



Independent Democratic Conference

Public

Housing Peril:



*The Need to Hold
NYCHA Accountable*



November 2017

Key Findings:

- 69% of all survey respondents reported that they either currently have a mold or lead issue in their apartment or have had one in the past.
- Regarding lead and mold complaints—while only around 1/3 of residents receive responses from NYCHA in under one week’s time, around 44% must wait longer than a month for a response, or receive none at all.
- 26% of respondents noted that NYCHA management *never* attempted to remediate their mold or lead issue after they reported it.
- 64% of respondents note that NYCHA failed to completely remediate their mold problems following a complaint, due at least partially to shoddy remediation techniques.
- 57% of residents surveyed experienced a repair order be closed out or cancelled by building management without being notified at least one or more times.
- 47% of all general repair requests at NYCHA take more than 2 weeks, according to survey respondents.
- 65% of elevators at developments are out of service at least one day per week, according to respondents, affecting elderly and mobility-impaired residents.
- 39% of respondents "usually do not feel safe" or "do not feel safe" due to the physical condition of their NYCHA building in 2017.

INTRODUCTION

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), established in 1935, stood for decades as a national model for public housing programs. In recent years, however, NYCHA has assumed a reputation that indeed tarnishes its decades of previously excellent service. The Authority has persistently neglected the basic needs and rights of its tenants, causing them undue hardship and suffering. As this report will demonstrate, this trend is one that has gone from bad – to worse – to utterly unacceptable. Recent revelations have led lawmakers to question whether the authority and its leadership have willfully misled and endangered the public in order to avoid the costs and resources required to properly document and remedy problems at NYCHA developments.

A bombshell report by the City of New York Department of Investigation (DOI), released on Tuesday, November 14, 2017, revealed that not only had NYCHA failed to conduct mandatory lead paint safety inspections for *four years*, its officials, including NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye, egregiously falsified certification documents to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), claiming the tests *had* been conducted. Federal law requires that these inspections be performed. In 2015, NYCHA’s senior staff was made aware that NYCHA was out of compliance with City lead laws, and Chair Olatoye was warned of non-compliance with both City *and* Federal rules in 2016; despite this knowledge, the false certifications were still sent to

HUD. Misleading the Federal government is bad enough; that these certifications misled the public and endangered children and infants with potential exposure to lead and its permanent effects is heinous and inexcusable.¹

Following relaxed apartment inspection standards by HUD in 2012, NYCHA shirked its responsibility to inspect apartments for lead altogether, flouting the legal rules which require visual assessment for potential lead-paint hazards in apartments that meet certain criteria, and where the possibility of lead-based paint has not been ruled out. NYCHA has since alleged to DOI inspectors that in September, 2016, it “self-disclosed its noncompliance privately to certain HUD officials” during a routine quarterly oversight meeting in Washington, D.C. DOI is currently working to corroborate the alleged disclosure to HUD. NYCHA submitted *another* certification the following month.²

It wasn’t until July, 2017 that NYCHA submitted an amended 2017 plan to HUD, qualifying its certification and stating, “NYCHA has not complied with certain requirements related to lead-based paint but is working to ensure full compliance.” The entire time, the public, but more importantly, the residents of NYCHA, whose health was placed at risk by the abject failure of NYCHA to meet its inspection responsibilities, was left in the dark over a *multi-year period*. In a neglected and uninspected lead-laden apartment, an infant could have been born and grown into a toddler, potentially exposed to dangerous lead during their most critical and important developmental years, all as a result of NYCHA’s dereliction of its testing responsibilities.³

This is not a small or isolated problem. As of 2016, there were approximately 55,000 apartments that had to be visually inspected pursuant to HUD regulation 24 C.F.R. 25, the “Lead Safe Housing Rule.” Of these 55,000, a full 4,200 units had a child, toddler, or infant under 6 years old living in them. The inspection certifications must be submitted annually to HUD to ensure that public housing agencies are inspecting for lead hazards to protect their residents.⁴ Finally, in July, 2017, when HUD finally provided a truthful and legitimate certification to HUD, it also notified NYCHA residents *after the fact* that NYCHA had been in noncompliance with HUD regulations, and provided a fact sheet and letter to residents notifying them of lead-based paint programs.⁵

In the wake of the findings in this harrowing report, which are reminiscent of the governmental incompetence in Flint, Michigan that exposed City residents and children to lead poisoning, the DOI is recommending an independent monitor be appointed to oversee NYCHA. The recent DOI findings about NYCHA’s failure to inspect for and remediate lead conditions, and its false certifications to the federal government, should come as no surprise given the recent sordid history of the authority regarding maintenance of its developments.

¹ DOI INVESTIGATION REVEALS NYCHA FAILED TO CONDUCT MANDATORY LEAD PAINT SAFETY INSPECTIONS FOR FOUR YEARS . (2017, November 14). Retrieved from http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2017/nov/27NYCHALeadPaint11-14-2017_UL.pdf

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

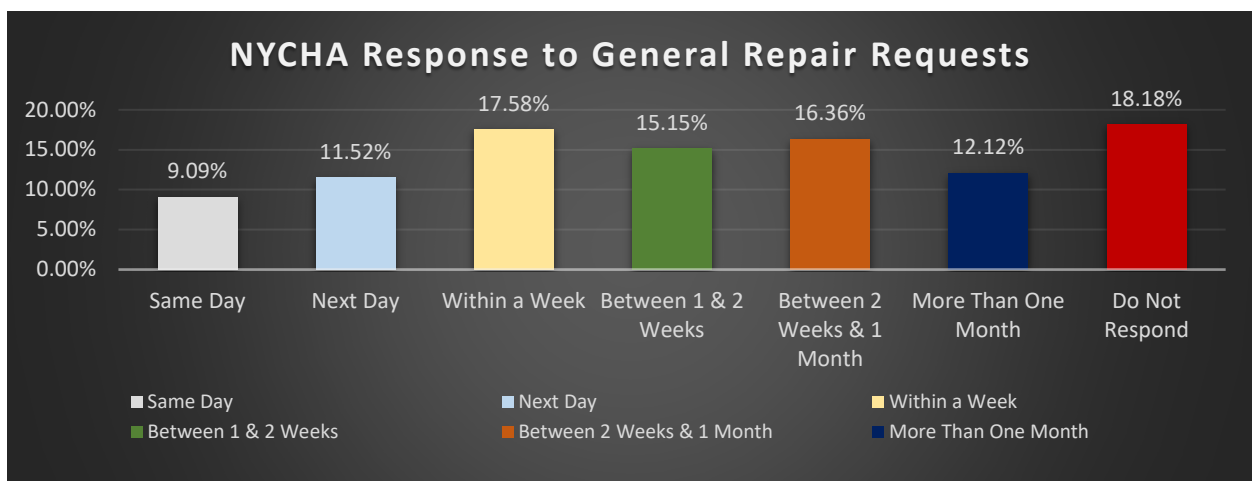
This report marks the third in a series of NYCHA investigations produced by the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC). The first report was issued in 2015 titled, *Worst Landlord in New York City?* All three reports demonstrate the deteriorating conditions at NYCHA, lack of transparency and lack of accountability. In particular, this 2017 report describes the daily hazards and conditions that surveyed NYCHA residents face in receiving timely repairs, working elevators, and mold infestation. To address this problem, the IDC is putting forth a package of bills including legislation to establish an independent monitor, give the City Council greater oversight of NYCHA, establish new mold remediation standards, help mobility-impaired individuals living in NYCHA and enhancing NYCHA’s repair program.

Substandard Living Conditions & Poor Customer Service Persists

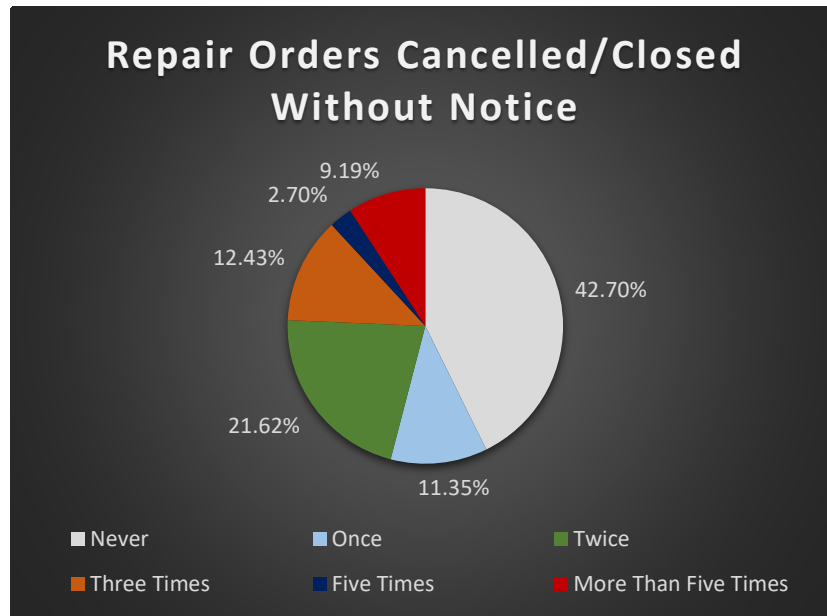
Maintenance and Repairs – 2017 Survey

As part of its advocacy for NYCHA oversight and revitalization, the IDC, in partnership with the Office of New York City Councilman and Public Housing Committee Chair, Ritchie Torres and Community Voices Heard, surveyed over 200 NYCHA residents across the City of New York regarding building conditions, repairs, and the overall service of NYCHA. The findings highlight the persistence of poor living conditions in several NYCHA properties and inefficient responses to tenant repair requests, while reinforcing the need for enhanced city and state stewardship and oversight of one of our most critical housing resources.

Unsurprisingly, the survey responses collected reflect general inefficiency and neglect on the part of NYCHA to resident repair requests. An abundance of residents reported that building management demonstrated slow and inefficient responses to general tenant repair orders. Of the respondents who have filed a repair request with NYCHA in the past, an astounding 18% never received an acknowledgement of their claim or a response from building management.



Moreover, an overwhelming number of respondents cited that they have experienced a repair order be cancelled or closed without any sort of notice or follow-up from building management. In fact, 57% of residents surveyed experienced a repair order be closed out or cancelled by building management without being notified at least one or more times. Conversely, only 43% of respondents stated that they have never experienced an issue when dealing with a repair order with NYCHA.



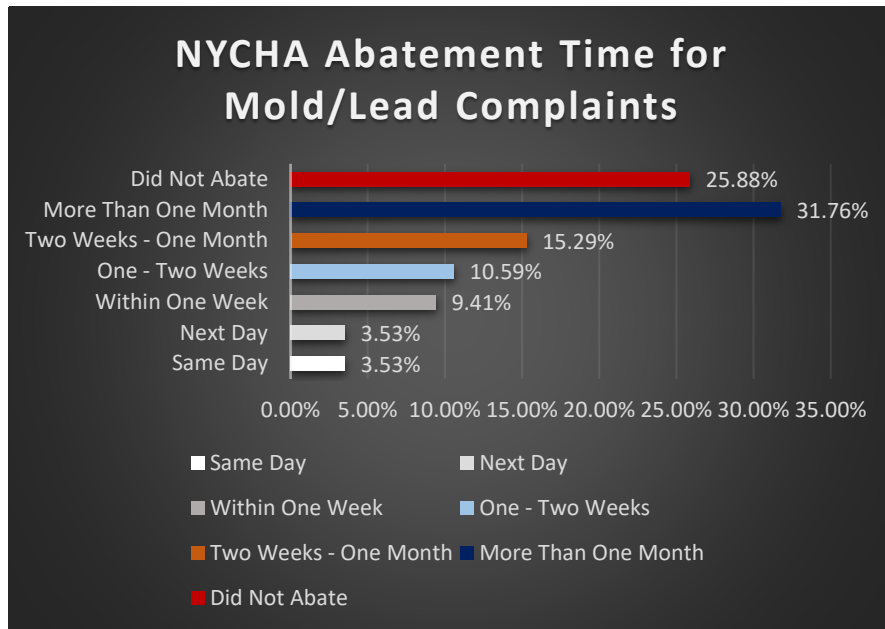
A recent investigative report confirms the horrors that tenants are experiencing. A PIX 11 story aired on April 11, 2017 uncovered that an elderly woman living in the Tompkins Houses in Williamsburg has endured three months with a broken shower and has resorted to cleaning herself with an improvised showerhead comprised of a garden hose attached to her bathroom sink.⁶ The fact that NYCHA has knowingly failed to provide this woman with this very basic of necessities for several months is utterly unacceptable and must be immediately rectified.

We also asked residents about the responsiveness of NYCHA to mold, lead, and general repair requests. What comes as absolutely no surprise following the revelations in the DOI report, individuals who reported having mold and/or lead issues in their apartments generally did not receive prompt and timely responses from NYCHA building management. Of the individuals that reported having issues with mold or lead, 15 percent never received a response from management; 29% stated that management took over one month to respond; 17% reported that management took between two weeks and one month to respond; 7% reported it took between one to two weeks for management to respond; 17% reported that management took one week to respond; and a mere 16% stated that management responded within two days. While only around a quarter of residents

⁶ Morales, Monica. PIX 11 News. “Grandmother bathes with garden hose as she waits months for repairs at Brooklyn home”, April 11, 2017. Available at: <http://pix11.com/2017/04/11/grandmother-bathes-with-garden-hose-as-she-waits-months-for-repairs-at-brooklyn-home/>

receive responses in under one week's time, 44% must wait longer than a month for a response, or receive none at all. This is completely unacceptable.

Actual abatement numbers reported by residents are perhaps even worse than the statistics on response times... Note that the following statistics indicate NYCHA took *some* action to attempt an abatement (except for those who responded "did not abate," indicating that NYCHA did not abate the problem). Resident responses on whether complete/adequate abatement took place follow later, and are far worse, indicating that 64% of respondents feel that NYCHA did not completely abate the problem they reported.

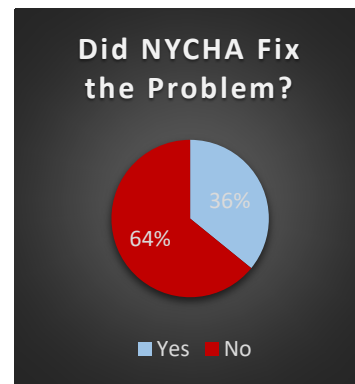
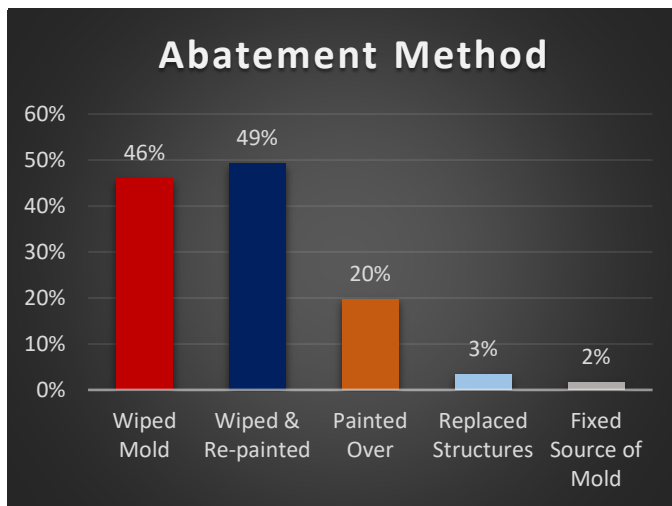


NYCHA's actions to physically remediate lead and mold received poor marks. **An astounding 26 percent of respondents noted that NYCHA management never remediated their mold or lead issue after they reported it.** Thirty-two percent of tenants noted that it took NYCHA more than a month to engage in remediation efforts while 15% stated that management engaged in remediation between two weeks and one month of the initial report. Further, 11% reported that remediation was complete in one to two weeks of reporting; 9% noted that remediation was completed within one week; and 6% stated that remediation took place within two days of reporting the issue.

Another concern beyond NYCHA's dangerously slow response times to these issues is their ineffective remediation methods used for mold abatement. Of those that reported that NYCHA responded to their mold issue, only one tenant noted that management actually fixed the source of or the actual structural deficiency that was causing the mold issue. Further, only two tenants reported that building management took the time to actually remove pieces of the structure affected by the mold (drywall, wood, tile) and replace it with new materials. Twenty percent said that NYCHA painted directly over the mold without first cleaning it, 49% stated that workers cleaned

the mold and re-painted the affected area, and 46% noted that workers merely wiped the mold away with a disinfectant.

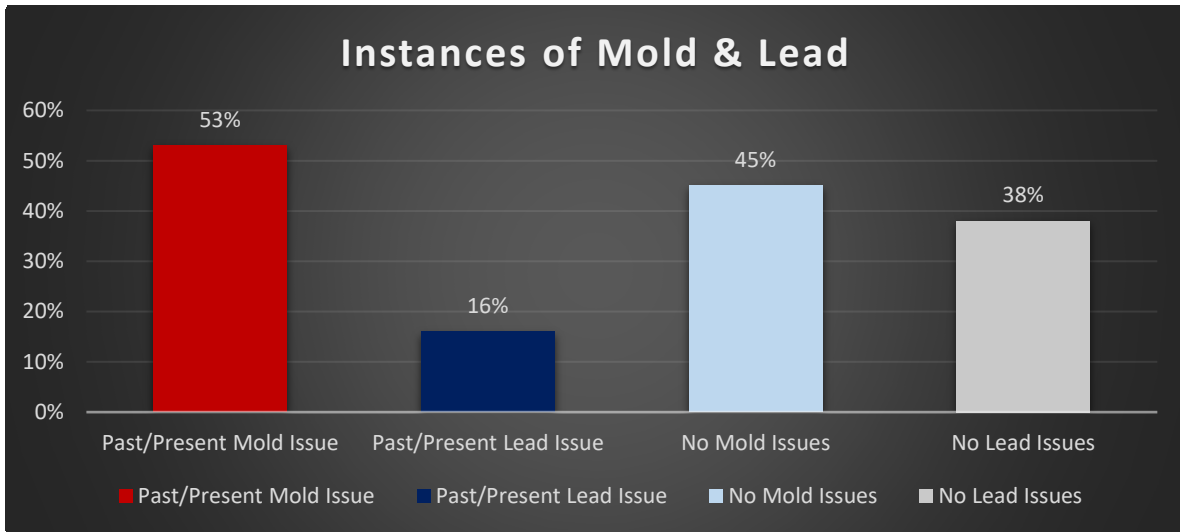
Based on these sub-par remediation efforts, it is not surprising that 64% of respondents also noted that NYCHA did not completely fix their mold issue. Residents were allowed to check multiple options in the question regarding abatement methods used by NYCHA, so responses add up to more than 100% in the abatement method graph below.



Mold & Lead – 2017 Survey

Around 69% of respondents reported that they either currently have a mold or lead issue in their apartment or have had one in the past. About one-third of tenants that cited a current and/or past mold or lead issue also reported that either they or someone in their household has asthma or some sort of respiratory issue. It is noteworthy that in New York City’s poorest neighborhoods, asthma is a leading cause of emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and school absences.⁷

⁷ New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. [Asthma Initiative](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/asthma/facts.pdf), May 2003. Available at: <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/asthma/facts.pdf>



ABC 7 published an example of widespread mold issues in NYCHA housing and management’s unresponsiveness in a November 2016 story.⁸ A woman and her two children living in NYCHA housing in Brooklyn waited three years for broken pipes, mold, and a collapsing ceiling in the children’s bedroom to be remedied. The serious delay on the part of NYCHA to abate black mold caused one of the young children living in the affected bedroom to suffer from repeated asthma attacks.

Further evidence of NYCHA’s poor customer service and failure to abate serious mold issues is illustrated in the case of a woman living in the Jacob Riis Housing Complex located on the Lower East Side. In an August 2016 investigative story, DNAinfo reported that after six repair requests from the tenant and a medical note from the tenant’s doctor, it took NYCHA over a year to properly fix leaking pipes, mold, and holes in the bathroom wall of her unit.⁹ The affected tenant also suffered from asthma and experienced an infection following a liver transplant that she attributed to the lingering mold in her bathroom.

In response to thousands of mold complaints, NYCHA recently announced a new “Mold Busters” program that would provide for more effective remediation and abatement.¹⁰ This pilot program intends to train NYCHA building management and employees on equipment and best practices used in identifying the sources of mold, abatement methods, and preventing its recurrence.¹¹ NYCHA’s initiative to establish such a program is certainly long overdue given the overwhelming issues of mold being reported by tenants, but nonetheless is a small step in the right direction to

⁸ Nelson, Rob. ABC 7 News. “Family’s NYCHA apartment in Brooklyn filled with mold, water damage”, November 30, 2016. Available at: <http://abc7ny.com/news/familys-nycha-apartment-filled-with-mold-water-damage/1633027/>

⁹ Hobbs, Allegra. DNA INFO. “Woman with Asthma, Liver Infections Has Waited Months for NYCHA Mold Repair”, August 31, 2016. Available at: <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20160831/lower-east-side/woman-with-asthma-liver-infections-has-waited-months-for-nycha-mold-repair>

¹⁰ New York City Housing Authority. “NYCHA LAUNCHES MOLD BUSTERS, NEW PILOT PROGRAM TO COMBAT MOLD”, April 24, 2016. Available at: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2017/nycha-launches-mold-busters-new-pilot-porgram-to-combat-mold-20170424.page>

¹¹ Ibid.

improving quality of life for residents. Indeed, the effectiveness of the program will hinge on NYCHA’s follow-through and ability to stick to the standards that they seek to establish internally, which, history proves and this report highlights, is not likely due to the many issues with management at all levels within the Authority.

In July 2017, the Authority’s officials admitted to “watering down” their testing protocols for lead (in reality, they had not been doing any routine testing for years), allegedly in order to direct more time and resources toward capital repairs. Failure to conduct lead inspections has put all residents, particularly young children, at risk for serious, long-term, and potentially irreversible health effects. As previously mentioned, around 4,200 NYCHA apartments occupied by children contain lead; this is alarming because medical research demonstrates that children are the most vulnerable population to lead poisoning, which can lead to neurological, developmental and other serious health disorders in both the long and short term depending on toxicity levels and length of exposure.¹²

Staff conducting these surveys were able to capture multiple pictures of the severe mold conditions plaguing NYCHA residents, such as the ones below:



Mold covers the wall of a Bronx NYCHA apartment (2017).



A severe case of black mold in a NYCHA apartment (2017).

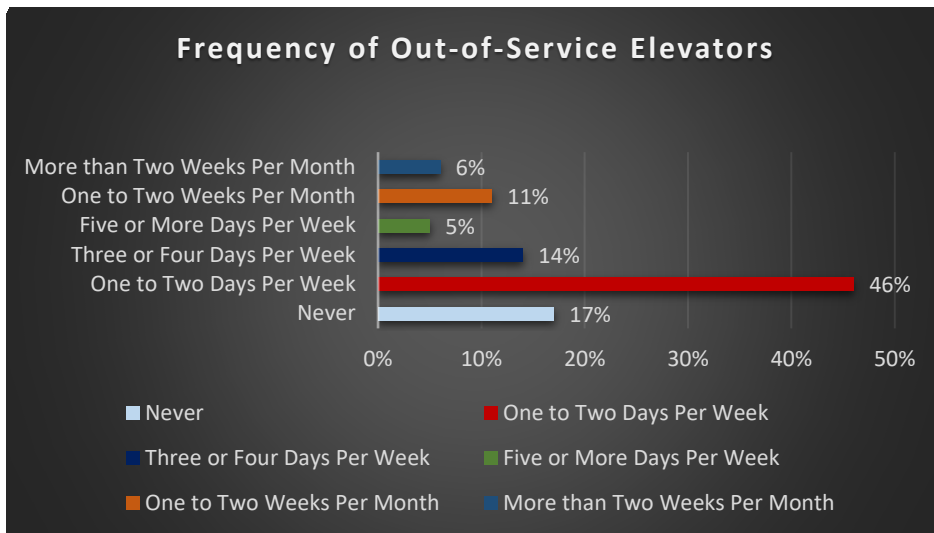


Black mold creeps up the wall of a Bronx NYCHA Apartment (2017).

Structural Integrity & Safety – 2017 Survey

Surveyed NYCHA residents repeatedly voiced their dissatisfaction with unreliable and spotty elevator service in their buildings. This issue was largely reported by senior citizens, who are most in need of elevators to access their dwellings located on the upper stories. The chart below demonstrates that an astounding 46% of respondents reported that elevators in their building were out of service at least one to two days per week. Further, 14% noted elevators being out of service three to four days each week; 5% reported outages of five or more days per week; 11% reported outages of one to two weeks per month; and 5% noted that elevators in their building are not in working order more than two weeks out of every month.

¹² Yona et al. “Childhood Lead Poisoning”, 2010. Available at: <http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/leadguidance.pdf>



It is further noteworthy that in December 2015, an elderly man residing at the NYCHA property at Boston Road Plaza was tragically killed in an elevator accident due to the improper handling of a tenant complaint on the part of NYCHA. The New York Post reported in March 2016 that a Boston Road Plaza tenant in fact reported the faulty elevator to NYCHA an hour and a half before the man stepped foot into the elevator, demonstrating that NYCHA clearly improperly handled the complaint.¹³ NYCHA management also admitted to poor elevator maintenance and a breakdown in their internal response protocols for elevator outages during an April 2016 New York City Council Public Housing Committee hearing about the Boston Road Plaza incident. In his testimony, NYCHA General Manager, Michael Kelly, stated that, "... this incident was the result of equipment and part failures; people failures; communications breakdowns, and most concerning – a fractured culture or dismissive way of thinking by some".¹⁴ This tragedy illustrates the desperate need for reform and enhanced accountability at all levels within the Authority.

While collecting survey responses, one elderly NYCHA resident noted that elevators in her building are out of service every other weekend from 5:30 p.m. Friday night through 9:00 a.m. the following Monday morning. This routine elevator outage has severely disrupted this woman's life. She cannot even go grocery shopping during these times because she does not have the physical capacity to carry bags of food items up several flights of stairs. What is even more concerning is that her "Meals on Wheels" cannot be delivered during these outages because the delivery service needs access to an elevator to carry the food up to her apartment.

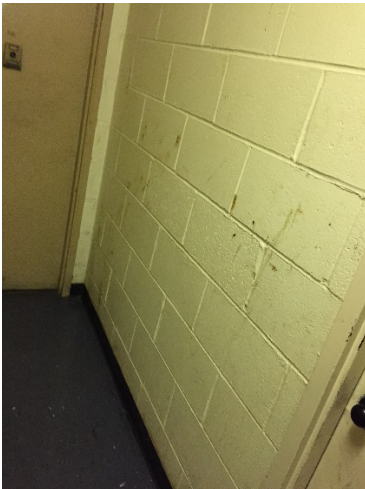
¹³ Gonen, Yoav. New York Post. "Housing Authority was warned about elevator hours before deadly accident", March 30, 2016. Available at: <http://nypost.com/2016/03/30/housing-authority-was-warned-about-elevator-hours-before-deadly-accident/>

¹⁴ Testimony from NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly: "Examining Elevator Safety in NYCHA Housing Following the Death of Olegario Pabon at Boston Road Plaza". Available at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/elevator-safety-testimony-20160421.pdf>

Staff conducting these surveys were able to capture multiple pictures of the severe structural deficiencies in NYCHA buildings, such as the ones below:



Cardboard and tape is used to cover exposed wall (2017).



Hallway wall is covered with tobacco and other stains (2017).



Paint is crumbling off of a hallway ceiling from what looks to be a leak. Mold is also evident (2017).

Continued Problem Areas for NYCHA

As mentioned earlier, this report marks the third in a series of investigations of NYCHA conducted by the IDC since 2015. In each report, staff members of the IDC, with assistance from NYC Council staff and other advocacy groups, surveyed a variety of NYCHA residents across New York City regarding these general topics:

- quality of apartment and building;
- management’s responsiveness to repair requests;
- overall customer service that NYCHA offers; and
- residents’ safety and comfort level in their dwellings.

While questions in each survey varied to address slightly different aspects of NYCHA, data concerning the overall condition of NYCHA properties, tenants’ safety, and general NYCHA customer service yielded similar results across the investigations.

Maintenance & Repairs

In the 2015 survey, over 92% of respondents said they had made a maintenance or repair complaint to NYCHA during the last two years. Of those respondents that actually had NYCHA complete repairs, 56% said they were either “disappointed” or “less than satisfied” with the quality of NYCHA’s repair efforts. Similar results were found in the 2017 survey when residents were asked about NYCHA’s quality of mold abatement. Of the respondents that reported having mold issues in their units and NYCHA engaged in remediation efforts, 64% stated that NYCHA did not “completely fix the problem”. When compared with the 2015 data, it is apparent that residents are significantly less satisfied with the quality of NYCHA repair work than they were in 2015.

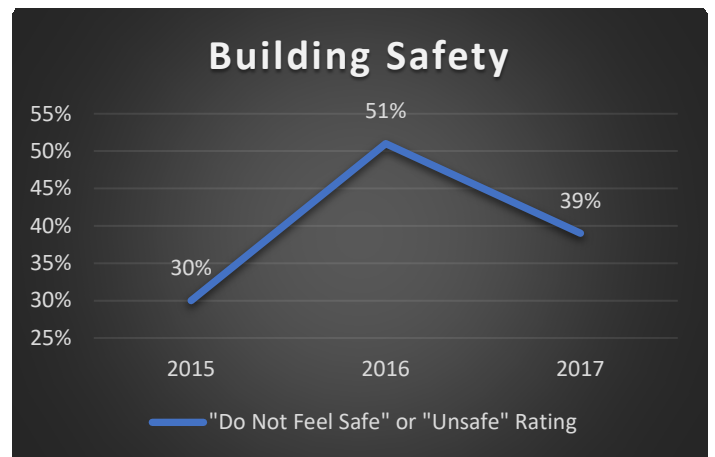
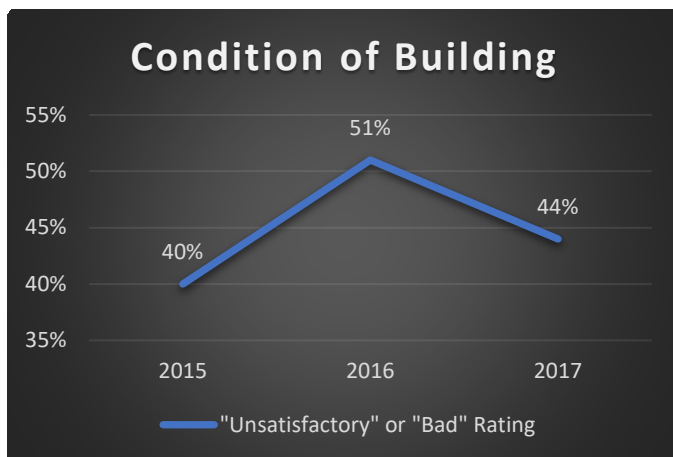
Condition of NYCHA Properties & Tenant Safety Concerns

Since 2015, an average of 45% of NYCHA residents surveyed have scored their building as being in “unsatisfactory” or “bad” condition overall. The highest percentage of poor marks in terms of building conditions came in 2016, with 51% of survey respondents grading overall condition as being “unsatisfactory” or worse.

- 2015 – 40% of tenants rated their building as being in “unsatisfactory” or “bad” condition
- 2016 – 51% of tenants rated their building as being in “unsatisfactory” or “bad” condition
- 2017 – 44% of tenants rated their building as being in “unsatisfactory” or “bad” condition

With respect to safety in NYCHA buildings and individual dwellings, survey results in the last three years reveal an uptick in tenant insecurity in 2016, similar to that of building condition ratings by survey respondents. The average across all three surveys yields that 40% of residents surveyed feel “less than safe”, “usually do not feel safe”, or “do not feel safe” in their building.

- 2015 – 30% of tenants feel “less than safe” or “unsafe” in their homes
- 2016 – 51% of tenants feel “unsafe” due to the physical condition of their building
- 2017 – 39% of tenants “usually do not feel safe” or “do not feel safe” due to the physical condition of their building



When comparing the survey data from 2015 through 2017, it is evident that both the overall condition of NYCHA buildings and the safety of NYCHA properties has gotten worse over time. Both data sets saw a significant uptick in poor ratings in 2016. It is also noteworthy that the data for building safety tracks with the findings for building condition, thus allowing us to reasonably conclude that poor building conditions generally make residents feel unsafe.

Photo evidence captured by staff members conducting surveys demonstrates the similar instances of crumbling ceilings, peeling paint (potentially contaminated with lead), mold, and graffiti throughout NYCHA buildings and individual units in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

2015



2016



2017



2015



2016



2017



IDC Funding for NYCHA

In 2015, the IDC successfully advocated for a state budget appropriation of \$100 million in J.P. Morgan settlement funds for desperately needed repairs and upgrades to NYCHA properties. However, longstanding mistrust of the Authority's ability to manage their resources led to a state allocation with parameters that dampened its effectiveness and constricted NYCHA's use of such funds. While a portion of this pot of money was utilized for modest capital improvements, the IDC recognizes the pressing need for NYCHA oversight. The Conference continues to push for reforms that would enhance the transparency of the Authority and restore state officials' and

taxpayer confidence in the Authority so that future appropriations will have more flexibility, thus allowing NYCHA to utilize them in a manner that will achieve its intended goals.

In a renewed effort, the IDC, in partnership with their legislative colleagues, secured a \$200 million appropriation for NYCHA in the 2017-2018 state budget. This funding is specifically earmarked for capital projects so that the Authority can begin repairing severely compromised infrastructure throughout its housing stock. Given the severity of the proposed HUD budget cuts discussed earlier, \$200 million in state-sponsored capital will ensure that much-needed repairs to NYCHA buildings and individual apartment units will continue over the short term. While the future viability of HUD and NYCHA both remain a question, for now, this investment will directly improve the quality of life for many NYCHA tenants awaiting fixes to chipping/cracked lead paint, leaking roofs, mold, broken lighting, and a host of other issues that have been kicked down the road due to previous funding shortfalls. The IDC insists that available funding also be used to fully restore NYCHA's lead testing protocols in compliance with any and all City, State, and Federal requirements.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

1. Establish an Independent Monitor

It is critical that NYCHA submit itself to greater oversight in order to restore public trust and demonstrate that it can effectively manage new capital support provided by the State and City of New York. The IDC introduced a proposal, S.5788 (Klein), which would establish an Independent Monitor to oversee NYCHA. The monitor would be responsible for ensuring that NYCHA capital spending is being effectively used and would be given the power to intervene if it finds that projects are being mismanaged. Further, the Independent Monitor would be required to submit an annual report to the Governor, State Legislature, New York City Mayor, and the New York City Council citing the overall condition of NYCHA, any issues identified in the previous year, and any action that NYCHA took to remediate such issues.

Since the DOI's findings regarding NYCHA's failure to test contaminated apartments for lead-based health risks, public officials have begun calling for an independent monitor over the Authority. The IDC has maintained for some time, even prior to the lead revelations, that the conditions at NYCHA have been long-standing and compelling proof that better oversight is *absolutely necessary*; since the beginning of 2017, the IDC has carried the independent monitor proposal in the State legislature, and has passed the measure through the Senate twice.

2. Enhance Reporting Requirements & Transparency

The IDC has put forth legislation, S.1989 (Klein), which would empower the New York City Council to obtain information and regular reports from NYCHA concerning the conditions of its developments. In addition, this measure would require the Public Housing Committee of the City Council to hold annual hearings to examine the performance and management of NYCHA, thereby enhancing the accountability and transparency of the Authority. By allowing the City Council access to NYCHA's books, officials and taxpayers will be able to see both how the Authority is

spending money and if its spending practices are fiscally sound and responsible. The Senate unanimously passed the bill this year, and the IDC continues to push for its passage by the Assembly.

3. Seek Assistance from Private Developers

As discussed throughout this report, NYCHA continues its poor customer service record. In order to enhance service and ensure that inspections, repairs, and abatements are completed properly and efficiently, the IDC proposes a Certificate Repair Program that would incentivize private developers to more promptly address repair requests. This measure, S.1990 (Klein), would reward private developers that conduct repairs to NYCHA buildings with enhanced development rights when the city rezones areas for increased development. This proposal would also benefit NYCHA residents by significantly expediting the repair process. Further, the IDC is ready and willing to work with developers to identify potential training opportunities for NYCHA residents so that they can pursue meaningful careers.

4. Establish Appropriate Mold Remediation Standards for NYCHA

The IDC is committed to protecting NYCHA residents from the harmful effects of mold. Existing New York State labor law mandates that mold assessments and remediation be conducted by licensed professionals to ensure that abatement is completed according to established standards and that individuals performing such work are held accountable. Unfortunately, this law also exempts mold assessment and remediation work done by public entities like NYCHA from the licensing requirement. Effectively, this loophole allows NYCHA to employ individuals who are not licensed to assess and abate mold. The fact that NYCHA properties have hundreds of documented cases of mold coupled with remediation being performed by untrained and unlicensed professionals puts residents at risk for serious health issues.

While the IDC recognizes the recent efforts on the part of NYCHA to train and better equip their employees in identifying and abating mold, more stringent requirements are needed to ensure compliance. To that end, the IDC has introduced a proposal, S.5696 (Savino), which would close the existing licensing loophole by extending the licensing requirements for mold assessment and remediation to NYCHA. This measure would build on NYCHA's own internal efforts by mandating that all mold related repairs on its properties are completed in accordance with the same standards imposed on private sector assessment and remediation efforts.

5. Enhance Accessibility of NYCHA Units

In order to ensure that residents with a disability and the elderly are able to easily access their apartment units, the IDC championed legislation (S.2720, by Senator Hamilton) that would require NYCHA to give preference to mobility-impaired residents living on an upper floor apartment when a comparable apartment on a lower floor of such building becomes available. This bill passed both houses of the legislature during the 2017 session and the IDC urges the Governor to promptly approve this common sense reform.

CONCLUSION

NYCHA housing is the largest single collection of affordable apartments in New York City, making it a critical asset for hundreds of thousands of low-income individuals and families. For too long, this vital housing stock has been allowed to deteriorate through years of neglect and poor stewardship. Likewise, longstanding practices of poor customer service and mismanagement at all levels must be remedied. The findings of the survey conducted by the IDC and Councilman Torres' office highlight the serious physical defects in NYCHA housing that tenants are forced to deal with on a daily basis.

Residents report structural problems lingering for months and years both in their own apartments and in their buildings, without any response from management. In cases where NYCHA does respond, their repair and abatement efforts often do not completely or adequately address the issues. Further, it is not surprising that many tenants do not feel safe for themselves and their families because of these structural deficiencies and instances of lead and mold that are directly affecting their health and well-being. Many residents willing to answer questions about the quality of the services that NYCHA provides its tenants rated both poorly.

Additionally, the proposed federal budget cuts to HUD and their projected \$300 to \$400 million impact on NYCHA give reason for serious concern for the Authority, tenants, and state and local officials. The over \$1.3 billion in state and city support earmarked in FY 2018 spending plans will certainly help mitigate these proposed federal funding reductions, if they are eventually ratified, and provide for some modest relief to tenants, but further long-term investments are needed. The IDC recognizes that regardless of the outcome of the FY 2018 federal budget, significantly more capital support for NYCHA is needed in future years to chip away at their severe capital repair backlog.

In concert with these efforts to secure additional capital dollars, the IDC remains equally as committed to holding NYCHA accountable to taxpayers by ensuring that they spend federal, state, and city aid in a manner that will directly improve the quality of NYCHA's housing stock and provide the high level of customer service that all tenants deserve. The IDC continues to work with residents, advocates, fellow legislators, local officials, and with NYCHA itself to ensure that our public housing is being managed in the most effective, transparent, and responsible manner. Particularly in light of looming federal budget cuts, the IDC believes that the implementation of the "NYCHA 2020" plan is the first step towards achieving these goals and securing the future of quality, affordable housing in New York City.

Appendix. Photo Evidence of Poor Living Conditions (2017)











