorkers was clearly

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/news/007-24/new-york-city-s-vacancy-rate-reaches-historic-low-1-4-percent-demanding-urgent-action-new#/0>



illustrated by the extremely high number of applications for the Section 8 waitlist. When the waitlist reopened for the first time in nearly fifteen years in 2024, over 633,000 applications were submitted in less than a week.<sup>2</sup> Of the more than 633,000 applications, only 200,000 were added to the waitlist, and NYCHA is capped at 115,346 active vouchers.

### **Our Work with Voucher Holders**

Neighbors Together has been organizing voucher holders since 2018. We conduct Know Your Rights trainings on how to identify and report source of income (SOI) discrimination, and Housing Search Workshops where voucher holders get additional support in their housing search and assistance with filing source of income discrimination complaints to the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) when needed. We work closely with CCHR to ensure that source of income discrimination reports are effective and have the best possible outcomes for our members. We also partner with CCHR on their restorative justice set-aside program<sup>3</sup> to ensure that set-aside units obtained through settlements are most likely to go to people in need as efficiently and effectively as possible. Additionally, in partnership with Unlock NYC, we built and launched the Stop Source of Income Discrimination (SID) NYC website,<sup>4</sup> which provides information about source of income discrimination and how to report it as well as a mechanism for reporting via the website.

We work closely with Unlock NYC<sup>5</sup> to improve New Yorkers' ability to utilize their vouchers. Starting in 2019 our members worked with the Unlock NYC team to design and test an online tool to help voucher holders easily report source of income discrimination. The tool has enabled hundreds of our members to quickly and easily gather evidence and report source of discrimination to CCHR. In our partnership with Unlock NYC, we have released multiple reports on source of income discrimination and voucher efficacy, including "An Illusion of Choice," the SOI visual online mapping tool, the "Serial Discriminators List"<sup>6</sup>, as well as ongoing budget advocacy to ensure CCHR is adequately funded to enforce against SOI discrimination.

After over a year of collecting data through the Stop SID NYC website, running know your rights trainings and conducting housing searches for people with vouchers, Neighbors Together built a

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<sup>2</sup><https://nychajournal.nyc/new-nycha-section-8-waitlist-established/#:~:text=In%20total%2C%20NYCHA%20received%20633%2C808,by%20the%20June%202028%20deadline.>

<sup>3</sup><https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-requiring-landlords-set-aside-apartments-voucher-tenants-under-new-approach-enforcing-human-rights-law>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.stopsidnyc.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://weunlock.nyc/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://weunlock.nyc/data/>



# Neighbors Together

grassroots organizing campaign of directly impacted people who had voucher shopping letters but couldn't find housing. The VALUE in Housing (**V**oucher **A**dvocates **L**ifting **U**p **E**quity in **H**ousing) campaign was created by voucher holders for voucher holders, to make vouchers more effective tools for securing housing, and to end source of income discrimination. The campaign's policy platform consisted of 5 reforms aimed at making vouchers effective tools for accessing permanent affordable housing. Since launching in 2019, the VALUE in Housing campaign has won a significant portion of its platform, including:

- Ensuring that CityFHEPS voucher holders receive know-your-rights information about SOI discrimination upon receipt of their shopping letter
- Increasing the size of the Source of Income Unit at CCHR
- Increasing the payment standard of CityFHEPS to fair market rent
- Improving income requirements for CityFHEPS vouchers so that recipients can increase their income until they are financially self-sufficient without fear of losing their voucher.<sup>7</sup>

This year, the VALUE in Housing campaign is fighting to **pass the MOVE Act (Making Opportunity for Voucher Equity)** in the City Council. **The MOVE Act includes 5 bills (Intros 264-269) that will address and disincentivize source of income discrimination.** The bills will:

- Increase fines for bad actors who continue to discriminate and intentionally violate orders from the Commission on Human Rights.
- Increase fines for housing discrimination based on landlord portfolio size, so that penalties for violating New York City's civil and human rights laws will be meaningful to larger landlords.
- Ban credit checks and minimum income requirements for voucher holders seeking apartments.
- Create standards for transparency in tenant screening
- Add source of income discrimination to the Certificate of No Harassment Program
- Publicly list SOI discrimination findings

We look forward to working with the Council to ensure these critical bills are passed, in order to help people exit homelessness and move into stable housing.

## **Importance of the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)**

From early in our work with voucher holders, the City Commission on Human Rights has been one of our most important resources for getting our members housed. Rampant source of income discrimination is a nearly universal experience for voucher holders; the majority of our

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.stopsidnyc.com/get-involved>



members with rental assistance vouchers have searched for housing for months and come up empty handed because they experience SOI discrimination with nearly every call.

The Commission on Human Rights is the only city agency that enforces against discrimination on behalf of the individual who was discriminated against. Other agencies can bring litigation against discriminators, but the penalties don't go to the person who experienced the discrimination. CCHR is the primary means by which voucher holders can receive restitution. This restitution can take different forms; monetary compensation for damages, access to view an apartment or access to an application, or an apartment itself.

One of the practices of CCHR that has been most beneficial for our members is the pre-complaint intervention (PCI). If a voucher holder submits a complaint of SOI discrimination and there is enough evidence to support that claim, then the SOI Unit will intervene by reaching out to the landlord or broker to inform them about SOI discrimination and the city's human rights laws. This is often enough to make the landlord or broker reconsider, and our members often get housed as a result. PCI's are one of the fastest ways our members can secure housing with their voucher.

Another important tool that CCHR uses to help voucher holders secure housing after being discriminated against is their set-aside program. When negotiating settlements with landlords who discriminated against voucher holders, the Commission frequently negotiates for set aside units that will be held explicitly for voucher holders.

Litigation is another important tool, and when CCHR is adequately staffed, in addition to pursuing litigation on behalf of voucher holders, it can pursue impact litigation. In fiscal year 2024, CCHR added additional staff lines, and with increased capacity they were then able to bring impact litigation against Parkchester Preservation Management. The litigation resulted in a historic settlement of \$1 million dollars with 850 units mandated to be set-aside for voucher holders.<sup>8</sup> Neighbors Together members feel strongly that the civil penalties for discriminators should be increased. For corporate landlords, small civil penalties are just the cost of doing business - our members want the financial consequences for discrimination to be meaningful. Members want to see more impact litigation like the recent Parkchester settlement - they want bad actors punished and a clear message sent to others in the industry that discrimination won't be tolerated.

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<https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/653-24/mayor-adams-largest-civil-rights-settlement-city-history-protecting-new-yorkers-from#:~:text=Parkchester%20Preservation%20Management%20required%20housing,to%20qualify%20for%20a%20unit.>



# Neighbors Together

It is important to note that although members of Neighbors Together frequently want to focus on securing safe and stable housing before they pursue litigation, they still feel that formal litigation is important, including both litigation on behalf of an individual and impact litigation. For many, the stability of housing gives them the mental and emotional bandwidth to consider or follow through on bringing litigation against a discriminating party.

When adequately staffed, the SOI Unit at CCHR is a life raft for voucher holders who are drowning in the unforgiving and inequitable sea of New York City housing. For that reason, **it is critical that the FY27 budget increase CCHR's budget to \$25 million.**

## **Increased Capacity Improves CCHR Outcomes**

Discrimination doesn't happen in silos - it is intersectional, and occurs in many different forms. SOI discrimination often overlaps with, or is a stand-in for, discrimination against other protected classes such as race, disability, gender, or presence of children, to name a few. With a robust and ever-growing City Human Rights Law to enforce, CCHR has a serious and large mandate. The Commission is tasked with protecting the rights of over 8 million people with less than 1% of the city's total budget.

After many years of advocating for increased funding for CCHR to bring on new staff to the SOI Unit and the Law Enforcement Bureau, Neighbors Together has been happy to see improved response times, and an increase in successful PCIs as CCHR has hired up. That said, the Commission needs increased funding support to continue its trajectory toward improved outcomes. Increased funding for CCHR to continue to bring on new staff, including critical support staff, as well as funding for OTPS, will help the Commission to meet its mandate. While Commission response times to inquiries have improved, Neighbors Together members have waited months at a time to hear back from staff at CCHR regarding formal complaints, and many have experienced their cases taking years to resolve.

Equally as important as funding increases is the Commission's ability to effectively utilize its funding and staff lines. Under previous administrations, austerity budgets, multiple rounds of PEGS, hiring freezes, and the 2:1 allotment process have made it difficult for CCHR to quickly and effectively staff up. Additionally, the city salaries for attorney positions are not competitive with the market, making the positions less attractive to potential applicants. This is compounded by only hiring at the lowest end of a given position's salary range, and the extreme amount of time it takes for conditional employment offers to be made official. The Commission must be permitted to hire all budgeted staff lines immediately and be exempted from the 2:1 allotment process, which requires that two people leave in order to bring on one new hire. The 2:1 hiring



# Neighbors Together

policy is counterproductive and illogical- it punishes CCHR for retaining staff, and it means CCHR will always be running below full capacity. OMB must expedite approval of all conditional hires at CCHR in order for the Commission to effectively fulfill its mandate.

To help provide New Yorkers with justice more swiftly, it is important for the Commission to create a team within the Law Enforcement Bureau (LEB), led by experienced attorneys, to resolve case backlogs. This team would focus on reviewing cases older than 18 months old, with the goal of resolving them within a year.

As a member of the Human Rights Law Working Group, Neighbors Together supports the working groups' complete list of recommendations for the new administration. For year one, those recommendations include the following changes:

- Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.
- Appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications with appropriate staff in the Office of the Chair.
- Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.
- Authorize CCHR to Appear in Court.
- Ensure the Office of Policy Counsel is adequately staffed.
- Create an OATH Division specifically for CCHR cases.

The City Commission on Human Rights has a mandate to cover the more than 8 million people who live in New York City. Given the current federal administration's dismantling of federal agencies and civil rights, and the Commission's ever-expanding scope of work, meaningful investment in the Commission is needed now more than ever. **In order to effectively enforce the human rights law, the city must fund CCHR at \$25 million dollars total, in order to bring the Commission back up to its pre-pandemic levels, adjusted for inflation.**

## **Recommendations**

The City Council must stand firm in its support for the City Commission on Human Rights, and champion increased funding for CCHR to effectively do its job. To that end, Neighbors Together strongly recommends that the Council:

- **Fund CCHR at \$25 million dollars total, including:**
  - **Increased funding for additional staff lines; both attorneys and other critical support staff positions**
  - **Increased funding for OTPS so that CCHR is able to run robust public education and outreach campaigns. This will allow CCHR to meet people who**



# Neighbors Together

might otherwise be scared to report discrimination, in their own neighborhoods and among trusted partners, where they will be more comfortable.

- **The city must classify staff positions at CCHR as “critical” positions and exempt them from any hiring freezes and 2:1 allotment process.**
- **The Commission, whose budget is less than 1% of the total city budget, should be exempted from PEGS.**
- **Salaries at the Commission need to be raised to competitive rates in order to attract and retain experienced attorneys, and CCHR must be allowed to hire at the top end of position salary ranges.**
- **Create a team within the Law Enforcement Bureau to resolve cases older than 18 months old, within one year.**
- **Implement the following changes in the first year of the Mamdani administration:**
  - **Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.**
  - **Appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications with appropriate staff in the Office of the Chair.**
  - **Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.**
  - **Authorize CCHR to Appear in Court.**
  - **Ensure the Office of Policy Counsel is adequately staffed.**
  - **Create an OATH Division specifically for CCHR cases.**

In addition to increased funding for CCHR, **the city must address deep staffing shortages in the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration, as well as Homebase, all of which administer or process CityFHEPS vouchers.** DHS, HRA and Homebase’s serious lack of capacity to meet the need of voucher holders also affects CCHR’s ability to effectively settle negotiations and close out cases in a timely manner. Lack of communication, slow response times, and delays in processing voucher packets can draw out the timeline for securing housing and moving a voucher holder into housing negotiated through CCHR settlements. One member of Neighbors Together with a CityFHEPS voucher secured housing through a CCHR set-aside unit, but it took the city over a year to process and renew his voucher packet. He lost the unit because of the delays, and remains homeless to this day. To prevent other voucher holders from experiencing the same unnecessary fate, the city must:



# Neighbors Together

- **Increase Staffing In CityFHEPS Units at DHS and HRA**
- **Improve CityFHEPS application processes to ensure the efficient administration and lease-up of vouchers.**
- **Stop further PEGS to DHS/HRA and Restore Service Dollars for Shelters**
- **Increase Staffing at Homebase Offices**

## Conclusion

In order to address the historic homelessness and housing crisis in New York City, Council must stand strong in their support of a robust social safety net. In particular, Council must ensure meaningful funding of at least \$25 million for the City Commission on Human Rights. Without a proper investment in CCHR, New York City will continue to see voucher holders languish in shelters as source of income discrimination and other intersectional forms of discrimination go unchecked. Budgets are moral documents, and the allocation of funds represent the values of our city. If New York City is truly a city for all, one that values equity and uplifting its vulnerable groups, then it must affirm those values by investing in the agencies that help protect those groups, particularly the Commission on Civil and Human Rights. The historic homelessness crisis that New York City is currently facing requires a bold willingness to invest in our city's systems and its people, and the funding priorities outlined above will provide significant positive outcomes for tens of thousands of New Yorkers for years to come.

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Amy Blumsack, Director of Organizing & Policy at Neighbors Together, at [amy@neighborstogether.org](mailto:amy@neighborstogether.org) or 718-498-7256.



**Testimony**

**Of**

**Linda Tigani, MSW**

**Chair & Executive Director**

**NYC Commission on Racial Equity (NYC CORE)**

**Before the**

**New York City Council**

**Committee on Civil & Human Rights Committee**

**On**

**Friday March 13, 2026**

**Preliminary Budget Hearing for NYC Commission on Racial Equity**

Good afternoon, Chair, Sandy Nurse, and members of the Civil and Human Rights Committee. My name is Linda Tigani, and I have the honor of serving as the Chair and Executive Director of the NYC Commission on Racial Equity (NYC CORE). I lead NYC CORE in partnership with a team of Commissioners and staff. Today I am joined by Maya Williams, our Senior Director of Research and Policy, and Rachel Natelson, our General Counsel. I am excited to share an overview of accomplishments from NYC CORE's and a snapshot of Fiscal Year 2027.

NYC CORE is the product of a 2022 ballot measure introduced to redress longstanding racial disparities in power, access, and opportunity enabled and perpetuated—whether by design, implementation, or impact—through City laws, regulations, policies, and practices. To accomplish this goal, New Yorkers called for a body to be established for the purpose of holding government accountable for advancing racial equity and empowering community members to influence City decision-making through the development and implementation of priorities for racial equity in government operations and citywide budget.

Today's testimony is delivered at a time in our nation and city when communities harmed by racism and social injustice – our immigrant, LGBTQIA+, elders, youth, individuals impacted by policing and incarceration and Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian New Yorkers- experience increasing cost of living, low wages, and physical and psychological harm through continued cuts in service delivery and resources. In our city, Black residents experience the lowest life expectancy, followed by the Latinx community. According to our own data, Black residents make up the majority of adult families and single adults in shelters, while Latinx residents are a majority of families with children in shelters. Black residents when compared to white residents, are less likely to own their home and experience deed theft at a higher rate than either Latinx or white homeowners. Child welfare data reveals that almost 45% of Black and Latinx children experience an investigation by age 18 and that Black and Latinx families account for 90% of system-involved families despite constituting only 60% of the City's child population. Due to changes in the federal policy, Black families across major cities in the United States are expected to pay as much as a 24% increase in medical care, while continuing to face deed theft, segregated schooling, and high



rates of unemployment. These outcomes are not inevitable but, are the product of government policies and practices that continue to yield a widening racial wealth gap in NYC, which underscores the truth of our city: race remains the single and most important factor, in determining the outcomes of New Yorkers.

NYC CORE was established to expressly redress the inequities created by the racial wealth gap. As in FY25, we wrestled with, and took great pains to overcome, challenges to its ability to meet this mandate over the past fiscal year. Operating for much of the year at less than full capacity, existing staff invested inordinate time and energy into initiating the second racial equity planning cycle, advancing intergovernmental projects, and producing the deliverables outlined in the racial equity provisions of the city's administrative code. Our team worked with 70 organizations and increased participation in Community Engagement Cycles by 116%, which included a 27% increase in respondents under the age of 25 and respondents who lived in the 33 high-needs TRIE neighborhoods, and increases in responses from residents who live in Staten Island (+1.2%), Manhattan (+2.7%), and the Bronx (+3.6%).

In surveying these New Yorkers on the relative urgency of our original 18 community equity priorities, NYC CORE learned that the issues most vital to them—lowering the cost of living, preserving safe and stable housing, and holding city officials accountable for abuse of authority—closely parallels the new administration's focus on affordability and restoration of the rule of law. It is our hope that this correlation will induce the mayor to release the long delayed Racial Equity Plan and True Cost of Living Measure.

Over the past year, NYC CORE and community organizations have continued to host additional convenings to addressing the intersection of racial equity and the cost of living. Along with MixTeca, Afrikana, LaComena, and several organizations, NYC CORE co-hosted an Immigration Justice Conference, a full day convening of attorneys and organizations to advance immigrant rights and access to legal support. We worked closely with government and community partners

to operationalize a NYC Accountability Council on Family Investigations, Separations, and Wellbeing, which is a community created policy solution to address longstanding systemic racism in children and family welfare system.

Fiscal Year 2026 also saw the launch of Reparations, Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation historic work -not only for our city, but also our nation. Following extensive engagement with both local community members and Reparations, Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation scholars and practitioners around the country, NYC CORE released the first progress report on the study on Reparations. These outreach activities were coupled with the development of a testimony guide for the truth and reconciliation process that NYC CORE is charged with planning in tandem with the NYC study on Reparations; NYC CORE's progress with this initiative was likewise documented in a written update submitted to the Council at the start of this year. With this foundation in place, we are currently in the process of soliciting organizations to join a Reparations, Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Network designed to inform NYC CORE's work on these projects and are preparing to issue a solicitation for Reparations research proposals. In view of the derailment of Reparations projects in other major metropolitan areas, it is imperative that NYC CORE receive the resources necessary to conduct this historic work with the dignity, and respect required at a time of growing local and national racial discord.

To meet our historic and legal mandates, we need increases in our operational and personnel resources. In the remaining months of Fiscal Year 2026, we need to repurpose \$500K from our personnel budget to operations. Funds will be used to continue public engagement and respond to the forthcoming Racial Equity Plan. In Fiscal Year 2027, NYC CORE needs \$6M to complete racial equity and Reparations community engagement. Our work will include but not be limited to launching public education campaigns, expanding community partnerships, conducting racial equity and community centered research and policy analysis, and instituting accountability mechanisms to close the racial wealth gap and its corresponding negative impacts in health, housing, family well-being, and more.



This funding is critical to NYC CORE meeting its legal mandate as an oversight agency for racial equity planning process, responding to requests from the Speaker and other public officials to steer intergovernmental projects, addressing complaints from the public about proposed or existing policy that may have the effect of exacerbating racial inequities, and implementing the city's Reparations study and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation process. Performing these functions in a manner consistent with the standards to which the city and members of the public hold us will require real financial investment in NYC CORE. NYC CORE's size and capacity remains far outstripped by the scale of its responsibilities to plan and implement ambitious multi-year projects, and the initiatives with which we've been entrusted—partnering with parent advocates on a child welfare accountability council, supporting council members in the development of a budget equity scoring tool, and uniting a fractured public behind the city's call for Reparations and racial healing, to name but a few—require personnel and operating support.

These programming duties, moreover, are accompanied by legal obligations to maintain and report on data privacy and security safeguards, records management practices, equal employment opportunity trends, and public accessibility planning. NYC CORE faces the same expectations with regard to procurement, labor relations, fiscal oversight, and ethics and transparency standards as entities hundreds of times our size and shoring up our budding infrastructure is absolutely essential to the prudent stewardship and risk mitigation that the city demands.

On behalf of the Commission as well as the thousands of voters who affirmed that our City has a duty to eliminate the racial inequities in a city where "vigilance is required to prevent the recurrence of past or worsening of continuing harms. We must act intentionally to remedy these past and continuing harms and to reconstruct, revise and reimagine our foundations, structures, institutions, and laws to promote justice and equity for all New Yorkers."



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE FORTUNE SOCIETY**

**THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

250 Broadway,  
New York, NY

Friday, March 13, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Preliminary Budget Hearing

**PURPOSE:** To support additional funding for the NYC Commission on Human Rights in order to properly implement and enforce anti-discrimination laws including the Fair Chance for Housing Act

Presented by

**Reggie Chatman**  
Director of Policy,  
The David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy

The Fortune Society  
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Thank you, Council Committee Chair Nurse and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

My name is Reggie Chatman and I am the Director of Policy at The Fortune Society's David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy. The Fortune Society is a 58-year-old organization committed to providing alternatives to incarceration and supporting successful reentry. Our mission aims to strengthen the fabric of our communities by instilling a belief in the power of individuals to change. Through programs shaped by the experiences of our participants, we help rebuild lives. We also seek to change minds through education and advocacy to foster a fair, humane, and rehabilitative justice system.

In my capacity as Director of Policy, I help lead Fortune's policy and advocacy efforts, including co-leading the successful Fair Chance for Housing Coalition. I am also a formerly incarcerated person who spent 25 years in prison. As it did for many other people, my conviction record made it difficult for me to obtain housing. Thus, I have professional and lived experience with respect to finding housing.

The Fair Chance for Housing Act (FCHA) passed the Council with a veto-proof majority on December 20, 2023 and went into effect on January 1, 2025. The FCHA prevents most private housing providers from discriminating against people with conviction histories. It is only one of a handful of such local laws in the country and national advocates for just housing celebrated its passage. We engaged in that campaign because we saw the need for those protections – and continue to see the need – on a daily basis. More than a quarter of Fortune's new participants are homeless or housing insecure. We provide them with temporary housing via our emergency and transitional housing sites and we also provide them with services geared at helping them become economically and otherwise stable enough to apply for permanent housing. Unfortunately, however, housing providers deny their applications because of their conviction records. Now they can, in theory, seek relief from the NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR/the Commission) or the courts under the FCHA.

Therefore, last year we were grateful when the City Council publicly called for an increase in funding for the Commission in the FY26 budget negotiations to strengthen its capacity to enforce our city's robust human rights laws, including FCHA.<sup>1</sup> To truly "budget for equity," we urge the Council to reaffirm its commitment to our laws by negotiating to ensure that CCHR finally has the robust budget necessary to prevent discrimination through public education and provide redress through timely enforcement. Unfortunately, the Mayor's FY27 preliminary budget proposal includes a \$1.178 million cut for the already-underfunded Commission, reducing it from \$15,436,142 in FY26 to \$14,257,917 in

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Council's Response to the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget and Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report. Retrieved from <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/04/Fiscal-2026-Preliminary-Budget-Response-4.pdf>.

FY27. Now, however, is not the time to reduce CCHR's budget but increase it. Reducing funding at this very moment risks transforming our robust human rights laws, including FCHA, into an unfunded mandate.

### **Urgent Need for Local Human Rights Education and Enforcement**

The need to strengthen local human rights laws has never been more important. Under the new administration, the federal government has dismantled several critical civil rights protections, particularly those related to fair housing and racial equity. It has de-funded agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).<sup>2</sup> This has left millions of New Yorkers vulnerable and defenseless to discriminatory practices. Furthermore, just last month, HUD proposed a new rule that would end its use of the well-established "disparate impact" standard in evaluating claims of racial discrimination in housing.<sup>3</sup> Thus, CCHR is one of the only lines of defense against housing discrimination. As federal protections recede, local enforcement becomes more, not less, essential.

The Commission's inability to fulfill its charter mandate with respect to the FCHA, alone, is illustrative of the need for more resources. When FCHA was before the City Council, the Finance Division estimated that CCHR needed \$1.4 million to "hir(e)...ten new staff" and for "related costs for a public education campaign."<sup>4</sup> That additional funding never materialized. Now, over one year after the FCHA went into effect, CCHR has still not conducted any public education campaigns about the law because they do not have the resources to do so. The FCHA Coalition has been attempting to fill that void by relying on private funding. In early 2025 we launched the New Rights, New Beginnings campaign across bus shelters, on buses, via Link NYC, and through distribution of printed materials. We also established and publicized a website so that organizations can request training. We have trained constituent services staff of City Council members and our state elected officials, along with staff from other city agencies, numerous non-profits, and even CCHR itself. Non-profit attorneys in our networks draft complaints for submission to CCHR so that cases can move more quickly. However, we do not

<sup>2</sup> Workforce Bulletin. DEI Dead at Revamped EEOC: EEOC Enforcement Priorities After Trump Administration Makeover (February 5, 2025) <https://www.workforcebulletin.com/dei-dead-at-the-eEOC-whats-next-for-eEOC-enforcement-priorities-after-trump-administration-actions>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HUD's Implementation of the Fair Housing Act's Disparate Impact Standard," Federal Register 91, no. 9 (January 14, 2026): 1475–1477. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/14/2026-00590/huds-implementation-of-the-fair-housing-acts-disparate-impact-standard>.

<sup>4</sup> New York City Council, Finance Division, Fiscal Impact Statement for the Fair Chance for Housing Act (Intro 632-A), December 19, 2023.

have the capacity to effectively reach a significant number of private housing providers about their responsibilities; far too many remain unaware of the law and the penalties they may face for violating it.

Non-profits cannot do it all, and we certainly cannot enforce the law. With increased funding, the Commission would finally be able to conduct public education campaigns and community outreach to ensure that housing providers understand their responsibilities and vulnerable people understand their rights. Expanding legal protections while shrinking the agency responsible for enforcing them risks turning rights into mere promises without concrete remedies.

### **Family Justice**

Housing discrimination against people with conviction records is also a family justice issue,<sup>5</sup> contributing to homelessness and instability that affect not only individuals but their children and loved ones.<sup>6</sup> Denying housing to a parent with a conviction record effectively denies housing to their entire family. At a time of rising homelessness and record numbers of unstably housed children in New York City, reducing CCHR's capacity to intervene in unlawful denials would directly undermine family stability; now is not the time to scale back enforcement that keeps families together and safely housed.

### **Racial Justice**

Because the criminal legal system disproportionately impacts Black and Brown New Yorkers, discrimination based on conviction history is inescapably a racial justice issue.<sup>7</sup> Weak enforcement of the FCHA would allow de facto racial discrimination in housing to persist, deepening existing inequities in communities of color. Cutting CCHR's budget at this moment would mean withdrawing one of the few tools we have to combat systemic housing discrimination; now is not the time to weaken that tool.

### **Public Health**

The need for increased CCHR funding for FCHA education and enforcement is also a public health issue in that housing is a critical public health necessity and a social determinant of health.

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<sup>5</sup> Fair Housing Justice Center, "Criminal Legal Records: An Impediment to Housing Choice," July 4, 2023, <https://fairhousingjustice.org/policy/criminal-legal-records-an-impediment-to-housing-choice/>

<sup>6</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Barriers to Housing for Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People," April 17, 2022, <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/policy-priorities/housing-and-criminal-justice>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of General Counsel. "Guidance on Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Use of Criminal Records by Providers of Housing and Real Estate-Related Transactions." April 4, 2016. <https://www.fairhousingnc.org/2016/hud-issues-guidance-on-criminal-history-and-fair-housing/>

Research shows that without secure housing, individuals experience higher rates of chronic illness,<sup>8</sup> mental health challenges,<sup>9</sup> and substance use disorders,<sup>10</sup> all of which place an undue burden on our healthcare<sup>11</sup> and social services systems.<sup>12</sup> Fully funding CCHR so it can educate and enforce against discriminatory denial functions as upstream prevention; cutting the Commission now would increase downstream public health burdens rather than reduce them. Therefore, ensuring that people with conviction records can access stable housing is a social determinant and public health issue. Civil rights enforcement functions as prevention by reducing homelessness and its associated health costs.

## Conclusion

Fortune urges the Council to negotiate a budget that will allow the Commission to meaningfully implement and enforce laws like the FCHA. We request that CCHR's overall budget increase from \$15 million to at least \$25 million for Fiscal Year 2027 and that CCHR be exempted from any future budget cuts or hiring freezes, including the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEGs). If CCHR is fully resourced, New Yorkers with conviction records, their families, and communities of color would actually be able to exercise the rights this Council has enacted instead of facing unlawful discrimination with no real remedies. In this moment of rising housing insecurity and retreating federal civil rights protections, investing in CCHR is not discretionary; it is essential infrastructure for a more equitable, safe, and just New York City

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.

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<sup>8</sup> "Housing Instability - Healthy People 2030 | Odphp.Health.Gov," n.d. <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/housing-instability>.

<sup>9</sup> "Housing Insecurity and Mental Health: The Effect of Housing Tenure and the Coexistence of Life Insecurities" March 18, 2022. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9033895/>.

<sup>10</sup> "In Flux: Associations of Substance Use with Instability in housing, employment, and income among young adults experiencing homelessness" May 13, 2024. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11090355/>.

<sup>11</sup> "Health Care Spending And Use Among People Experiencing Unstable In the Era Of Accountable Care Organization" November 3, 2017. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7384249/>.

<sup>12</sup> "New Yorkers in Need: The Housing Insecurity Crisis," January 7, 2024. <https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/new-yorkers-need-housing-insecurity-crisis>.

March 13, 2026

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## **The Legal Aid Society's Testimony Calling For Increased Funding for the New York City Commission on Human Rights**

**Submitted by Rebekah Cook-Mack**

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I am a Staff Attorney in the Employment Law Unit of The Legal Aid Society.

The Mayor's preliminary budget proposal compounds, rather than addresses, the chronic underfunding the New York City Commission on Human Rights (Commission) has been subjected to since the pandemic. Mayor Mamdani proposes cutting the Commission's budget by almost 10%. This would be the first budget decrease in five years for the Commission. Cutting the Commission's budget means that New Yorkers will wait longer for justice and our Human Rights Law will go under-enforced. **We call on the Mayor to reverse course and invest in the Commission so that it is funded at \$25 million in FY27. This is less than 0.02 percent of the City's \$127 billion FY 27 preliminary budget – it is a rounding error.** Funding the Commission at \$25 million and allowing it to hire and fill lines will allow Commissioner Christine Clarke to build a robust Civil Rights Enforcement Agency for New Yorkers at a time when the Federal Government has become hostile to these rights. If funded, a robust Commission could serve as a lasting legacy for the Mamdani administration – but building that legacy cannot wait. Commissioner Clarke takes the reins at a time when the Commission is more important than ever. She cannot succeed if the City does not give her the resources necessary to do the job.

### **I. The Legal Aid Society**

**The Legal Aid Society** is built on one simple but powerful belief: that no New Yorker should be denied the right to equal justice. We want to remain a beacon of hope for New Yorkers who feel neglected, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or how they identify. From our start 150 years ago, our growth has mirrored that of the city we serve. Today, we are proud to be one of the largest and most influential social justice law firms in New York City and nationwide. Our staff deliver justice in every borough, working tirelessly to defend our clients and dismantle the hidden, systemic barriers that can prevent them from thriving. As passionate advocates for individuals and families, LAS is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of our city.

Last year, LAS provided direct holistic legal services to 475,000 individuals and their families through our Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights Practices. Over 2 million New York City residents benefited from our direct representation, affirmative litigation, legislative and policy advocacy. Our work across these Practices provides us with unique insights into the challenges facing marginalized communities in NYC and an unparalleled ability to effect change on a greater scale. Our Civil Practice works with low-income New Yorkers experiencing a broad range of civil legal issues that, without assistance, can escalate into situations with cascading effects that threaten their stability and keep families locked in cycles of poverty. Our specialized units cover the full spectrum of civil legal needs, including housing and homelessness; homeowner stabilization, family law and domestic violence; immigration; special education; health; community development; consumer issues; employment; government benefits and disability; taxes; and holistic services for vulnerable populations including the elderly, adults and children with disabilities, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Employment Law Unit represents low-wage workers in employment-related matters such as claims for violations of leave laws, unpaid wages, discrimination, trafficking, and unemployment insurance. Our clients are overwhelmingly people of color living paycheck to paycheck. The Unit conducts litigation, outreach, and advocacy designed to assist the most vulnerable workers in New York City, among them, low-wage workers who are sexually harassed; discriminated against based on race, national origin, immigration status, pregnancy, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, age, domestic violence, or criminal background; or denied reasonable accommodations needed due to pregnancy or disabilities.

The LGBTQ+ Unit of the Legal Aid Society seeks to address systemic issues impacting Legal Aid's LGBTQ+ clients through public education, advocacy, legislation, and impact litigation. It also provides trainings to LAS staff on the New York State and New York City Human Rights Law's protections for LGBTQ+ people.

LAS provides legal and related services to low-income individuals and families experiencing housing discrimination based on their source of income. This work entails advocacy and negotiation with brokers, owners, and landlords on behalf of clients and litigation of selected cases to end systemic practices that exclude voucher holders where landlords continue to discriminate after being informed of their legal obligations to accept housing vouchers. Through this litigation, LAS seeks comprehensive remedies, including injunctive relief requiring landlords to accept housing vouchers; policy changes to eliminate discriminatory screening and advertising practices; mandating fair housing trainings for ownership, management, and leasing staff; monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure ongoing compliance; compensatory damages for affected persons; and, where appropriate, civil penalties and attorneys' fees. By pursuing strategic enforcement actions, LAS aims to deter future discrimination, expand access to neighborhoods of opportunity for voucher holders, and reinforce the enforceability of source of income protections. CCHR should be a critical partner in this work, helping to identify patterns of noncompliance, conduct testing and investigations, support outreach and education to voucher holders and housing providers, and coordinate advocacy to strengthen programmatic enforcement efforts.

## **II. The Mayor Has Inherited A Commission In Disarray That Does Not Serve New Yorkers In Crisis**

In FY2019 – pre-COVID - the Commission fielded 9,804 inquiries from the public. In 2025 that number grew by 58% to 15,532: today more New Yorkers seek help from the Commission than they did before the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Yet today far fewer people – in actual numbers and percentages - actually get help at the Commission. This is the moment to

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<sup>1</sup> References to FY2019 data from:

[https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2019/2019\\_mmr.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2019/2019_mmr.pdf)

References to FY2025 data from:

[https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/2025\\_mmr.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2025/2025_mmr.pdf)

change the narrative so that the New Yorkers who call the Commission for help actually receive assistance.

**Today just 3% of the 15,500 New Yorkers who called the Commission for help had complaints filed to be investigated by the Commission.** More people called, fewer people got help. In 2019, 2,319 matters were initiated by the Commission to assist New Yorkers facing discrimination – that dropped by almost half to just under 1200 in 2025. Complaints filed by the Commission declined as well. And even for the lucky 3% of callers who get a complaint opened by the Commission – waiting periods for investigation and resolution have grown. Today the average age of a complaint with Commission is 614 days... over a year and a half. **The Commission helps too few people too slowly.** Commissioner Clarke has inherited a Commission that is not serving New Yorkers at a time when New Yorkers have nowhere else to turn. The time to reinvest is here, and we ask Council to join us in pressing the Mayor to make sure he gives Commissioner Clarke the tools necessary to do the work she was hired for.

### **III. A Small Investment Can Spur Transformation and Return Meaningful Benefits For All New Yorkers By Ensuring Our Anti-Discrimination Laws Are Vigorously Enforced**

In his inaugural address, the Mayor acknowledged the transformative moment we are in and promised to govern expansively and audaciously. We stand now — as we did on inauguration day — to ask Council to stand with us to demand the Mayor realign his budget to reflect our shared principles. Economic justice will not be achieved without funding – yet the Mayor has cut funding to the portfolio that falls under the purview of the newly established Deputy Mayor for Economic Justice, by over \$250 million, the amount he proposes increasing the NYPD budget by. This is not audacious governance.

With a budget of \$25 million in FY27, the Commission will be able to rebuild and improve its service to New Yorkers by increasing staff so that it can:

- 1. Resolve eligible cases through early intervention within two weeks.** Early intervention can be the difference between having or losing a job or a place to live. With a permanent staff of at least 20 well-compensated and experienced advocates, the Commission would be able to help secure apartments, keep

people in their jobs by requiring reasonable accommodations, and end harassment and retaliation for people complaining about discriminatory treatment.

2. **Appoint a Deputy Commissioner of Adjudications with appropriate staff in the Office of the Chair and ensure prompt follow up on OATH decisions.**

Following a trial at the Office of Trials and Administrative Hearings (OATH) and the ALJ's resulting report and recommendation, this person would be responsible for promptly issuing the Commission's decision. No monetary or injunctive relief can issue without this step, and cases have languished for far too long in recent years.

3. **Establish an Affirmative Litigation Team.** Ensure patterns identified by early intervention efforts, public reporting, and case investigations are pursued by the Commission.

4. **Ensure Office of Policy Counsel is adequately staffed:** OPC must be fully staffed with subject matter experts so that it can pursuing strategic initiatives and issue rules, legal guidance, and public education materials. In the past, such guidance has provided a great resource for advocates, but CCHR is now too under resourced to continue to produce these materials. Ensure CCHR's resources and toolkits help city residents and agencies understand how the CHRL can aid in identifying and combatting discrimination and that such materials are timely: for example, currently there is no fact sheet addressing antisemitism.

Increasing the funding to the Commission is a necessary element to ensuring that New York City can hold the line and protect the rights of its most vulnerable residents – largely Black and Brown low-income New Yorkers. By protecting these New Yorkers in this moment, the Commission will act as a bulwark for all of us. Cutting the budget, as the mayor proposes, is a mistake.

The New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL), administered by the Commission, prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. It protects against discriminatory lending practices, retaliation, discriminatory harassment, and bias-based profiling by law enforcement. It is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the country and applies to a long list of protected

classes beyond those recognized by the federal and New York State governments.<sup>2</sup> We commend City Council for its expansive view of civil and human rights, amending the NYCHRL over 40 times since 2013 to add additional protections for New Yorkers.<sup>3</sup> However, we must express our alarm at the chronic underfunding of the Commission, which prevents New Yorkers from receiving justice when faced with discrimination and is reflected in the Mayor's preliminary FY27 budget.

#### **IV. Importance of the Commission Expands as Federal Partners Retreat**

The Commission should be a key partner in protecting the people of New York City and bringing bad actors to justice. Unfortunately, today, the Commission is in crisis. It no longer meets the needs of New Yorkers. **We write to alert you to this crisis and to implore you to take immediate action to increase its funding and staffing.** Without adequate funding and staffing, thousands of New Yorkers – disproportionately low-income people of color – who have been discriminated against will go without justice. Unfortunately, the Mayor's preliminary budget catastrophically reduces the Commission's funding by almost 10% at a time when more is needed following years of disinvestment. In the absence of federal partners to protect the rights of the most vulnerable, the Commission stands between undocumented workers and bad actors empowered by a federal government that is hostile to protecting their rights.

The Commission is an indispensable partner for New York's most vulnerable residents seeking to enforce their rights. For low-income New Yorkers, the Commission is likely the only way to protect their rights. Accessing the courts, without the assistance of counsel, is not viable for many New Yorkers. This is because court procedures are complex; litigation can be expensive and involve multiple appearances requiring low-income New Yorkers to miss work they cannot afford to forego; and language access can be a barrier. Often private attorneys will not take the cases of low-income New Yorkers who cannot afford to pay an hourly rate or retainer. Non-profits, like The Legal Aid Society, used to file regularly in the Commission because it allowed us to help more people. Today, we rarely do. We are hesitant to refer pro se individuals there because the waits are too long and the outcomes are poor. This leaves New York's most

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/the-law.page>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/amendments.page#:~:text=A%20Local%20Law%20to%20amend,%2C%20housing%2C%20and%20public%20accommodations>

vulnerable residents without an avenue to protect their rights, which disproportionately impacts people of color.

Historically, employees facing discrimination could turn to the EEOC for help. Today, the federal workforce is experiencing an unprecedented retrenchment and filing with a federal agency now involves risks for the undocumented. For TGNCNBI people, the EEOC is no longer a viable partner; the DOJ has withdrawn from cases involving TGNCNBI individuals in its effort to comply with Executive Order 14168 which, among other things, withdraws federal recognition of transgender people. If the City of New York wants its civil rights laws to be enforced, it must fund the Commission charged with doing so. It can no longer rely on federal counterparts.

Ensuring that our civil rights laws are enforced is important for all workers. By demanding that employers comply with our laws, we ensure that workplaces are free of discrimination and harassment. This benefits all workers. To meet this moment and ensure New York City's laws are enforced, the City must invest in the Commission.

#### **V. New York City Human Rights Law, the Strongest in the Nation, Continues to Expand**

The Commission is a unique body in the City, entrusted with the authority and charged with the duty to “thoroughly” investigate allegations of discrimination and, to the best of its ability, “eliminate and prevent” discrimination in New York. The Commission's budget has plummeted while its responsibilities have grown. In nearly every year in the past decade, the City Council has added to the protections of our Civil Rights Law in some way. Since 2013, the City Council has passed more than 40 amendments to these laws.<sup>4</sup> Most recently CCHR took responsibility for enforcing the Fair Chance for Housing Law. This law expands the City's commitment to ensuring that people with prior involvement in the criminal legal system are not unfairly denied housing opportunities. The Fiscal Impact Statement estimated the fiscal impact of this law at \$1 million for education and enforcement. Ensuring that the Commission has the resources

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<sup>4</sup> See *Amendments to NYC Human Rights Law*

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/amendments.page#:~:text=A%20Local%20Law%20to%20amend,%2C%20housing%2C%20and%20public%20accommodations.>

to implement and enforce this new law is essential to realizing its promise and preventing discrimination against New Yorkers with arrest or conviction histories.

Many of the more recent additions to the law have no equivalent protections at the state or federal level. Some of these expanded rights prohibit discrimination in housing that is rampant in the City, significantly increasing the Commission’s workload.<sup>5</sup>

Laws CCHR Enforces	CCHR	State	Federal
<b>Fair Chance For Housing Law:</b> Makes it illegal for most private NYC housing providers, in rentals and sales, to consider most older convictions and requires them to conduct an individualized assessment process for any applicants with convictions that may lawfully be considered.			
<b>Fair Chance For Employment Law:</b> Makes it illegal for most employers in New York City to ask about the criminal record of job applicants in ads, on applications, or in interviews—before making an offer.			
<b>Law prohibiting Source of Income Discrimination:</b> Prohibits discrimination based on the type of lawful income you receive. Applies to nearly all types of housing throughout New York.			
<b>Disability Rights Laws:</b> Requires landlords to pay for modifications for disabled tenants both inside units and in common areas			

The failure to fund the Commission means our Human Rights Laws are under enforced and New Yorkers seeking justice endure long waits.

## VI. Staffing Crisis at the Commission

The Commission is more important now than ever and it is in crisis. In 2018, the Law Enforcement Bureau (LEB) had 47 staff attorneys. In the summer of 2023, that fell to only 9 staff attorneys, today it has just 15 to serve the entire City. Support and managerial staff suffered similar reductions in personnel. Because limited staff means

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<sup>5</sup> See Ishan Thakore, *Plagued by staff shortage, NYC agency fails to make determinations in most discrimination cases*, Gothamist (July 6, 2023) (noting that source of income discrimination is the most common form of housing discrimination), <https://gothamist.com/news/plagued-by-staff-shortage-nyc-agency-fails-to-make-determinations-in-most-discrimination-cases>.

limited intake appointments, the number of complaints filed at the Commission dropped substantially over this same period. The Commission administratively closes many of its cases rather than working with the parties to resolve them through mediation or completing investigations and making findings. Organizations like LAS no longer file with the Commission because its outcomes are so poor.

Without increased funding and the ability to hire without impediment, the Commission will continue to fail our city's residents. We call on our city to reinvest in the Commission so that it can occupy the field ceded by its federal counterparts. It is not yet too late for New York City to take decisive steps to protect vulnerable populations that have already been targeted by the federal administration. For Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, Nonbinary, and Intersex (TGNCNBI) and undocumented New Yorkers, federal partners are no longer viable avenues for protecting their rights. For these New Yorkers, the City Commission, which enforces a broad array of laws – more protective than state or federal counterparts – has become an indispensable partner. **The City should fund the Commission at a level commensurate with its heightened import.**

**This is a moment of urgency.** Without intervention, the situation will further deteriorate. Today's underfunded and understaffed Commission is not positioned to meet the needs of New Yorkers as federal partners retreat. It is not positioned to meet the needs of the undocumented or TGNCNBI New Yorkers who may reasonably fear the repercussions of filing complaints with a federal agency or in court. The Commission is failing New Yorkers and must be rescued.

We thank the Council for its consideration of this testimony. For more information or to address concerns, please feel free to contact me at [rcook-mack@legal-aid.org](mailto:rcook-mack@legal-aid.org) or (212) 298-5311.

Good day, City Council members, and thank you for your time. I come before you today to testify on the council's efforts to support the critical work of the NYC Commission on Human Rights to combat unlawful discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. My name is Aaron Horth, I am a Staff Attorney in the Brooklyn's Comprehensive Rights Unit at Legal Services NYC ("LSNYC", [www.legalservicesnyc.org](http://www.legalservicesnyc.org)), the nation's largest civil legal services provider with offices in all five boroughs. LSNYC's mission is to fight poverty and seek racial social and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers. Through litigation, advocacy, education, and outreach, LSNYC has advanced the interests of our clients and created systemic changes that strengthen and protect low-income communities. We work to protect the rights of people with disabilities, veterans, immigrants, and the LGBTQIA+ community, and other vulnerable constituents. We are deeply appreciative to the city council for its many years of support for legal services and for its championship of our mission and our work.

The New York City Commission on Human rights plays a vital role in the lives of vulnerable New Yorkers as the agency charged with enforcement of the New York City Human Rights Law. The City's Human Rights Law provides the most robust protections of any human rights law in the country, and exceeds in many ways the scope of anti-discrimination protections in the state and federal law.

When the Commission is working well, it provides critical assistance to our clients, and the Commission's investigatory power allows us as a legal services provider to represent more individuals than we can in court, where we bear the burden of investigation ourselves. We prefer to litigate discrimination cases before the Commission rather than in court as the Commission has what we lack- investigatory powers and authority as a law enforcement agency. Further, with the Commission effectively and efficiently investigating cases, we are then able to use our resources to represent more individuals before the Commission. The Commission also provides a critical forum for unrepresented complainants, for whom the court system is much less accessible than the Commission's complainant friendly process.

The Commission is a vital resource for our clients, like Mx. C, a non-binary, transgender teacher whom we represented at the Commission in a discrimination complaint filed in early 2022. Mx. C taught high school History and Film at a girls' charter school in Brooklyn from 2019 until their termination in May 2021. During their employment, Mx. C was harassed, retaliated against, and ultimately terminated in their efforts to advocate for proper pronoun usage, not for themselves but for non-binary transgender students at the school. When Mx. C requested permission to make an announcement regarding one student's pronouns at a staff meeting, the Head of School rejected this proposal, and instead forced the student to attend counseling and then to make a presentation to the entire school about gender. In a further effort to support the student, Mx. C designed a curriculum for the class on gender identity, transphobia, and allyship, wherein the students discussed the ways in which the school perpetuated transphobia. Mx. C then shared the work with the school's leadership. Thereafter, Mx. C was accused of indoctrinating students to believe the school was transphobic, disciplined in retaliation, threatened, denied paid leave for gender-affirming surgery, and ultimately terminated from employment at the end of the 2021 school year.

We filed Mx. C's case at the Commission in early 2022 and went to mediation in November 2023, where the parties reached a settlement agreement in principle. Thanks in large part to the work of the Commission's mediator, Mx. C's case was ultimately settled in early 2024, with Mx. C receiving a fair monetary settlement.

While this is a good result for Mx. C, we rarely see cases at the Commission resolve this quickly. In FY24, the Commission closed 477 cases, which on average were pending a final resolution for 911 days. Further, with only one mediator on staff, the Commission is simply not able to bring many cases to mediation. Indeed, in Fiscal Year 2024, the Commission only successfully mediated 31 complaints, or less than 1% of the 447 complaints closed. Mediation is an effective and efficient way to resolve complaints. Moreover, mediation allows our clients to tell their stories, have a meaningful dialogue, and avoid a public trial. Increased mediation resources for the Commission would greatly benefit our clients.

In this moment, with much of the federal administration in tatters, the New York City Commission on Human Rights is now more critical than ever in ensuring New Yorkers retain their protections from harassment and discrimination and can seek redress when their rights are violated.

This is especially true for New York's immigrant and transgender communities who are not able to seek redress from the federal government.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, charged with enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination, has publicly abandoned several pre-existing cases alleging anti-trans and gender non-conforming discrimination, and has signaled it will not pursue any further complaints on this basis. Similarly, the EEOC has announced plans to target employers who it believes are "part of the pipeline contributing to our immigration crisis" or are engaging in "abuse of legal immigration programs," implicitly reflecting that it will not be investigating claims of national origin discrimination for immigrant employees.

When it comes to Housing, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity ("FHEO"), the federal agency charged with investigating housing discrimination and enforcing and administering fair housing laws lost more than 50 percent of its staff last year, eliminating resources of another forum where New Yorkers could previously pursue complaints of housing discrimination. This will likely result in more housing discrimination complaints filed at the Commission by complainants without other recourse, and we fear will cause more instances of housing discrimination by housing providers who feel emboldened by the reduction of the regulatory state.

With the EEOC and FHEO both signaling publicly their intention to abandon discrimination protections for transgender, gender non-conforming, and immigrant New Yorkers, these individuals will have only the Commission and the state Division of Human Rights available to redress discrimination. If the Commission's funding remains at its current levels, the backlog of cases only stands to increase and the delay for our clients is likely to get worse.

Finally, while we laud the Fair Chance Act's prohibition on employers and landlords inquiring into applicants' criminal histories, the addition of this category to the Commission's jurisdiction without corresponding funding to address enforcement means our clients wait for their complaints to be adjudicated will only increase as the provision goes into effect.

The Commission is the most accessible forum for our clients to report discrimination and discriminatory harassment, and with bad actors feeling emboldened by the national political climate, we fear increased harassment and discrimination especially against immigrant communities, transgender, and gender non-conforming people.

A stronger Commission on Human Rights will be a Commission on Human Rights that is better able to serve our clients, who represent the vulnerable New Yorkers it was created to protect.

Thank you for your time.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katherine Carroll

Address: 22 Beale St

I represent: NYC Commission on Human Rights

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Clark

Address: 22 Beale St

I represent: NYC Commission on Human Rights

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mariela Salazar

Address: 22 Beale Street

I represent: NYC Commission on Human Rights

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Funmi Akinnawoye

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Address: 40 Broad Street, New York, NY 10004

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Appearance Card

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jonathan Eber

Address: 1 Whitehall Street, NY, 10001

I represent: Enterprise community partners

Address: 1 Whitehall Street, NY, NY, 10001

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Robin Recant

Address: [Redacted] N.Y., N.Y. 10029

I represent: Myself

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michelle Lyons

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Community

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aaron Horth

Address: 105 Court Street 4th Floor Brooklyn 11205

I represent: Brooklyn Legal Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

BUDGET  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS Date: 3/13/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole Saek CCHR

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: LEGAL SERVICES NYC

Address: 105 COURT STREET, BROOKLYN

11201

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nathifa Forde, Deputy Commissioner

Address: MOERTJ

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alva Atta-Mensah, Commissioner

Address: MOERTJ

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Delilah Tyson, Deputy Commissioner

Address: MOERTJ

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Dabash Negash, Deputy Commissioner

Address: MOERS

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Reggie Chatman

Address: [REDACTED] Amsterdam Avenue, NY, NY 10032

I represent: The Fortune Society

Address: 29-76 Northern Blvd, LIC, NY 11101

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nguzi Okaro

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Equal Employment Pract. Com

Address: 253 Broadway

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Menelik Allsop

Address: 253 Broadway Suite 602

I represent: EEPC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3/13/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jimmy Pan

Address: 27a W 113<sup>rd</sup> St Apt 50

I represent: EEPC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RUSSELL FERRI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: EEPC

Address: 253 BWAY, 602

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole Salk

Address: Brooklyn

I represent: Legal Services

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rebekah Cook-Mack

Address: 49 Thomas St

I represent: Legal Aid Society

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yvette Chen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Fair Housing Justice Center

Address: 30-30 Northern Blvd. Suite 302  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms