

Testimony from NYCHA's Chief Operating Officer Eva Trimble
NYCHA Vacancies and Transfers
Committee on Public Housing
Monday, June 16, 2025 – 10 a.m.
New York City Hall Council Chambers

Chair Chris Banks, members of the Committee on Public Housing, other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of the public: good morning. I am Eva Trimble, NYCHA's Chief Operating Officer. I am pleased to be joined by Sylvia Aude, Senior Vice President of Public Housing Tenancy Administration, and other members of NYCHA's team. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss vacancies and transfers at the Authority. NYCHA is a vital resource of affordable housing, and we strive to ensure that as many New Yorkers as possible can benefit from safe and decent public housing.

Ensuring Safe, Quality Housing

As part of our efforts to improve residents' quality of life, and in compliance with the HUD agreement, we have been performing extensive – and required – environmental work in every apartment that becomes unoccupied. Considering the massive repair needs across the Authority (nearly \$80 billion) and the average tenure in a NYCHA apartment (25 years), this is a vital opportunity to carry out critical health and safety work.

Lead-based paint testing and abatement is a major element of the work we're doing in vacant apartments. NYCHA's policy is that when an apartment becomes vacant, our Healthy Homes team conducts a lead-based paint inspection if the apartment hasn't already been inspected prior to becoming vacant. If lead-based paint is identified, the apartment is scheduled for abatement. An asbestos investigation is performed at apartments with damaged tiles or textured ceilings.

Since the City instituted a more stringent lead paint standard in December 2021, Healthy Homes has cleared lead-based paint in more than 16,000 apartments at turnover; we are currently clearing vacant apartments for lead-based paint at a rate of 325 apartments per month. For vinyl asbestos floor tiles, we abate around 160 to 200 vacant apartments each month; since December 2021, we have abated asbestos floor tiles in more than 7,500 vacant apartments. On average, it takes four to six months to complete the lead and asbestos testing process, and abatement if necessary, during turnover. It costs approximately \$17,000 to

complete lead testing, abatement, and clearance in each apartment and approximately \$25,000 to complete asbestos testing, abatement, and clearance in each apartment.

While the practice of eliminating lead-based paint adds time to the apartment turnover process, it also means that every resident will move into a new apartment that is free of this environmental hazard. Our work in this area is a transformative accomplishment that addresses a long-entrenched issue and dramatically benefits residents.

Since last June, NYCHA has been turning over approximately 535 apartments per month. Every development is expected to complete a minimum of five moveouts per month. While we are always working to turn over apartments as quickly as possible and to speed up our timelines, we take pride in the significantly increased turnover activity and the fact that residents are moving into safe and rehabilitated homes. We also understand that it's frustrating to wait for a new apartment; to reduce the wait time for families, we now match prospective tenants with apartments when the homes are turnkey ready (rather than once the apartment is vacated, per the previous policy).

Vacancies at NYCHA

NYCHA's vacancy rate is currently 4.46 percent, which is lower than the national public housing vacancy rate of 5.27 percent. Additionally, the total number of move-ins in 2024 (4,052) was 52 percent higher than in 2023 (2,674 move-ins).

NYCHA works with partners at all levels of government to use every available resource to get New Yorkers into our deeply affordable apartments. We are grateful for the City's ongoing support, including via funding for the Vacant Unit Readiness program. In the current fiscal year, the City has made approximately \$76 million available to NYCHA for this program, for rehabilitation work associated with expediting apartment turnover. Additional funding is also available for the following fiscal years.

Improving Our Transfer Policies

I'd like to take a moment to share some exciting updates about our Tenant Selection and Assignment Plan (TSAP). For nearly 30 years, TSAP has guided a fair and neutral process for

filling vacancies with applicants and tenant transfers. We evaluate our transfer policies periodically to ensure we are serving residents and applicants as efficiently and effectively as possible, while adhering to applicable laws, regulations, and requirements.

In line with our vision for transformation, we are considering changing the current TSAP from a four-tier to a three-tier system. Tiers 1 and 2 are allocated to tenant relocations. The third tier encompasses all remaining transfer and applicant selections, which would be divided into seven rotating groups, with certain categories allocated a higher proportion of selections to reflect their priority. The revised rotation model will ensure a more balanced and efficient selection process while addressing the needs of multiple housing priorities, including health and safety matters, domestic violence, reasonable accommodations, and homelessness.

We are currently seeking feedback from stakeholders, including resident leadership and elected officials, on these proposed transfer policy changes, and we have already briefed Chair Banks and Assemblymember Rosenthal, as well as other partners and housing advocates, as part of a robust outreach campaign. The changes are also described in the Draft Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Plan that was released for public review on June 13. Residents and any member of the public can comment on the plan, including the proposed TSAP changes, in person or virtually at a July 30 public hearing; comments can also be submitted via email. The annual plan, as well as details about the public hearing and commenting process, are available on NYCHA's website.

Serving New Yorkers

We aim to provide housing to New Yorkers as quickly as possible, while ensuring that they are moving into safe, decent homes which have been remediated of hazards like lead and asbestos – the strides we are making in carrying out critical work like lead abatement are benefiting residents today as well as the generations to come.

We acknowledge that there is more work to be done, and we are always grateful to collaborate with the Council and other partners on ways we can improve our service to residents and continue making progress as an organization.

Thank you. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.