

Biography of Margarita López

Margarita López was appointed Member of the Board of the New York City Housing Authority by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg on April 28, 2006. Her term expires in 2011. From 1998-2005, Ms. Lopez was a member of the New York City Council representing the 2nd Councilmanic District on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. As a council member, Ms. López served as the first Chair of the newly expanded Council's Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disabilities ("Mental Health Committee"). She also served as a member of the Council's Finance, Contracts, Environmental and Higher Education Committees.

Ms. López' service on the Mental Health Committee was the next and logical step to a career dedicated to work with the homeless and mentally ill population of New York City. For the twelve years preceding her election to the City Council, Ms. López worked as a Senior Team Leader, securing homes and services for individuals diagnosed with mental illness, some of whom also suffered from drug and alcohol addictions. She served on the MacArthur Foundation's Advisory Committee on Mental Illness and the Law, participated at the Meeting on State Mental Health Authority Housing Issues organized by the Federal Task Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness, and lectured and trained outreach workers in such cities as Los Angeles, CA, Seattle, WA, Philadelphia, PA, Washington, D.C., Providence, RI, and San Juan, PR on issues pertaining to multiculturalism and team building, under the auspices of the National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness.

Ms. López relocated to Manhattan's Lower East Side from her native Puerto Rico in 1978, where she became a community activist dedicated to the preservation and creation of affordable housing. Her efforts resulted in the construction and restoration of hundreds of units of affordable housing and the provision of a wide range of support services for area residents. She also served as a member of Community Board 3 for several years.

As a council member, Ms. López worked closely with the New York City Housing Authority on several initiatives at developments on the Lower East Side, such as urging residents to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit, with the help of the Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union, an organization she co-founded.

August 13, 2007