



# Important Message from NYCHA Leadership

To the NYCHA Community:

Now more than ever, it is imperative that all of us who live and work at NYCHA stand together and support each other during this unprecedented time in our nation's history. The COVID-19 crisis, the brutal actions that led to the killing of George Floyd by a law enforcement officer in Minneapolis, and the civil rights protests now taking place in New York City and throughout the United States have cast a blinding light, yet again, on the insidious, longstanding racism and inequities experienced by Black communities and other communities of color.

People of all races and backgrounds are expressing their sadness, anger, and deep frustration and are rightfully demanding long overdue justice, not just for George Floyd and others who have been targeted, attacked, and killed, but also for the millions of people who call America their home yet continue to live in fear, experience the repeated violation of their rights, and suffer disadvantages that many pretend do not exist. We know that solidarity, while important and appreciated, means nothing without fundamental change.

NYCHA denounces racism; we believe in the right to protest and we support the fight for equality and justice.

NYCHA is a community, and as a community it is our responsibility to listen to our residents and employees, as well as openly and fearlessly discuss what we are all experiencing, seeing, and learning during this painful time.

Both nationwide and throughout New York City, communities of color are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. While at this point DOHMH data indicates that NYCHA residents are impacted on par with all New Yorkers, this may change as more residents are tested and as we gain more information. Nevertheless, it is a fact that NYCHA residents have underlying health conditions, experience social disparities, and suffer economic hardship at higher rates, and are therefore more vulnerable to this virus and other health, social, and economic crises that may come now and in the future.

Without question, quality, stable housing is crucial to residents' health outcomes and overall equality and success. For NYCHA, this means putting resources on the ground to improve essential and quality of life services at developments for our families, reinvesting in our buildings, and improving residents' access to health and social support services and educational and economic opportunities. This will strengthen our developments, where 90 percent of residents are Black and/or Latinx and many have served as essential workers during the pandemic, and it will require a commitment from all Americans to put some of the great wealth of this country into public housing.

Well before the COVID-19 crisis, NYCHA had been working to transform the Authority and preserve its buildings by implementing compliance and environmental health and safety standards and addressing critical issues identified in its January 2019 federal agreement such as lead, mold, pests, heat, and elevators. This work has continued where possible throughout the crisis, but there is still much more work to be done.

Significantly, decades of financial disinvestment, from all levels of government, in NYCHA and public housing authorities throughout the nation is a glaring example of how America has devalued the health, safety, stability, equality, and success of communities of color.

Today, with renewed urgency, NYCHA remains steadfast in its commitment to working with residents and all partners toward developing long-term solutions and, most importantly, fighting for the long overdue equitable funding that residents of public housing need and deserve.

Although these are difficult and challenging times, we believe in the fortitude of NYCHA residents and employees, and we have never been prouder to serve this community.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Gregory Russ, Chair and Chief Executive Officer  
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