

# **SAFE AT HOME?**

**A BRONX NEW YORK CITY HOUSING  
AUTHORITY TASK FORCE  
PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT**

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### **I. Executive Summary**

The Bronx Public Housing Authority Task Force makes the following recommendations pertaining to public safety in the New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”), for immediate implementation:

#### **Recommendation #1:**

NYCHA must better address repairs and better manage finances to promote public safety and maintain safety-oriented capital improvements.

#### **Recommendation #2:**

NYCHA should widely implement co-located mental wellness and community health centers.

#### **Recommendation #3:**

Support diversion programs that empower communities, prevent over-incarceration, and reduce recidivism.

#### **Recommendation #4:**

“Use the Carrot”: Encourage youth to take ownership of public safety in all NYCHA developments, as tenant leaders, by giving them a seat at the table. NYCHA should incentivize youth participation in community leadership with innovative, youth-driven events.

#### **Recommendation #5:**

In order to transform NYCHA developments into safer, more harmonious environments, the Summer Youth Employment Program should be expanded to include all NYCHA residents ages 18-24. NYCHA should also provide all youth living in its developments with daily, high-quality evening programming. This programming should be created with community input and take place in NYCHA developments. Additionally, NYCHA and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) should be required to submit detailed annual reports to the City Council on youth programming in NYCHA developments.

#### **Recommendation #6:**

NYCHA should align facilities and service center programming with the population at each development.

### **Recommendation #7:**

NYCHA should design a development by development approach to program development.

## **II. Background**

### **Public Safety at NYCHA**

Public safety in New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”) developments is a key quality of life issue in The Bronx, and has ramifications throughout New York City. Recent data indicates that NYCHA is home to only 4.8 percent of New York City’s population and houses families with a median income of \$24,336 and average monthly rent of \$509.<sup>i</sup> However, NYCHA developments were the location of a full 20 percent of New York City’s violent crimes as of 2013.<sup>ii</sup>

It is also noteworthy that, in very recent history, crime rates in NYCHA spiked during a period of time when the citywide crime rate went up only slightly. From 2009 through the end of 2013, New York City saw a 3.3 percent increase in crime while NYCHA saw a 31 percent increase in crime.<sup>iii</sup> The most recent data indicates that serious crimes in NYCHA developments rose about 2.4 percent from 5,088 in 2015 to 5,211 in 2016, in contrast to a citywide drop of approximately four percent.<sup>iv</sup>

This data underscores a need for a continued look at the issue of public safety in NYCHA to understand what can be done better. The NYPD has reported to the task force that while The Bronx has, for 2017-to-date, seen a 28 percent decrease in murders, NYCHA housing only saw a four percent decrease, and that the 42<sup>nd</sup> Precinct is seeing a year-to-date increase in crime attributable to crime in NYCHA developments in that precinct.<sup>v</sup> Domestic violence reports at NYCHA as a percentage of those in the City are also a notable phenomenon. From January through June 2017, there were 7,174 domestic violence reports in NYCHA alone, 7.6 percent of the citywide total for that period.<sup>vi</sup> Disproportionate crime rates at NYCHA beg the analysis: What can be done to better target Bronx NYCHA developments to ameliorate public safety problems there? This is the central question of this task force’s analysis.

It should be noted that as of 2016 data, New York City’s crime rate is lower than the national rate and the murder rate is below the national average.<sup>vii</sup> The picture may not be completely dark, but this does not diminish the urgent need for these recommendations to both make NYCHA a safer home for its residents and to make the City safer as a whole.

In The Bronx, there are 89 NYCHA developments with 44,293 apartments. The largest Bronx NYCHA development is Edenwald Houses, which is home to 2,036 apartments,<sup>viii</sup> making, it, like many other developments, equal in size to a neighborhood unto itself. Manhattan and

Brooklyn are both home to more NYCHA developments and apartments than The Bronx. Brooklyn houses 99 developments with a total of 58,447 apartments and Manhattan is home to 97 developments with a total of 52,999 apartments. There is no doubt that public safety in NYCHA should be an issue of citywide concern, and that the many factors that can negatively impact public safety in NYCHA developments should be rectified.

### **The Task Force:**

In December 2015, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. announced that he would convene a task force to study the issue of public safety in public housing in The Bronx.

The new task force would work with NYCHA tenants, law enforcement agencies, elected officials, community organizations and others to focus on solutions to crime and public safety issues that affect the borough's NYCHA developments. The task force officially launched in January 2016, with City Council Members Vanessa Gibson (Chair, City Council Public Safety Committee) and Ritchie Torres (Chair, City Council NYCHA Committee) as its inaugural members. Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark would also join the task force in 2016.

“Our NYCHA developments are home to some of our most vulnerable populations, and they deserve to live in a safe space free from the fear of crime. Recent reports have put the issue of crime and gang activity in NYCHA housing into clear focus, and through this new task force we will be able to create and implement a clear vision for a safer NYCHA in our borough, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies and the community-at-large. I thank Council Members Torres and Gibson for their commitment to this critical initiative, and I am hopeful that the ideas we put forward for The Bronx could prove useful for all five boroughs,” said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. when he announced the creation of the task force.

The Bronx NYCHA task force held three hearings over the past eleven months to gather community input in the form of testimony. The task force also created and sent a survey to NYCHA residents that allowed the task force to glean topics of importance to NYCHA residents.

The task force hearings were held on December 1, 2016, June 7, 2017, and June 15, 2017, and issues related to public safety raised at the hearings ranged from youth programming, to implementing technology to promote safety, to city policies and mental health services necessary to public safety. The task force hosted approximately 140 attendees who signed in at the NYCHA Tenant Association Members', Bronx North and Bronx South hearings combined.

The December 2016 hearing invitation was extended to Bronx NYCHA tenant associations and the two June 2017 hearings were opportunities for all NYCHA residents to make their voices heard without having to travel too far from home to do so. To promote accessibility, one June hearing was held in Bronx South at Claremont Neighborhood Center and one in Bronx North at the Sonia Sotomayor Community Center.

The goals of the task force are to inform Bronx NYCHA residents that their input on public safety in NYCHA housing is valued by Bronx policymakers, to shine a light on issues and

possible solutions to the problem of public safety, broadly defined, in NYCHA housing, and, finally, for the task force to make recommendations - based on the information gathered from the community and additional research - on how to make NYCHA safer, and present those recommendations in this report. Many of the recommendations in this report are scalable to address public safety in NYCHA housing in all of New York City, and they have implications well-beyond the walls of NYCHA developments for demographics including youth and seniors.

The recommendations of NYCHA community members during these three hearings and over the course of conversations with our offices, in addition to research, form the basis of this task force report.

### **III. Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation #1: NYCHA Must Better Address Repairs and Better Manage Finances to Promote Public Safety and Maintain Safety-Oriented Capital Improvements**

One cannot talk about public safety without acknowledging that safety is also tied to the health of the community. NYCHA is city-operated and consistently fails to adhere to its own guidelines. NYCHA housing has egregious housing violations, placing its residents in harm's way every day.

In all of our NYCHA hearings, we heard repeated concerns about NYCHA's inability to address repairs in a timely fashion, if at all. New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer's 2016 *NYC Housing Brief: Changes in the Structural and Apartment Conditions of the City's Public Housing Stock*, documents how four of the seven deficiency rates - additional heating required, cracks and holes in interior walls and ceilings, floor holes, and broken plaster and peeling paint - worsened in NYCHA since 2011<sup>ix</sup>. In, addition, there were two maintenance deficiency rates that worsened from 2011 to 2014, toilet breakdowns (6.2 percent increase) and kitchen facilities not working (7.0 percent increase).

On November 14, 2017, the Department of Investigation released a report, revealing NYCHA's failure to conduct mandatory lead paint safety inspection for four years. The DOI report in addition to several others, have documented numerous lead paint violations<sup>x</sup>. The report specifically stated:

*"Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, "DOI's investigation found that NYCHA failed to do critical lead safety inspections and then falsely certified that they were meeting these legal requirements. This is the fourth time in two years that DOI has found NYCHA to be careless when it comes to tenant safety. NYCHA has an obligation both to protect tenants and to be honest with the public."*

These reports were issued after children in Bronx NYCHA Developments were found to have elevated levels of lead in their blood. Under HPD guidelines, some of these deficiencies are classified as hazardous C level violations and require immediate attention. Public safety is not just about the crime incidence rate. Safety requires that one's housing infrastructure is habitable.

We have seen over and over that NYCHA violates the public safety of its residents by violating their physical and mental health. We have known for years that lead exposure is detrimental to the development of young children. If an apartment has had lead paint in the past, and there are young children dwelling in that unit, it needs to be remediated. Landlords, in this case NYCHA cannot wait and see if paint is chipping to take action. The American Academy of Pediatrics<sup>xi</sup> released a policy statement in 2005 stating the following:

*Evidence continues to accrue that commonly encountered blood lead concentrations, even those less than 10 µg/dL, may impair cognition, and there is no threshold yet identified for this effect... The focus in childhood lead-poisoning policy, however, should shift from case identification and management to primary prevention, with a goal of safe housing for all children.*

*At the levels of lead exposure now seen in the United States, subclinical effects on the central nervous system (CNS) are the most common effects. The best-studied effect is cognitive impairment, measured by IQ tests. Other aspects of brain or nerve function, especially behavior, also may be affected. Teachers reported that students with elevated tooth lead concentrations were more inattentive, hyperactive, disorganized, and less able to follow directions. Additional follow-up of some of those children showed higher rates of failure to graduate from high school, reading disabilities, and greater absenteeism in the final year of high school.*

Uninhabitable units are a public safety issue: Housing is supposed to keep us safe not make us sick. Letitia James, the Public Advocate, recently released her office's list of the 100 worst landlords in New York City, of which NYCHA was not listed. NYCHA has been in constant violation of housing laws for decades, and, as the country's largest residential landlord, it is time we hold them accountable. NYCHA is unfortunately sending the message that it does not prioritize the health and safety of its tenants.

In addition to the recent report concerning lead, the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) has recently issued other reports regarding NYCHA's lack of compliance as it relates to providing crucial safety equipment such as smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, lack of adherence to elevator safety standards and lack of enforcement its own policy of Permanent Exclusion for serious criminal offenders. Deficiencies in key areas demonstrate a disregard for the life and safety of the most vulnerable of residents.

### **Capital Improvements and Managing Oversight**

The State of New York has invested, \$42 million in security and lighting improvements at NYCHA<sup>xii</sup>. The issue of safety in NYCHA is constantly being discussed, with reports noting data

such as: “NYCHA residents suffered increase in major crime last year as city enjoyed four percent dip.<sup>xiii</sup>”

The Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (“MAP”), initiated in 2014 and part of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) is attempting to reduce crime in 15 NYCHA developments through a concentrated effort of resources and programs. The 2017 Mayor’s Management Report (“MMR”)<sup>xiv</sup> sites that the MAP program developments have seen an overall reduction in violent crime, index crime, shootings down 2.2 percent, 4.2 percent and 14.7 percent, since the initiative's 2014 launch.

MAP is completing its third year and has begun to diversify its programs by bringing on community initiatives that concentrate on the employment of at-risk, disconnected youth, the installation of layered access and closed circuit television and the implementation of *NeighborhoodStat* at each development. Lastly, MOCJ will launch its’ *Sentiment Meter*, a measure of community sentiment made to reflect resident’s sentiment with respect to resource access, perceptions of safety and collective efficacy. MAP’s community engagement piece aims to create a wraparound approach to reducing crime.

Community engagement is vital to public safety, and it must be more widely employed. Capital improvement projects are one of the pillars of safety, but do not work as a standalone approach. In addition to the millions of dollars invested in capital projects, there have been independent reports documenting NYCHA’s inefficiency at rectifying housing violations and building maintenance issues, as well as at remediating vacant apartments and maintaining oversight of construction. As mentioned, DOI has issued several reports on areas where NYCHA has failed in its reporting and safety practices.

Current and future investments into NYCHA will be lost if NYCHA cannot manage its finances well. In addition, a recent Department of Investigation report found that large appliances stored in NYCHA storerooms are vulnerable to theft due to security deficiencies.<sup>xv</sup> Oversight has been an ongoing issue, and with looming concerns about NYCHA’s long-term financial stability, every investment must have optimal impact.

The Comptroller’s 2017 audit<sup>xvi</sup> documented NYCHA’s constant failure to manage its construction contracts. The report states that NYCHA paid “\$1.8 million for new roof installations at Pomonok Houses North, but despite making those substantial investments, the Authority accepted defective work, such as poor water- drainage...conditions that lead to leaks, shorten the useful life of the new roofs, and potentially lead to health and safety concerns for residents.”

Water leaks pave the way for mold growth, and are extremely disruptive. In addition, the remediation work is time consuming and costly. Defective work bleeds money from NYCHA, diverting funds from other capital investment projects aimed at improving residents’ quality of life.

## **Impact Safety Capital Projects**

The lack of oversight and inability to address violations is of extreme importance. If NYCHA cannot adhere to HPD's standards for being a compliant landlord, we cannot continue to pour financial resources into Capital Improvement Projects, including Safety Capital Projects, without new systems for oversight.

In order for City agencies to accurately test the impact of Safety Capital Projects, NYCHA must be able to ensure that it has the proper controls in place to track and ensure that the capital safety improvement systems (doors, key access cards, etc.) remain intact and are working. Door locks and intercoms are a point of concern. The State's \$42 million investment included \$8 million for door locks, doorway improvements, security access, intercoms and electronic keycard access throughout NYCHA. During our hearings, NYCHA residents shared stories of broken doors, locks, and faulty key access card issues. Residents shared feelings of frustration and fear around the public having unrestricted access to their buildings. If developments are not secure, any work we do to reduce violence and/or theft can only go so far.

NYCHA should be looking to adopt new technologies to enhance building security.

The millions of State and City dollars being spent on these capital safety projects, coupled with resident complaints about the inability to maintain them, calls into question NYCHA's processes.

## **Blue light Pilot project: Installation of blue light emergency call boxes**

The installation of a Blue Light Pilot program, much like the one that is soon to be installed in many of our city's parks, would add another layer of safety to our residents as well access to responses from first responders. We recommend the Administration collaborate with the NYPD to determine where blue light emergency call boxes should be placed at NYCHA developments. These call boxes will have GPS capabilities, which allow first responders to locate exactly where the emergency call comes from. These call boxes can have additional features including video capabilities. This project will allow the community to anonymously report crime and alert the NYPD if there is an emergency.

## **Zombie Scaffolding**

Scaffolding poses another public safety threat. There are NYCHA developments across New York City that are riddled with "zombie scaffolding," otherwise known as "non-construction

***Scaffolding adds a  
criminal element***

-Resident, Sotomayor Houses



scaffolding and shedding.” Scaffoldings can limit the visibility of security cameras and create a cloak of darkness for potentially illicit behavior. In addition, residents have reported feeling uneasy, as the scaffolding makes it easy for people to hide<sup>xvii</sup>. NYCHA has used scaffolding as a band-aid in addressing necessary capital improvements. Failing to maintain capital improvements increases the extended use of scaffolding and adds another layer of insecurity, as it provides spaces for illegal behavior to occur. NYCHA is creating public safety risks, and they need to be addressed.

### **Recommendations: Increase visibility**

**Remove Scaffolding:** Though Mayor Bill de Blasio has prioritized the removal of zombie scaffolding, the removal will be a lengthy process. In addition, other developments that actually require scaffolding due to construction will face the same public safety issue.

To understand the full impact of scaffolding on public safety, each development must monitor how any scaffolding obstructs the views of safety cameras. Any cameras obstructed by scaffolding must be readjusted to capture the obstructed area. Adequate lighting must also be provided in covered areas to discourage illegal behavior.

**Tree Pruning:** Many developments have large trees which flourish beautifully during the warmer months. The administration should work with the Parks Department’s forestry division to better maintain these trees and other plants and hedges along pedestrian paths. Some of the bigger trees block lighting through pathways which make certain parts of NYCHA developments more susceptible to crime. This was a concern brought up by several residents from developments in both Bronx North and Bronx South.

**NYCHA has issued a policy statement in its NEXTGen Initiative that seeks to satisfy the NEXTGEN NYCHA Goal to “Operate as an efficient and effective landlord”. Supplement Strategies #5 and #6 of Next Gen NYCHA are: Improved digital services; faster repairs and more transparent metrics, and “Improve property management efficiency and improve customer satisfaction”<sup>xviii</sup>. We believe this needs to go further.**

Our recommendations to meet these objectives are as follows:

- Develop an internal auditing system that allows NYCHA to track in real-time the functionality of their safety systems.
- Develop a best practice for security camera systems. Variables to consider include but are not limited to motion and noise sensors, image quality, night vision, durability, and ability to communicate with external systems such as the NYPD.
- Develop maintenance schedule to ensure cameras are working effectively and their view is unobstructed (i.e. as result of scaffolding; trees; etc.)

- Through the NYCHA app, myNYCHA, superintendent reporting, and NYCHA’s internal complaints system, NYCHA will be able to receive work orders in real time. NYCHA can create real-time dashboards of repairs, and communicate repair schedules to residents via the app. In addition the app should allow residents to upload pictures of the conditions. When closing the cases NYCHA can document the repairs with a photo as well. In addition, NYCHA residents should be able to report violations through the 311 system.
- Implement better coordination between NYPD and its Housing Bureau, FDNY, EMS and NYCHA on fixing doors after emergency services were required to break them or possibly consider a skeleton key for emergency response.
- NYCHA needs to find a solution to better disincentivize broken doors and people breaking the doors. The use of cameras to monitor these infractions will go a long way. Tampering with NYCHA doors should be further discouraged through legislation.
- Information to create a baseline for each development. This data can be used to identify recurring issues, monetary cost of those issues, and rate at which those issues arise. This will allow for financial and strategic planning that will be unique to each development.

NYCHA needs to find a solution to the common problem of broken doors through punitive measures aimed at preventing meddling with NYCHA doors and through better technology. In addition, there needs to be better coordination between NYPD and NYCHA/ FDNY / EMS on fixing the doors after emergency services has had to break them.

- NYCHA should use reporting data to drive maintenance investigations and create long-term corrective strategies for the most common issues.

## **Recommendation #2: NYCHA Should Widely Implement Co-located Mental Health Centers**

### **The Social Determinants of Mental Health: Making the Case for Co-located Mental Health Centers.**

#### **Isolation in Public Housing**

Poverty exists across New York City neighborhoods. However, those levels of poverty vary -low, moderate, and extreme – and so does their impact. Neighborhoods with extreme poverty tend to have higher rates of violent crime, unemployment, housing code violations and lower educational attainment<sup>xix</sup>. Poorly maintained housing is associated with negative health outcomes, including asthma, and other respiratory illnesses, injuries and poor mental health.

#### **NYCHA SNAP SHOT**

Average public housing family income: \$24,336

Average monthly rent: \$509

47.1 percent of NYCHA families are working.

13 percent of NYCHA families receive public assistance

The average rent is 30 percent of the household’s income;

Our tenant testimonies and public data both indicate that NYCHA properties are riddled with housing violations. Stress is a central component of mental health outcomes. The stress process model leads the framework for studying mental health, and is a vital tool in understanding how to improve mental health outcomes.

Neighborhood characteristics, such as the physical, structural, and social environment are all related when it comes to mental health outcomes<sup>xx</sup>. Conditions associated with poverty, such as income, upward mobility and being rent burdened (spending greater than 30 percent of one's income on rent), can influence stress levels, exposure to stress, and ability to cope. In an analysis of poverty across New York City, the Furman Center found that in the Bronx, 52.6 percent of all neighborhoods were high or extreme poverty.<sup>xxi</sup> Areas with a high concentration of poverty experience poor educational attainment, and poor health outcomes.

There are significant amounts of research that reinforce the association between mental health and neighborhood factors<sup>xxii</sup>. This association illustrates how economic disadvantages are linked to higher levels of depression and mental illness among adults<sup>xxiii</sup>. Similar to adults, children living in poverty are at risk for experiencing trauma, increasing the likelihood of physical and mental illness, risk behaviors, and functioning challenges.

The McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research references how families living in poverty are rarely successfully connected with the mental health services they need. Mental illness can increase one's risk to becoming impoverished. Alternatively, people who live in poverty are more likely to experience mental illness. The cyclical nature of this relationship makes it difficult for people to transition out of poverty, as mental illness is associated with higher health care costs, decreased productivity and poor general health<sup>xxiv</sup>.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's 2015 Community Health Profiles illustrate how a neighborhood's outcomes are linked across indicators. The aforementioned paragraphs highlighted the relationships between mental health outcomes and poor housing quality. Of the 59 Community Districts (CD) in New York City, Community District #3 (Morrisania/ Crotona) is ranked fourth for the highest incidences adult psychiatric hospitalizations and tenth for the highest incidences of housing violations. Built environments can be extremely problematic and exacerbate the mental and physical health of residents.

To put this into context, imagine a grade school aged child with asthma. As a result of vermin infestations and mold growths in the home, they have repeated asthma attacks that require their parent to take them to the doctor and/or ER visits. The child thus is absent from school, the parent is absent from work, both are stressed, and the process continues as a result of unattended violations. NYCHA properties generally consist of multi-story buildings that are poorly soundproofed and ventilated, overcrowded and can be infested by vermin.

## **Recommendations**

Understanding neighborhood influences on mental health are crucial for designing neighborhood-level interventions. Public housing settings have the potential to be health

promoting environments that contribute to lessening social health inequalities instead of increasing them. However, this potential is often not fully realized, as public housing programs are often limited to providing shelter without fully considering all the aspects that can contribute to (or hinder) tenants' positive mental health.

The 2018 Capital Funding period, brought to light the lack of Mental Health Facilities co-located within Public Housing Developments (PHD) in The Bronx. In 2018, Montefiore Medical Center will open the only Behavioral Health Center co-located within a Bronx PHD. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Council Member Annabel Palma each allocated \$1.2 million to renovate the ground floor of the Sotomayor Houses, located at 1818 Watson Avenue, in the Soundview area of The Bronx to make this happen. This would fill in the gap that was left with the closing of a center in this community. In 2016, Montefiore was forced to close its' doors on its Soundview/Throggs Neck Mental Health Center located at 1967 Turnbull Avenue, as a result of increasing rental costs. While clinic patients were transferred to their Westchester Square site, Montefiore lost 20 percent (2,400) of their patients, the majority of whom are children and adolescents.

The Montefiore Mental Health Clinic at the Sotomayor Houses will be the first of its kind in The Bronx. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships, mental wellness centers can co-exist within PHD's. The Jordan and Harris Community Health Center (JHCHC), established in 2010, provides comprehensive health and mental health services to residents of the Hyatt Court, Pennington Court, Terrell Homes, and Stephen Crane Village, public housing developments in Newark, New Jersey. The Center's founder, Cindy Sickora, implemented this model after recognizing that the stress associated with living in poor community's strong influence on the mental health of adults and children. JHCHC started with solely providing medical services, in its first three years it was able to stabilize diabetic patients, improve blood pressures, reduce hospital readmission rates and implement asthma action plans with parents for their children.

This model can and should live in New York City, throughout NYCHA developments. By targeting the most vulnerable and isolated developments, stakeholders can pool their resources to bring services to its tenants. Through its medical services program, JHCHC estimated a cost savings of \$11 million in over three years, serving 6,000 residents.

JHCHC involved the resident community to implement its model: building a bridge between health and community through a community health worker model. While many residents in NYCHA have health insurance, many report not seeing a doctor regularly and/or utilizing the emergency room for care. By training residents to become Community Health Workers (CHW), they are able to provide peer-to-peer education to other residents. Having local community stakeholders, allows for residents to own the project, creating more community buy-in.

The medical community and community based organizations are recognizing the value in adopting the CHW model and as a result hiring more CHWs to ensure that patients and their families are adhering to treatment action plans on an ongoing basis. Often times CHWs will conduct home visits to provide an extra level of care and ensure that each patient has the tools

they need to be successful. During home visits CHWs can assess the home to make sure there are no hazardous issues, such as chipping paint, mold, or vermin droppings. They can assist patients in getting connected with additional supportive services, such as case management. CHWs communicate with each patient's clinical care team, using care management software to document interventions and receive alerts when patients are in the hospital.

Through various partnerships of elected officials, neighboring hospitals, CBO's, and economic development organizations, NYCHA can implement on-site medical and mental wellness centers. The City should enter into agreements with medical and mental wellness providers that make it financially possible for them to stay at NYCHA long-term. In an effort to create more community buy-in, residents can be trained as CHW's to connect residents with both mental and physical health resources and to provide training around intimate partner violence, asthma action plans, and medication compliance.

The MMR NYCHA MAP Community Engagement and Programming assignments do not include any allocations for mental health programming.

### **Recommendation #3: Support Diversion Programs That Empower Communities, Prevent Over-Incarceration, and Reduce Recidivism.**

To increase the sense that justice is being served in NYCHA communities and other communities suffering from crime and to better achieve the goal of justice, we need to modify how we "do justice," the process by which justice is meted out itself.

The Task Force recognizes that public safety and the criminal justice system are inextricably linked, and that it is necessary to reduce recidivism and have individuals buy into the justice system rather than feeling alienated or persecuted by it. Innovative justice programs and other diversion programs are an excellent opportunity to reduce the difficulties with public safety in NYCHA and improve relationships between residents and the criminal justice system.

#### **Q: What is an Example of a Recommended Diversion Program?**

A: Diversion programs aim to provide participants with strategies to avoid repeat conduct and criminal charges. For example, participants and community members in one type of diversion program participate in a discussion about the offender's actions on the larger community and reflect on individual and group accountability. This type of program empowers community members to develop their own solutions to quality of life offenses and will show participants that their community is investing in them. It is a voluntary alternative to the court system. Restorative justice, generally, is viewed by some proponents as a means of rectifying what are thought to be the harms of poverty and oppression.<sup>xxv</sup> Diversion programs seek to reduce recidivism and prevent over-incarceration.

**Q: What does the data say about whether this will be effective and helpful for public safety in NYCHA?**

A: An important element of the justice system is that it is perceived fairly by citizens. The Bronx District Attorney’s Office and the New York Police Department are working to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the communities that they serve. For example, the NYPD is building bridges to the community through their initiatives such as the Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) program.<sup>xxvi</sup> It is the recommendation of this task force that good relations between the community and the actors in and institutions of the justice system and the perceived fairness of the system be priorities.

Data demonstrate that innovative approaches to justice can be effective. For example, when Los Angeles instituted a particular diversion program, they found they had an 85 percent compliance rate (where the offender signed a restorative justice agreement)<sup>xxvii</sup> in the program’s first year with a 92 percent success rate.<sup>xxviii</sup> Out of 113 participants who reached a six month recidivism check-in in the first year, only two had been arrested after their restorative justice intervention for another offense.<sup>xxix</sup> To put this into context, consider that in New York City in 2009 statistics show that 33 percent of people arraigned were rearrested for a crime within a year.<sup>xxx</sup>

The City of Los Angeles’ report on the first year of this program states the following:

*“Research shows that youth and young adults are at greater risk of developmental delays and behavioral problems when their parents and neighbors are in prison. And, these youth are more likely to end up in prison themselves. Home environments such as these, coupled with the poverty that characterizes our target neighborhoods, drives criminal behavior, derailing whole communities and generations of young people who would otherwise have a successful path if not for the hardships of their upbringing.”<sup>xxxi</sup>*

Over-incarceration is a criminal justice issue and a public health issue that needs to be mitigated, and diversion programs are one important method for addressing the problem and allowing for alternative obligations other than jail. Such programs aim to reduce the dual problems of recidivism and high incarceration rates that are prevalent in some communities including NYCHA developments, and they have shown some success where piloted. The task force supports the implementation and growth of evidence-supported initiatives in this area.

**Recommendation #4: “Use the Carrot”: Encourage Youth to take Ownership of Public Safety in all NYCHA Developments, as Tenant Leaders, by Giving Them a Seat at the Table. NYCHA Should Incentivize Youth Participation in Community Leadership with Innovative, Youth-Driven Events.**

**Resident Watch: A Model of Self-Governance and Action:**

NYCHA describes the Resident Watch Program:

*“For over 40 years, thousands of residents have volunteered their time to enhance the safety and security of their communities through the Resident Watch program (formerly Tenant Patrol). By patrolling their development, resident volunteers help make their homes safer and more secure while building communities and fostering pride in their development. NYCHA strongly encourages resident volunteers to: Form lobby, roving, or youth watch groups as part of the Resident Watch Initiative [and] Work with their Housing Manager to create a safe and supportive environment for themselves, families, and neighbors...”<sup>xxxii</sup>*

This program has a highly replicable element of community-driven responsibility for public safety. When the Office of the Bronx Borough President queried NYCHA tenant association presidents about the Resident Watch Program, those who responded has universally high levels of praise for the program that evinced an affinity for the community coming together to govern itself and promote safety and accountability.

A selection of these quotes is as follows:

“The Resident Watch Program has been a great asset to our development and keeping the neighborhood safe. The program allowed us to work closely with PSA 7 and NYCHA to ensure the residents in the area were safe.”

“This program allows people to take ownership of their development and allows us to show we are doing something for our community.”

A resident called for the expansion of the program:

“As the current Resident Council President I would love to see the Resident Watch Program come back to my development. Upon coming to Bailey Houses I was informed, the program was removed from the development. Based on my past experience in regards to this program, I believe a program like this will boost community engagement and a sense of safety with the residents in the building.”

"When you have residents that are willing to take pride in where they live at by doing resident watch, shows they don't welcome undesirables in their community. This is how the residents of Bronx River work towards the better quality of life where they live."

“... We need to make further adjustments to the program so we can attract our youth so they can get involved in the program, currently the program is predominantly done by senior women, in my development.”

“As the Resident Leader for Soundview Houses, I know how valuable resident watch is in the community. This program has deterred intruders in the buildings where resident watch is

active and it also has kept residents and their visitors from littering inside and in front of the buildings.”

Accountability was, as in these statements, also a theme at the Bronx North hearing, where more than one stakeholder noted they wished to see strong NYCHA policies aimed at excluding individuals from NYCHA to weed out troublesome neighbors<sup>xxxiii</sup> and that policies more efficacious than NYCHA’s permanent exclusion policy as currently enforced should be in place.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The Department of Investigation has critiqued what it views as enforcement failures by NYCHA in these matters.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### **Using the Community-Driven Public Safety Model to Involve Youth:**

It is evident that adequate resources should continue to be allocated to this program. Further, the content of these highly positive responses to the resident watch program indicates that there are favorable elements of residents working to keep the community safe. This kind of community involvement and community ownership of the issue of public safety in NYCHA should be widely expanded and adequately funded to provide individuals with resources they need to help ensure the safety of the community.

To this end, the task force recommends that youth who pledge to do their part to not engage in any criminal activity on NYCHA property and participate in discussion groups on how safety can be promoted at NYCHA are honored with participation in positive status-building activities driven by NYCHA youth, for example, a basketball tournament featuring a youth idol actively working against youth violence. The existing NYCHA Youth Leadership Council would do well to focus on public safety and direct energies toward both a branding and programmatic effort to make participation attractive. Youth involvement in solving the problem of public safety at NYCHA must be more widespread.

Youth should be empowered to problem solve on this issue and their voices should be heard. Notably the Citywide Public Safety Advisory Committee is publicly advertised as recruiting only two youth members.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

While it is favorable that at least one youth member was appointed to the Executive Committee of this committee,<sup>xxxvii</sup> the number of youth participants in the discussion on public safety should be increased so that young people are truly given an equal seat at the table, and, to this end, an additional separate youth advisory committee of public safety in NYCHA should be implemented immediately and youth should be heavily incorporated in the pilot NeighborhoodStat program.

The newly formed committee should take on the issue of inter-development and intra-development “beefs” like those described by a Mill Brook Houses resident at the Bronx South hearing that prevent children, by her account, from being able to visit other developments.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Additionally, youth tenant associations should be implemented in developments, and NYCHA should have a youth representative who participates in meetings of its board.



Further, a youth peacemaking process would do well to take a lesson from the current Cornerstones programmatic partnership between Soundview, Sotomayor, and Bronx River community centers. Youth from any of these developments will be encouraged to participate in programming at the other two developments in this partnership, fostering intermingling between developments. This initiative is supported by a technology grant from the Office of the Bronx Borough President.

The peacemaking process should look to restorative justice practices and to programs that foster communication between youth from different developments and be heavily driven by youth-stakeholder involvement.

**Recommendation #5: To Transform NYCHA Developments into Safer, More Harmonious Environments, Offer Summer Youth Employment to All NYCHA Residents Ages 18-24 and Provide All Youth With Daily High-Quality Evening Programming, Created with Community Input, in NYCHA Developments. Additionally, NYCHA and DYCD Should Be Required to Submit Detailed Annual Reports to the City Council on Youth Programming in NYCHA Developments.**

Youth programming is a proven successful gang prevention strategy and should be expanded at NYCHA. Youth programming was, additionally, cited as a powerful tool and advocated for by members of the community in the hearings the task force held. Its efficacy is reinforced by the literature on the topic. The combination of the grassroots desire for programming evident at the hearings and the evidence-based literature on the subject leads us to recommend that this powerful gang prevention strategy be implemented. This recommendation takes into account NYCHA's goal of focusing on being a landlord, as opposed to focusing on programs, and therefore suggests that other agencies such as DYCD continue to focus on program provision.

**There is a Strong Community Desire for Youth Programming**

In the words of a Mill Brook Houses resident, a proliferation of gang-affiliated youth creates a need for programs so that it does not “get hot,” i.e. so that crime does not spike.<sup>xxxix</sup> A speaker at the Bronx North hearing also spoke of a high degree of gang activity in one development, noted that residents were paralyzed with fear, and stated that youth needed to be set on the right path.<sup>xl</sup>

Further, the Executive Director of Claremont Neighborhood Center, Abraham Jones, spoke powerfully at the June 2017 Bronx South task force hearing about the important impact of youth programming in NYCHA.

A beaming ten-year-old girl who was a participant in the Claremont Healthy Village program also spoke, and observers stated they were impressed by her confidence and the laudatory words she had for the local NYCHA community center's youth programming and the interpersonal skills she had learned there. It is evident that good things are coming out of youth programming at NYCHA, and that Mr. Jones' center's programming should be considered as a model. Additionally, another resident at the same hearing stated that there is a gap in services and a need for young people to have activities and mentorship. As the ten-year-old speaker, wise beyond her years, stated at the June Bronx South hearing: there are "no bad kids" [just those who need programming in their communities to develop into good actors].<sup>xli</sup>

Youth programming and youth jobs are very well regarded measures for the prevention of gang affiliation and therefore gang activity in NYCHA. Youth programming is considered by many, including the author of a recent *New York Times* op-ed, who has in-the-trenches knowledge of the topic as an educator, to be an optimal solution to the problem of gangs.<sup>xlii</sup>

Gangs must be addressed from a preventative standpoint with youth. The 2006 national gang survey found that most youth join gangs between ages 12 and 15.<sup>xliii</sup> Therefore, it makes sense to disrupt the gang joining process with positive programming at this age. This data also underscores the need for early high schoolers and not just middle-schoolers to have universal access to afterschool and summer programming. Responses to the task force's survey also indicated that a lack of programming for youth in NYCHA was perceived as a problem by residents.

- **Programming after school, on summer days, and on summer nights should be made more widely available throughout The Bronx in areas with easy access for NYCHA residents.**

More programming targeted at youth vulnerable to gang involvement in NYCHA is a solution rooted in research. The research, including that by The United States Department of Justice (US DOJ), tells us the following important facts about youth and gang activity: youth get some positive things out of being in gangs and these must be replicated in other social environments in order for those alternatives to gangs to be effective in preventing gang membership. This task force recommendation was also informed by the hearing testimony of the Tenant Association President of Teller/Claremont Consolidated who testified that in the summer there are fights and shootings, no space for programming, and that there are young people not engaged in activities beneficial to their development.<sup>xliv</sup>

The US DOJ and United States Department of Health and Human Services note in the Book published under their auspices, "*Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership* by James C. Howell.":

*"To be effective, a gang-membership prevention strategy should replace — and, indeed, exceed — the attraction that being in a gang has for some youth. An oft-*

*repeated adage in the helping professions is, “Don’t take something away without putting something in its place.” When urging youth not to join gangs, the message should also offer prosocial alternatives. Some of the important but often unrecognized attractions of gangs include the support, sense of belonging, excitement and relationships that youth believe gangs offer.”<sup>xlvi</sup>*

This Justice Department research should be implemented widely at within NYCHA developments. Programs enforcing prosocial youth development and replacing these positive elements of gang involvement must be made widely available to all young people living in NYCHA.

*Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership*, also underscores that “The most successful comprehensive gang initiatives are community-wide in scope; have broad community involvement in planning and delivery; and employ integrated prevention, outreach, support and services.”<sup>xlvi</sup> Further, according to extensive research by the US DOJ, policy makers must “Reinforce prosocial youth-development programs and community strengths” and “engage in evaluation of these programs.”<sup>xlvii</sup>

NYCHA communities, through tenant associations and other means, should be given a full voice in the programming that goes into their community centers and should work together with organizations to develop suitable curricula and recreational programs for youth.

NYCHA and DYCD should heed this research and allow for extensive ongoing community input on programming. Additionally, the evaluation process should always include surveys to participants in these programs and their families to foster community involvement in program planning.

**Universal Summer Youth Employment for NYCHA Youth: Funding should be allocated and outreach implemented to allow ALL NYCHA youth residents to have summer youth employment that want it.**

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is a program of The New York City Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD). SYEP provides youth in New York City aged 14 to 24 with paid summer employment for up to six weeks in July and August. Funding has recently somewhat increased for the program, but as recently as 2015, only 41 percent of 131,897 applicants were accepted into the program after a lottery, resulting in a total of 54,263 enrolled participants.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Universal employment for NYCHA youth residents should be implemented, and not just at certain Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice selected developments. DYCD recently released a concept paper calling for access to SYEP for youth in the Mayor’s Action Plan (“MAP”) program designated NYCHA developments. In The Bronx, those are Patterson, Castle Hill I and II, and Butler. The concept paper states that this program is “designed to expand access

to career readiness as well as summer youth employment opportunities for low-income youth residing in these NYCHA public housing complexes. Eligible participants will be youth ages 14-24 who currently reside in one of the NYCHA MAP developments.<sup>xxlix</sup>

However, youth in all Bronx NYCHA developments would benefit from this program, and it should be scaled to reach additional Bronx NYCHA developments other than just those currently designated for this opportunity. It is the position of the task force that it is inequitable not to provide SYEP jobs to all interested youth at all NYCHA developments. All youth ages 14-24 in NYCHA housing should be given the option of summer jobs. We can and must do more when it comes to summer jobs for youth. This is a pressing objective that New York City must accomplish for all developments. The steps taken to increase SYEP are laudable, but this program should expand to come much, much closer to allowing all youth in NYCHA who want summer jobs to have them. Further, employers and nonprofit organizations that service youth should form strong and efficient partnerships with SYEP and fund the program.

This proposal of using jobs to combat youth criminal involvement is not novel, and has national legs. Former Obama Education Secretary Arne Duncan is taking aim at youth violence in Chicago with a jobs program targeted at ending disparity in employment numbers for minority youth.<sup>1</sup>

Borough President Diaz is leading a conversation on the pipeline for jobs for youth in the new economy. With the issue of youth employment in mind, the Office of the Bronx Borough President hosted a Tech Summit in Spring 2016 to bring together stakeholders in conversation about forming a major tech hub in The Bronx and a Digital Education Summit in Fall 2017 that brought together educators and business leaders to discuss a pipeline into tech jobs for youth. Opportunities like tech jobs create alternative paths away from criminal activity, and The Office of The Bronx Borough President is committed to fostering the creation of these jobs in The Bronx. Further, the employment picture in The Bronx overall is greatly improving during the Borough President Diaz's tenure. Higher unemployment numbers have been shown to increase rates of property crime.<sup>li</sup> Therefore, lowering unemployment is also a public safety measure.

SYEP is part of a key pipeline from school to jobs (and away from the criminal justice system). If availability and perception of career opportunities can combat property crime and possibly combat youth desire to join gangs, as jobs might provide preferable positive activities to engage in<sup>lii</sup>, then why would we as a city not target all NYCHA youth with SYEP opportunities immediately? The task force further recommends that SYEP employment records be thoroughly kept by the City to allow better guidance for youth and better analysis of SYEP as it continues to grow. SYEP must also improve its marketing strategy. SYEP needs to further expand to better target youth in NYCHA.

- **More Prevalent High Quality Evening School Year Programming:**

Youth programming should be available after school to all NYCHA youth residents. Programming in NYCHA can fill the void left by the absence of gang involvement for youth in NYCHA. We as a city must do more of this to address the gang problem in NYCHA, particularly as it is a known fact that gang activity in particular, among other crimes, plagues NYCHA developments.<sup>liii</sup> As of 2015, The NYPD estimated that there were about 300 crews, gangs smaller than, for instance, the widely known Crips or Bloods, operating in and around NYCHA developments and that most violence by these crews was rooted in “turf” disputes and that crew shootings made up a full 30 percent of shootings in the city as of 2013.<sup>liv</sup>

The existing programming is insufficient. While the existing School’s Out NYC after-school program is tailored towards 6, 7, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders,<sup>lv</sup> there should also be widely available programming for high school students available to NYCHA residents. Where is the evidence that New York City should give up on putting forward a maximum effort at gang prevention strategies after the 8<sup>th</sup> grade? Cornerstones already provide some of this service, staying open until 10 p.m. on weekdays and 11 p.m. in the summer, and there is some additional programming besides Cornerstones. However, Cornerstone programs are only available at 94 NYCHA community centers, representing a small fraction of NYCHA developments. Additionally, the results of the Cornerstones expanded night hours should be analyzed for their impact on crime by the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the hypothesis being that these measures will have a positive impact on lessening crime. Every NYCHA youth resident should have access to quality programming in his or her community provided on a regular basis including at night. Community members, as noted *supra*, articulated at the hearings and on the task force’s survey that they are not satisfied with the existing options for youth programming.

We therefore propose the following an alternative means of providing youth with the positive elements gang affiliation provides them: evening programming open late available all nights of the year to youth ages eight through age 24 in every NYCHA development as a policy priority. We as a city should not rest until this is fully implemented.

An additional scalable model for implementation is the Borough President’s own Bronx Youth Corps initiative, which works via DreamYard and school programs to provide service learning and leadership development to youth in The Bronx. The Office of The Bronx Borough President is actively growing the program currently. This program should be studied as a scalable model to build a sense of community, camaraderie, responsibility, and self-leadership among youth who are neighbors. This Borough President’s Office initiative is exactly the type of prosocial activity recommended by the US DOJ for gang prevention.

The CONCEPT Program should also be widely available at NYCHA developments.

The District Attorney’s Office describes the program as follows:

*“The C.O.N.C.E.P.T. Program is a life-skills curriculum that operates for twelve*

*weeks in middle schools. This course includes classroom instruction, academic enrichment, and diverse-learning activities taught by certified professionals from the criminal justice sector. Since antisocial behavior often acts as a prerequisite for crime, the focal point of this curriculum is prevention, which is to provide life skills to students who need assistance in avoiding delinquent behavior. During the program, every instructor teaches and encourages students to demonstrate the following skills of leadership:*

- *Attain and reinforce positive relationships*
- *Focus on the problem and not the person*
- *Be proactive*
- *Lead by example*

*In addition, parent and educator workshops are offered to reinforce what the students learn during the Program. Topics covered during adult workshops are based on the needs of the individual school and/or community.”<sup>lvi</sup>*

This program is an example of positive youth programming that should continue to be scaled and available to the NYCHA community. It is funded by task force member Council Member Vanessa Gibson. The taskforce recommends that this program additionally be adapted for the higher elementary school grades and high schoolers.

Additionally, NYCHA and DYCD should be jointly required to report annually to the City Council in an easily accessible format grouped by NYCHA development on what programs are available for youth at each NYCHA development. The report should also include on what dates, at what times, and for what age groups this programming is available, along with a description of the skills built in each program and a synopsis of the community feedback on the programming. This public disclosure will motivate public discussion of and advocacy for optimal youth programming. The report should additionally be published on NYCHA’s website and available on the NYCHA cell phone app. It is time we took public stock of what youth programming is available to youth in NYCHA. All this programming should be implemented in addition to violence-interrupter programs such as Cure Violence, which has a proven track record of success in the South Bronx and East New York.<sup>lvii</sup>

- **This task force further recommends that new community spaces be built on underutilized NYCHA property in developments lacking sufficient amenities in order to better facilitate programming.**

The task force recommends a study of building community spaces on NYCHA property in order to better facilitate the ambitious goal of regularly scheduled evening, night and summer youth programming for all youth in every NYCHA development. Siting of centers should always carefully consider the quality of life of NYCHA residents, including a need for green space.

- **Recommendation: Growing Summer Youth Evening Programming at NYCHA to Prevent Gang Violence:**

- **New York Should Widely Follow the Proven Los Angeles Model for Anti-Gang Public Safety Initiatives:**

Los Angeles' Summer Night Lights Program provides after dark programming and has documented seven consecutive summers of violence reduction in the areas around the sites. The success of such summer night programming may be highly replicable on a much larger scale than currently implemented in The Bronx, as the data show that violence escalates in the summer months.<sup>lviii</sup> The Los Angeles program exists at 32 sites.<sup>lix</sup> The task force recommends the widespread implementation of similar programming here in New York City. New York City should fully implement intergenerational youth-inclusive programming like Summer Night Lights throughout The Bronx. Saturday Night Lights, a NYC Youth Programming initiative via the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, has been offered at New South Bronx PAL Center.<sup>lx</sup>

Youth summer night programming should be a focus of NYCHA initiatives going forward and should continue to be prioritized as an anti-crime public safety model. It is not enough to offer this in limited areas. Summer night programming should be available on a regular basis easily accessible to Bronx NYCHA residents in summer. In view of this, it is essential that New York City implement such programming on a broad scale, and not a limited one. The intergenerational element of the Los Angeles programs should also be considered when planning New York City summer programming near NYCHA developments, in order to foster families coming together as a community, thereby supporting the family structure with a positive shared experience.

Anticipated scarcity of resources arguments are inapplicable when the cost is as high as gang involvement. To prioritize these initiatives is to prioritize human life in NYCHA developments and throughout the City.

**Summary of Recommendation:** New York City provides youth programming and youth jobs to some extent to NYCHA youth. However, we must grow, adapt, and replicate these programs, seeking the best models and tailoring them individually by age to a wide target age range based on data driven experience and community feedback. Successful programs should be scaled and replicated, among them The Bronx Youth Corps.

New York City should increase SYEP, summer intergenerational youth-inclusive activity programming, and youth evening programming. These activities provide superior options to gang involvement, while filling the same social needs that gangs fill.

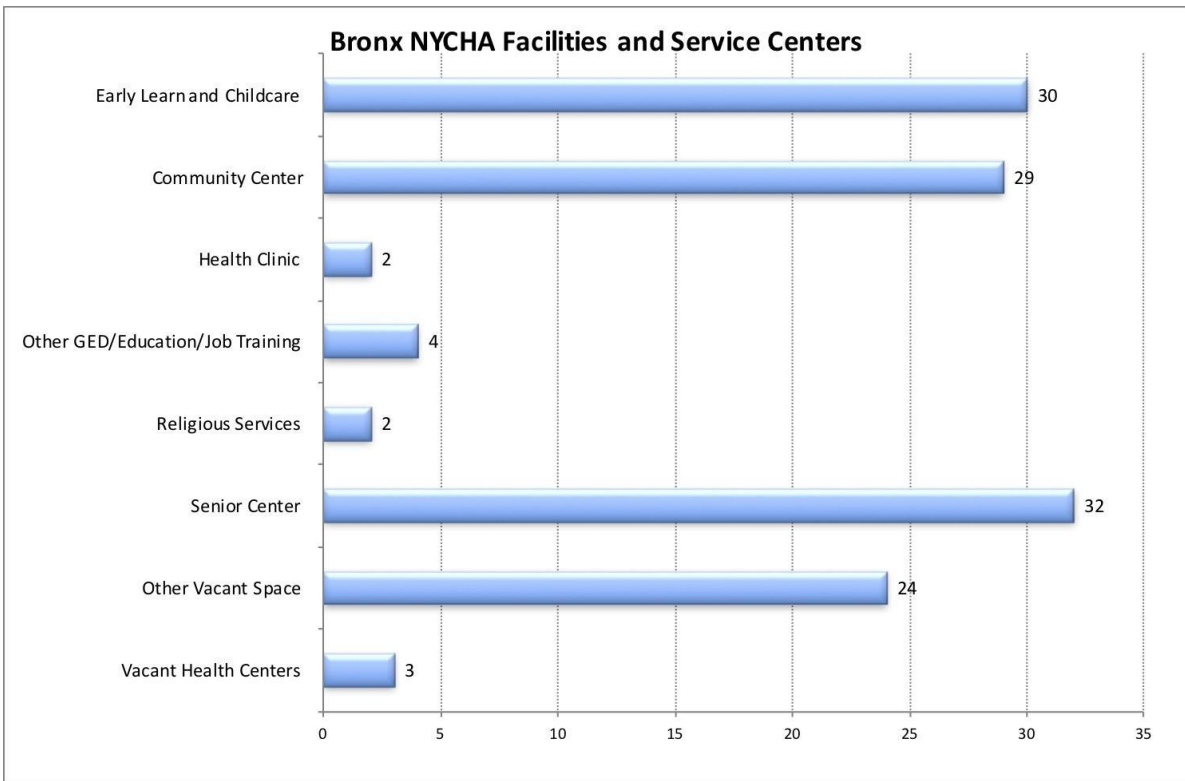
These methods of crime prevention are evidence-based and desired by NYCHA residents and should be implemented in and/or near all NYCHA developments in The Bronx, as well as across the city. While The City has expanded hours at Cornerstones NYCHA programs and increased middle school afterschool options, far more can be done through further developed and more widely-available NYCHA programming. Further, all NYCHA resident youth who want summer youth employment should be granted employment. Additionally,

there should be a separate youth programming option for elementary, middle and high school students available every night inside - or within a very short and safely commutable (in some cases this may mean made safe by police presence) distance of every NYCHA development. When sitting at home is not a viable option, youth should have a place to go to engage in positive, development enhancing, activities.

**Recommendation #6: Align facilities and service center programming with the population at each development.**

**Inclusivity starts with Community: Utilization of Community Space for Programming:** NYCHA is the largest landlord in New York City, with a total population of over 400,000 residents. The demographics at each development require diverse programming to meet the needs of the community.

Figure 1, illustrates the number facilities and services centers<sup>lxi</sup> located within NYCHA developments throughout The Bronx. A deeper dive highlights a disparity in programming.



Community space capital improvements must also be maintained to improve the community centers. We can't improve programming with space that is hazardous to the health of the participants. The task force has learned of instances when Murphy Cornerstone had to cancel programming due to a lack of heat at the site. In addition, we have also heard stories of major sewage issues at a community center, where the sewage backed up to the kitchen



and programming had to be cancelled so NYCHA could disinfect the site.

## **Recommendation #7: Design a Development by Development Approach to Program Design.**

NYCHA should align facilities and service center programming with the population at each development. We have the demographic data and insight to designate resources to developments across the borough. Conducting a development by development analysis of demographics, such as age, percentage of working adults, single parent homes, disconnected youth etc. can assist in driving programming recommendations for each development. Other factors can include what developments are more geographically isolated, population density, and/or location in areas of extreme poverty. Leveraging the NYCHA app, already in place, can be a useful tool in collecting information from residents as to what programming they would like to see included.

Having a development by development approach allows for each partnership to be tailor made to the needs and resources available to the specific developments. Although the housing and programs share common clients, they each have different goals, functions, constraints, and funding sources. However, each party has to work together to achieve effective outcomes.

Partnership sites will have to develop a revised Memorandum of Understanding or development specific partnership agreements to address how they will reach their goals, given their different objectives, and address any potential conflicts. While NYCHA is one large entity, each development has its own culture, and personnel, making each site unique. Having a development specific report mechanisms, can expedite processes and improve oversight.

Lastly, NYCHA should create an inclusive approach to design programs within each development. In addition to having residents inform programming through surveys, NYCHA should work with existing community centers to sponsor community programming development competitions, where residents can work on problem solving together, to create more of an internal buy-in and increase community participation.

## **IV. Conclusion**

For the aforementioned reasons, the recommendations in this report should be implemented immediately. The task force respectfully submits these recommendations to Mayor Bill de Blasio, NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye, DYCD Commissioner Bill Chong, HUD Regional

Director of New York and New Jersey Lynne Patton, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman and State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli. Implementing these recommendations will promote public safety in NYCHA and throughout New York City.

**Appendix #1: List of Currently Vacant NYCHA Community Centers:<sup>lxii</sup>**

<b>BORO</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>	<b>BUILDING #</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Bronx	1162 - 1176 Washington Avenue	1162 Washington Avenue	1	Vacant
Bronx	Adams	755 East 152nd Street	1	Vacant
Bronx	Bronx River	1585 East 174th Street	8	Vacant
Bronx	Bryant Ave - East 174th St	1705 Bryant Avenue	1	Vacant
Bronx	Claremont Rehab (Group 3)	1105 Teller Avenue	4	Vacant
Bronx	College Ave - East 165th Street	1020 College Avenue	1	Vacant
Bronx	Forest	1005 Tinton Avenue	8	Vacant
Bronx	Gun Hill	3445 Holland Avenue	5	Vacant
Bronx	Gun Hill	3450 White Plains Road	2	Vacant
Bronx	Highbridge Rehab (Anderson Avenue)	125 West 166th Street	4	Vacant
Bronx	Hunts Point Avenue Rehab	875 Irvine Street	13	Vacant
Bronx	Melrose	731 Courtlandt Avenue	2	Vacant
Bronx	Millbrook	161 Saint Anns Avenue	3	Vacant
Bronx	Monroe	816 Soundview Avenue	4	Vacant

Bronx	Morissania Air Rights	3210 Park Avenue	3	Vacant
Bronx	Morissania Air Rights	3131 Park Avenue	2	Vacant
Bronx	Saint Mary's Park	675 Westchester Avenue	6	Vacant
Bronx	Sedgwick	1531 University Avenue	6	Vacant
Bronx	Twin Parks West (site 1 & 2)	355 East 183rd Street	1	Vacant
Bronx	University Avenue Rehab	1925 University Avenue	4	Vacant
Bronx	West Tremont Avenue-Sedgwick Avenue Area	228 West Tremont Avenue	1	Vacant

Source: NYCHA data, available at <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/Directory-of-NYCHA-Community-Facilities/crns-fw6u>

<sup>i</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/factsheet.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> NYPD Press release, Homicides Among Victims Age 13 to 21 Have Declined 50% citywide (November 25, 2013) [http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pr/pr\\_2013\\_11\\_25\\_operation\\_crew\\_cuts\\_homicide\\_among\\_youth\\_in\\_half.shtm](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pr/pr_2013_11_25_operation_crew_cuts_homicide_among_youth_in_half.shtm)

<sup>iii</sup> NYCHA Units See Spike in Crime that Outpaces City, Leaving Residents in Fear, N.Y. daily News (April 6 2014). – <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/nycha-residents-live-fear-major-crimes-public-housing-soar-article-1.1747195>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/nycha-residents-rise-major-crime-2016-article-1.2934944>

<sup>v</sup> Meeting with NYPD and Office of The Bronx Borough President Directors, October 17, 2017.

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/reports-analysis/domestic-violence.page>

<sup>vii</sup> The Brennan Center for Justice Report, Crime Rates 1990-2016 <https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/Crime%20Trends%201990-2016.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/factsheet.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> Seven Key Deficiencies include: (1) Heating and equipment breakdowns, (2) additional heating required, (3) presence of mice or rats; (4) cracks and holes in interior walls and ceilings (5) floor holes; (6) broken plaster and peeling paint; (7) water leakage. See How New York Lives: An analysis of the City's Housing Maintenance Conditions, available at [https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/How\\_New\\_York\\_Lives.pdf](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/How_New_York_Lives.pdf)

<sup>x</sup> See , available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/17/nyregion/us-investigating-elevated-blood-lead-levels-in-new-yorks-public-housing.html>

<sup>xi</sup> Lead Exposure in Children: Prevention, Detection, and Management Committee on Environmental Health Pediatrics Oct 2005, 116 (4) 1036-1046; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2005-1947 see: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/116/4/1036>

<sup>xii</sup> Security and lighting investments included but were not limited to: Lighting, Cameras and CCTV Upgrades, Intercoms, door maintenance, “Shot Spotter”, mailboxes, and key FOB systems

<sup>xiii</sup> See Daily News available at <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/nycha-residents-rise-major-crime-2016-article-1.2934944>

<sup>xiv</sup> [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2017/2017\\_pmmr.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2017/2017_pmmr.pdf)

<sup>xv</sup> [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2017/nov/25NYCHAInventory\\_11-03-17.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2017/nov/25NYCHAInventory_11-03-17.pdf)

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- <sup>xvi</sup> <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-audit-nychas-oversight-of-construction-contracts-is-flawed/>
- <sup>xvii</sup> <https://medium.com/@NYCMayorsOffice/addressing-scaffolding-concerns-at-nycha-developments-92b4089bcd31>  
<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/investigations/Mayor-De-Blasio-Vows-Clean-up-Zombie-Scaffolding-NYCHA-Buildings-Complaints-438627123.html>
- <sup>xviii</sup> Strategy 5: Strategy #5: Improved digital services: The Authority will launch an app, MyNYCHA, for residents to create, submit, view, and update maintenance service requests 24/7, view alerts and outages related to their developments, view their scheduled inspections, and more. The application will reduce the need to call NYCHA’s Customer Contact Center (CCC) for questions or service requests. Objective: improve customer service. Strategy 6: Strategy #6: Faster repairs and more transparent metrics: i. Enacted in January 2015, the Authority’s Optimal Property Management Operating Model (OPMOM) system is empowering MyNYCHA, NYCHA’s first mobile app, coming in the summer of 2015 <http://on.nyc.gov/nextgeneration> NextGeneration NYCHA May 2015 10 local property managers at 18 developments spanning 22,386 units to build their own budgets, hire their own staff, and purchase materials from the central office. NYCHA will ultimately assemble best practices from OPMOM and will begin to deliver them to all 328 developments by 2016. The Authority projects a reduction in repair time for basic maintenance to a maximum of seven days at OPMOM developments. Objective: improve property management efficiency and improve customer satisfaction. ii. NYCHA will improve transparency around performance. The Authority has for too long focused on the number of work orders outstanding as the sole measure of its performance. NYCHA will reorient to measure its performance based on the total time to complete the entire repair. Finally, the Authority will identify appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure success. Objective: improve customer satisfaction. Next Generation NYCHA 2015 available at <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/nextgen-nycha-web.pdf>
- <sup>xix</sup> [http://furmancenter.org/files/sotc/SOC\\_2016\\_FOCUS\\_Poverty\\_in\\_NYC.pdf](http://furmancenter.org/files/sotc/SOC_2016_FOCUS_Poverty_in_NYC.pdf)
- <sup>xx</sup> Wandersman & Nation, 1998.
- <sup>xxi</sup> [http://furmancenter.org/files/sotc/SOC\\_2016\\_FOCUS\\_Poverty\\_in\\_NYC.pdf](http://furmancenter.org/files/sotc/SOC_2016_FOCUS_Poverty_in_NYC.pdf)
- <sup>xxii</sup> (Mair, Diez Roux, & Galea, 2008; Truong & Ma, 2006).
- <sup>xxiii</sup> (Galea, Ahern, & Vlahov, 2003; Kim, 2010; Matheson et al., 2006; Ross, 2000), psychological distress (Schulz et al., 2000),
- <sup>xxiv</sup> [http://mcsilver.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/reports/Mental\\_Health\\_and\\_Poverty\\_one-sheet.pdf](http://mcsilver.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/reports/Mental_Health_and_Poverty_one-sheet.pdf)
- <sup>xxv</sup> Source: Interview with co-Founders of “Here Connect,” September 26, 2017.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> June 15, 2017 Bronx South Hearing. Verbal Testimony of Inspector O’Sullivan.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> <http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/NJPFIRSTYearAnalysis.pdf> at p.6
- <sup>xxviii</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>xxix</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>xxx</sup> [http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/pdf/2013/criminal\\_justice\\_indicator\\_report\\_summer\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/pdf/2013/criminal_justice_indicator_report_summer_2013.pdf) at p.5
- <sup>xxxi</sup> <http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/NJPFIRSTYearAnalysis.pdf> at p.8
- <sup>xxxii</sup> <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/getting-involved-as-a-resident.page>
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> June 7, 2017 Task Force Bronx North Hearing. Verbal testimony.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> June 7, 2017 Task Force Bronx North Hearing. Verbal testimony.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> DOI Report, available at <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2017/2017-03-28-NYCHAMOUreport.pdf>
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/residents/getting-involved-as-a-resident.page>
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2016/nycha-appoints-joseph-kemp-as-resident-public-safety-advisory-committee-member-20160608.page>
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> June 15, 2017 Bronx South Hearing. Verbal Testimony of NYCHA, resident Millbrook Houses.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> June 15, 2017 Hearing. Verbal Testimony of NYCHA resident, Millbrook Houses.
- <sup>xl</sup> June 7, 2017 Hearing. Verbal Testimony of Speaker #8.
- <sup>xli</sup> June 15, 2017 Testimony, Bronx South Hearing
- <sup>xlii</sup> See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/28/opinion/sunday/trump-gangs-soccer-education.html?mcubz=0>
- <sup>xliii</sup> [https://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu\\_atrisk.html](https://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu_atrisk.html)
- <sup>xliv</sup> June 15, 2017 Bronx South Hearing. Testimony, Tenant Association President, Teller/Claremont Consolidated.
- <sup>xlv</sup> Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/243472.pdf>

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- <sup>xlvi</sup> Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/243465.pdf>
- <sup>xlvii</sup> Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/243472.pdf>
- <sup>xlviii</sup> <http://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/press/releases/2016-05-10.html>
- <sup>xlix</sup> Source: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/concept\\_papers/SYEP\\_Concept\\_Paper-Final9-17.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/concept_papers/SYEP_Concept_Paper-Final9-17.pdf)
- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-arne-duncan-youth-jobs-initiative-0318-biz-20160317-story.html>
- <sup>li</sup> Identifying the Effect of Unemployment on Crime  
Author(s): Steven Raphael and Rudolf Winter- Ebmer  
Source: The Journal of Law & Economics, Vol. 44, No. 1 (April 2001), pp. 259-283, at p.259, 280.
- <sup>lii</sup> See eg. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/243472.pdf>
- <sup>liii</sup> See eg. <http://www.wnyc.org/story/120-busted-historic-bronx-gang-bust/>
- <sup>liv</sup> See: <http://www.wnyc.org/story/300886-crews/>
- <sup>lv</sup> See: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/after-school/schools-out-new-york-city-sonyc.page>
- <sup>lvi</sup> Source: <http://bronxda.nyc.gov/html/community/programs.shtml>
- <sup>lvii</sup> Among the Statistics that point to the successes of the program, implemented in The South Bronx and East New York, are that “In the South Bronx, with the Cure Violence program in place, there were 37% fewer people shot from 2005 to 2016 [according to a John Jay college of Criminal Justice Report]. “There were 29% fewer people shot during the same period in East Harlem, which doesn’t have the program.” Additionally, “In Brooklyn’s East New York [which also implemented the program], 50% fewer people were admitted to hospitals with gunshot wounds from 2005 to 2016, according to the state Department of Health. [Whereas,] Flatbush, a Brooklyn neighborhood with similar demographics and population, saw a 5% decline in shooting injuries during the same period.”  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/interrupters-help-reduce-violence-in-new-york-city-1506916800?tesla=y>
- <sup>lviii</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hot-and-bothered-experts-say-violent-crime-rises-with-the-heat/>
- <sup>lix</sup> [http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cprs\\_presentation\\_-\\_parks\\_after\\_dark\\_summer\\_night\\_lights.pdf](http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/cprs_presentation_-_parks_after_dark_summer_night_lights.pdf)
- <sup>lx</sup> [http://manhattanda.org/sites/default/files/SNL%202016-17%20All-Sites%20Flyer%20%28PDF%29\\_1.pdf](http://manhattanda.org/sites/default/files/SNL%202016-17%20All-Sites%20Flyer%20%28PDF%29_1.pdf)
- <sup>lxi</sup> NYC Open Data: NYCHA Facilities and Service Centers. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Housing-Development/NYCHA-Facilities-and-Service-Centers/d4iy-9uh7>
- <sup>lxii</sup> NYCHA data, available at <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/Directory-of-NYCHA-Community-Facilities/crns-fw6u>