



# Obstacles and Options for Maintaining Affordability in the City's Unsubsidized Housing Stock

Wednesday, December 3rd, 2014 | 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. | New York University School of Law | #NYChousing

**PANELISTS:** **Jim Buckley**  
Executive Director, University Neighborhood Housing Program

**Rafael Cestero**  
President and CEO, The Community Preservation Corporation

**Daniel Hernandez**  
Deputy Commissioner, Neighborhood Strategies, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

**Ismene Speliotis**  
Executive Director, Mutual Housing Association of New York

**MODERATOR:** **Mark A. Willis**  
Executive Director and Resident Research Fellow, NYU Furman Center

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## ABOUT THE PANELISTS

### JIM BUCKLEY

#### Executive Director, University Neighborhood Housing Program

Jim Buckley is the Executive Director of University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP). Mr. Buckley has worked in the Northwest Bronx with community-based non-profits for more than 35 years. He became the founding director of UNHP in 1989. UNHP's mission is to create, preserve, and improve affordable housing in the Northwest Bronx and New York City. Mr. Buckley serves as an adjunct faculty member at the College of Mount Saint Vincent and Manhattan College. He received his B.A. from Fordham University and his M.S.W. from Hunter College School of Social Work.

### RAFAEL CESTERO

#### President and CEO, The Community Preservation Corporation

Rafael E. Cestero has served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) and its for-profit development subsidiary, CPC Resources, Inc. (CPCR) since January 2012. In 1974, CPC was created to stem a tide of abandonment in New York City. Since then, CPC has financed the preservation and development of more than 133,000 residential multifamily units in New York State, involving public and private investments of over \$7 billion. In February of 2009, Mr. Cestero was appointed by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD). He served as Commissioner from February 2009 until April 2011. During his two-year tenure at HPD, Mr. Cestero was instrumental in implementing Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan to finance the creation or preservation of 165,000 units of affordable housing to New Yorkers by the close of the 2014 fiscal year. Additionally, he led HPD's Proactive Preservation Program, a \$750 million initiative to stabilize distressed multifamily properties across New York City. Prior to being appointed Commissioner, Mr. Cestero served as the Deputy Commissioner of Development at HPD from 2004-2007 leading a team at HPD which financed the construction of over 15,000 units of affordable housing each year. Mr. Cestero has held leadership positions at L+M Development Partners where he was a Managing Director and at Enterprise Community Partners where he worked for 15 years in various capacities including Director of New York Programs, and Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer for the national Enterprise Community Partners. Mr. Cestero received his Masters degree in Urban Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received his undergraduate degree in Public Policy Analysis from Cornell University.

### DANIEL HERNANDEZ

#### Deputy Commissioner, Neighborhood Strategies, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Daniel Hernandez leads HPD's Office of Neighborhood Strategies, which works to ensure that the agency's investments leverage broader community objectives. The office combines HPD's Planning, Inclusionary Housing, and Community Partnerships divisions. Mr. Hernandez' career has covered many aspects of affordable housing and economic development across the country and internationally. He served as the Executive Director of Mission Housing, one of the nation's leading affordable housing development corporations located in San Francisco where he developed award-winning affordable housing in a low-income, predominantly Latino, neighborhood. At Jonathan Rose Companies, Mr. Hernandez participated in the planning and development of the firm's own projects, and created a Planning Practice to provide real estate consulting and project management services to other developers, non-profit organizations, HUD and public housing authorities, and municipal planning and redevelopment agencies, including the NYC Economic Development Corporation, the NYC Department of City Planning, and the NYC Department of Transportation. Upon leaving Jonathan Rose Companies, Mr. Hernandez started his own consulting firm, Topology, to focus on the planning, design, finance, and implementation of mixed-use, mixed-income housing and urban development projects. He is also an adjunct professor at the Pratt Institute where he teaches a studio on large-scale urban redevelopment. Mr. Hernandez studied at the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and is a Loeb Fellow at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. He is committed to community engagement, urban design excellence, and planning and developing equitable neighborhoods.

## ABOUT THE PANELISTS (cont'd)

### **ISMENE SPELIOTIS**

#### **Executive Director, Mutual Housing Association of New York**

Ismene Speliotis has 25 years of experience implementing affordable housing and community development programs. All of her work has focused on very low-income neighborhoods and on meeting the needs of low- and moderate-income families. As Executive Director, Ms. Speliotis has increased the Mutual Housing Association of New York's (MHANY) development portfolio to over 1,500 apartments in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens and has expanded its development initiatives to the surrounding region with a 50-unit rehabilitation project in Paterson, New Jersey. The homeownership program has increased to counsel hundreds of potential homebuyers and generate over 100 first time home buyers annually. Over 1,000 families have received foreclosure prevention counseling services. Prior to coming to MHANY, Ms. Speliotis co-founded the non-profit organization, Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation, and played a leading role in the redevelopment of the Morrisania Hospital in the Bronx. The former hospital was converted into 132 affordable apartments, a kitchen incubator and take out business center, a child care center, a health care facility, and a classroom training space. Ms. Speliotis has also been involved with several other housing development projects including the gut rehabilitation of over 700 apartments in the Highbridge section of the Bronx. Her community development work began in Highbridge where she was responsible for developing and administering a lead poison testing and prevention program. Ms. Speliotis has a Masters degree in Urban Public Health from Columbia University and a B.A. from Barnard College.

### **MARK A. WILLIS (Moderator)**

#### **Executive Director and Resident Research Fellow, NYU Furman Center**

Mark Willis is the Executive Director and a Resident Research Fellow at the NYU Furman Center. Before joining the Center, Mr. Willis was a Visiting Scholar at the Ford Foundation, working on research related to community development and the financial services sector. Prior to his time at Ford, Mr. Willis spent 19 years at JPMorgan Chase, overseeing its community development programs and products to help strengthen low- and moderate-income communities. Among his many accomplishments there, Mr. Willis founded the Chase Community Development Corporation. Before joining Chase, he held various positions in economic development and tax policy with the City of New York, including Deputy Commissioner for Development at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and was an urban economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Mr. Willis teaches Housing and Community Development Policy at NYU's Wagner School and speaks often on urban, housing, and community development affairs. He chairs the Program Planning Committee of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and is on a number of other boards involved with housing and community development. He has a B.A. in economics from Yale University, a J.D. from Harvard Law School, and a Ph.D. in urban economics and industrial organization from Yale University.

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The NYU Furman Center advances research and debate on housing, neighborhoods, and urban policy. It is a joint center of the New York University School of Law and the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

The Moelis Institute for Affordable Housing Policy works to improve the effectiveness of affordable housing policies and programs by providing housing practitioners and policymakers with information about what's working and what isn't, and about promising new ideas and innovative practices.

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