



UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PROGRAM

CREATE | PRESERVE | IMPROVE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

RESEARCH | RESOURCES | ACTION

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Testimony of University Neighborhood Housing Program for The NYC Council Budget Hearing

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University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) is an Affordable Housing Developer, Direct Services Provider and Housing Research organization which has been working to address housing and financial instability in the Bronx for over 40 years. Through our experience operating our own 1,216 Unit Portfolio, our work with a number of both for-profit and non-profit housing operators representing over 20,000 Units of housing and the New York Housing Conference which represents an even larger coalition of Housing operators we have identified both major issues threatening NYC's most valuable and at-risk housing stock as well as corresponding solutions to address them. We have outlined these issues and proposed solutions in *our Every Nickel Counts* Campaign and the New York Housing Conference *C.R.I.S.I.S* Agenda, both of which are outlined below.

The *Every Nickel Counts Campaign* calls for:

- An increase in funding for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Multi-family Water Assistance Program to \$100 million from \$16.25 million, and doubling the amount per unit to \$500. It also reduces the remaining regulatory requirement to 3 years.
- Making the one-year HPD waiver on re-rentals permanent based on the successful marketing of vacant apartments under the waiver to interested income-qualifying households in a compliant and timely manner.
- The revision of NYC's Local Law 11 requirements to preserve the safety of buildings without putting the buildings in financial peril, including adjusting the reinspection schedule for compliant multifamily buildings from every 5 to every 8 years.
- The implementation of a comprehensive strategy to bring insurance costs in affordable housing under control that includes changes in lending, legislative, and judicial processes, coordination efforts by housing agencies to simplify insurance

requirements, and provides immediate relief for affordable housing through an insurance subsidy.

- Changes in punitive Con Ed practices around billing and "security deposits" in affordable housing by extending turnaround on payments to a minimum of net 30 days and eliminating shut-off notices for deposit demands and late payments less than 60 days.
- Reform NYC real estate tax policies to incentivize high-density affordable housing and prioritize distressed affordable multifamily buildings in the use of J-51 and Article XI, 420-c programs.
- Create an Affordable Housing Stability Court as proposed by the New York Housing Conference to connect tenants in need with financial assistance and process cases more quickly.

C.R.I.S.I.S. Agenda

Affordable Housing Preservation Coalition priorities for NYC Mayor Mamdani Administration to address operating deficits in affordable housing.

1. **Create \$1b loan workout & reserve replenishment fund** for affordable housing buildings under regulatory agreement with NYC HPD at risk of default.
2. **Raise revenue by allowing vacancies to comply with current AMI rent limits** in 100% income-restricted affordable housing buildings under regulatory agreement with NYC HPD or NYS HCR.
3. **Increase capacity for loan restructuring on a portfolio basis** for preservation finance and asset management at NYC HPD to meet growing preservation needs.
4. **Staff NYC DSS adequately to ensure New Yorkers access and retain affordable housing** by proactively preventing nonpayment evictions; supporting timely homeless set-aside referrals; and efficiently processing of CityFHEPs.
5. **Invest in a municipally-backed affordable housing insurance program** to lower premiums for HPD-financed buildings.
6. **Save money on water bills in affordable housing** by expanding the Multi-family Water Assistance Program to cover all affordable housing by budgeting \$100 million and increasing the per unit discount to \$500 per unit.