

Media Contact:

Charles McNally
charles.mcnally@nyu.edu
212-998-6492

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2019

Report: Public Housing is a Key Element in Sustaining New York City's Racial and Ethnic Diversity

New fact brief details crucial role NYCHA plays in maintaining racial and ethnic diversity in New York's changing neighborhoods

New York, NY— A new fact brief published by the NYU Furman Center outlines the critical role that the public housing plays in preserving racial, ethnic, and economic diversity in the city's gentrifying and higher-income neighborhoods. The brief builds on previous work by the NYU Furman Center outlining [NYCHA's outsized role in housing the lowest-income New Yorkers](#). That crucial role in the affordable housing landscape combined with the geographic distribution of public housing developments in gentrifying neighborhoods means that many of the city's neighborhoods owe their diversity to NYCHA's public housing developments. [Read How NYCHA Preserves Diversity in New York's Changing Neighborhoods](#).

"Policymakers interested in maintaining the economic and racial diversity of New York's gentrifying neighborhoods should prioritize the preservation of public housing," said Ingrid Gould Ellen, Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center. "Public housing provides some of the city's most vulnerable populations access to affordable housing in resource-rich neighborhoods."

In 2017, a third of the city's public housing units could be found in the ten most economically diverse neighborhoods, yet only a fifth of all housing units were located in those ten neighborhoods. Without public housing residents included, the racial diversity of many neighborhoods would decrease, particularly in several of the city's gentrifying and higher-income neighborhoods including Astoria, the Lower East Side/Chinatown, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and East Harlem.

The fact brief details how the loss of public housing would yield a loss of access in gentrifying and higher-income neighborhoods for low-income New Yorkers. In 2017, the median household income for all public housing residents was \$18,473 whereas the median household income for residents of all other housing was \$61,297. Amid rising rents, low-income households have significant barriers to accessing affordable housing.

“NYCHA’s challenges should not obscure the benefits it provides to New York City and its neighborhoods,” said Matthew Murphy, Executive Director of the NYU Furman Center. “As we debate the future of this crucial housing stock, it is vital to remember that NYCHA’s public housing is an anchor to New York City’s diverse population.”

Over 85 percent of NYCHA units are located in gentrifying or high-income neighborhoods. Previous research conducted by the NYU Furman Center and Abt Associates shows that [children living in public housing units located in more affluent neighborhoods scored higher on standardized math and reading tests](#), and adults had higher earnings.

The fact brief highlighting NYCHA’s role in New York’s racial and ethnic diversity comes on the final day Fair Housing Month, an annual commemoration of the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968. The act as amended bars discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability.

###

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).