

Testimony from Lauren Gray, NYCHA's Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance, Safety, and Technical Programs
Security Guards, Fire Guards, and NYCHA's Oversight of Contractors
Committee on Public Housing
Tuesday, April 15, 2025 – 10 a.m.
250 Broadway, 16th Fl. Committee Room

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 Lauren Gray, NYCHA's Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance, Safety, and Technical Programs. I am pleased to be joined by Shin Kim, Senior Vice President of Supply Management and Procurement; and Joseph Terranova, Senior Director for the Office of Fire Safety. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Authority's security guard and fire guard programs, and how we are partnering with the NYC Department of Investigation to foster safer and more secure NYCHA communities.

Security Guards and Fire Guards at NYCHA

The safety and security of NYCHA families is a priority for us. To that end, NYCHA, in partnership with tenant association presidents, has proactively implemented a security guard program at our 52 buildings dedicated for seniors, even though security guard services are not required at any NYCHA developments. NYCHA is working with the City on another capital swap which will fully fund the program in City Fiscal Year 2026.

Fire guard services are required at buildings where an installed fire protection system is out of service for repairs. In accordance with the NYC Fire Code, one fire guard is assigned to patrol up to 50,000 square feet of space to watch for fires and alert emergency services and the Fire Department of New York, if necessary. NYCHA has focused our efforts and financed an aggressive repair program that has significantly reduced the reliance on fire guards in buildings – from over 150 locations in 2023 to just over 30 in 2025.

Partnering with DOI

We value our partnership with the NYC Department of Investigation (DOI) and appreciate their efforts to bring to our attention areas at the Authority that need improvement. NYCHA has already made significant progress with implementing several of DOI's recommendations and is

accepting substantially all of the 12 recommendations, as part of our shared goal to ensure safe and secure communities for NYCHA residents. For instance, NYCHA is:

- amending its contracts and invoicing processes for security and fire guard services to enhance oversight;
- providing dedicated security desks or podiums for security guards in a central location at each building;
- posting signage with information for residents to report emergencies or make security-related inquiries or complaints;
- performing unannounced inspections, as well as spot checks of cameras, to ensure guards are present; and
- revising procedures related to the reporting of security infrastructure issues.

Safety and Security Is Fundamental

While we acknowledge that there is always more work to be done, we are grateful for the support of our partners, including DOI and the City Council, as we strive to ensure safe and secure communities at NYCHA and continue to improve residents' quality of life.

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