



Advancing research and debate
on housing, neighborhoods,
and urban policy

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Report: NYCHA's Outsized Role in Housing New York's Poorest Households

New fact brief details critical role NYCHA plays in housing lowest-income New Yorkers

New York, NY – A new fact brief by the NYU Furman Center outlines the critical role the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) plays in providing stable housing for the city's poorest households. In 2017 over 60 percent of the roughly 174,000 households in NYCHA's public housing developments earned 30 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) or less. That translates to just \$28,600 annually for a family of four. These households would have few housing options in New York City without the affordability offered in public housing. Read *NYCHA's Outsized Role in Housing New York's Poorest Households*.

As the largest landlord in New York, NYCHA units represent almost six percent of all occupied housing citywide, and almost nine percent of all occupied rental housing. The city's public housing provides shelter to substantially more households than any other place-based housing assistance program in the city, including housing developed through the Low-Income Tax Credit program, which has been the major source of affordable housing production for the past three decades.

"Preserving the deeply affordable housing NYCHA provides is essential for maintaining the economic and racial diversity of New York's neighborhoods," said Ingrid Gould Ellen, Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center. "Putting NYCHA on sound financial and structural footing should be a top priority for federal, state, and local policymakers."

The fact brief details how income-based rents make public housing a unique source of affordable housing in the city by providing lower median rents than other types of affordable housing, enabling tenants to remain stably housed during setbacks or periods of financial hardship. The average rent for an apartment in public housing was \$601 per month, substantially less than the average contract rent in other subsidized housing programs, and less than half the median rent for unsubsidized housing.

As recently as 2002, NYCHA's portfolio represented just 36 percent of all units citywide renting for less than \$500. By 2017, NYCHA's share of these deeply affordable units had grown to 64 percent, reflecting the rapid disappearance of housing affordable for extremely low-income households outside of public housing. Nearly 90 percent of such households living outside of public housing

were classified as severely rent burdened, paying over 50 percent of their income towards rent, and another eight percent were considered moderately rent burdened, paying between 30 and 50 percent of income towards monthly housing costs.

“NYCHA dominates the landscape of affordable housing for the lowest income families,” said Vicki Been, Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center. “As housing costs continue their ascent across the city, public housing is becoming the last refuge for households who cannot afford to pay the citywide average of \$1,595 in monthly rent.”

Read the brief: [NYCHA's Outsized Role in Housing New York's Poorest Households >>>](#)

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About the NYU Furman Center

The NYU Furman Center advances research and debate on housing, neighborhoods, and urban policy. Established in 1995, it is a joint center of the New York University School of Law and the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. More information can be found at furmancenter.org and [@FurmanCenterNYU](https://twitter.com/FurmanCenterNYU).