

# Ombudsperson Call Center Report – Q8 August 1, 2021 – October 31, 2021

STOUT RISIUS ROSS, LLC

*Baez, et al. v. New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA),*  
No. 13-cv-8916 (WHP)

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On April 17, 2014, Judge William H. Pauley of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (the “Court”) approved a Consent Decree obligating NYCHA to abate mold and excessive moisture and their root causes in a timely and effective manner. In July 2018, the Court approved the Revised Consent Decree (“RCD”), which included the appointment of an independent Ombudsperson. Since September 20, 2019, the Court appointed César de Castro as the Ombudsperson to address NYCHA residents’ complaints about leak, mold, and excessive moisture repair orders and Stout Risius Ross, LLC (“Stout”) to operate the Ombudsperson’s call center (“OCC”).

The OCC was developed to assist residents in situations where their mold and leak-related complaints are not being adequately addressed or resolved by NYCHA. NYCHA residents can reach an independent party (the OCC) that offers effective and empathetic listening, proactive communication, and timely case management to ensure their complaint is addressed. Throughout this process, the OCC ensures that resident complaints promptly resolved by NYCHA and works with NYCHA to use information gathered through the process as opportunities to refine and transform NYCHA’s culture and operational processes. The OCC and the Ombudsperson, working collaboratively with the *Baez* Plaintiffs, plaintiff organizations, the Special Master, the court-appointed Independent Data Analyst (“IDA”), the court-appointed Independent Mold Analyst (“IMA”) and NYCHA (collectively herein as the “Parties”), has been successful in its efforts to assist NYCHA residents with mold and leak related complaints and identify opportunities for systemic operational change at NYCHA. Understanding the feedback from both the residents’ perspective as well as the operations perspective offers a unique opportunity for ongoing and sustainable transformative change in NYCHA’s response to mold and leaks, and its efforts to effectively prevent recurrence and improve resident communication.

This report provides an update and overview of the OCC operations, activities, and call center metrics for the eighth reporting period from August 1, 2021, through October 31, 2021 (“Quarter 8” or “Q8”).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the Court’s Order on September 20, 2019, this report is filed independently from the Ombudsperson.

## I. Executive Summary

The OCC has been available for NYCHA residents for nearly 2 years and has assisted over 8,000 NYCHA residents with mold and leak-related complaints. The OCC has proven to be a very successful outlet for NYCHA residents to seek the help they need towards living in a healthier home, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> As of the end of Q8, NYCHA had over 62,500 open parent mold and leak work orders associated with mold and leaks in nearly 44,000 unique apartments (or 27% of all NYCHA apartments), of which 92% were open for greater than 7 or 15-days.<sup>3</sup> As such, nearly 40,500 unique apartments were eligible for the OCC's assistance in Q8.

NYCHA remains committed to the success of OCC operations by providing resources to service resident-reported complaints and work to expedite the necessary repair activity to ensure its residents are living in a healthier home. Despite unexpected staff turnover, continued disruption arising from the COVID pandemic and other complexities, NYCHA's Mold Response Unit ("MRU") has worked diligently to help NYCHA residents towards living in healthier homes. Efforts have been taken to work with each development (within NYCHA) to improve communication with residents and be held accountable to the quality of work required that can be completed to the resident's satisfaction.

NYCHA's Office of Mold Assessment and Remediation ("OMAR") (which MRU is a part of) and Compliance departments have been particularly instrumental to the success of the operations through its support, collaboration, responsiveness, and implementation of various recommendations for organizational change strategies associated with mold and leaks.

### ***OCC's Impact to Date for NYCHA Residents Includes (but is not limited to):***

- Assisted 8,087 NYCHA residents with 8,811 direct mold and leak-related resident-reported complaints.
- Assisted 10,565 NYCHA residents with at least 11,289 direct and indirect mold and leak-related complaints (including other residents that did not directly contact the OCC for assistance).<sup>4</sup>
- Serviced over 4,100 resident-reported complaints per month (within a quarter).
- Placed over 41,000 calls to NYCHA residents.
- Monitored the completion of more than 39,000 parent and child work orders.
- Collaborated and received referrals from the NYCHA's Monitor (Guidepost Solutions), elected officials, tenant organizers, or other non-profit organizations for over 900 NYCHA residents.
- Collaborated and received referrals from the NYCHA's Compliance department for 456 resident-reported complaints.
- Assisted with relocation (temporary or permanent) for over 175 NYCHA residents.
- Conducted over 80 virtual inspections with NYCHA residents.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to **Appendix A** for more information regarding NYCHA's COVID-19 guidance in relation to mold and leak work order remediation.

<sup>3</sup> The RDC requires that NYCHA completes any mold or leak work orders (within a resident's unit) within 7 or 15-days based on the complexity of the conditions.

<sup>4</sup> For example, this includes resident-reported complaints that involve work in other units (e.g., the floors above or below) or if the resident submits an additional complaint. This number is understated due to a lack of reporting on the number of units that each OCC resident-reported complaint affects.

- Collaborated with at least 15 NYCHA departments regarding resident-reported complaints, systemic operational change opportunities, technical change opportunities, and/or standard procedure improvements.

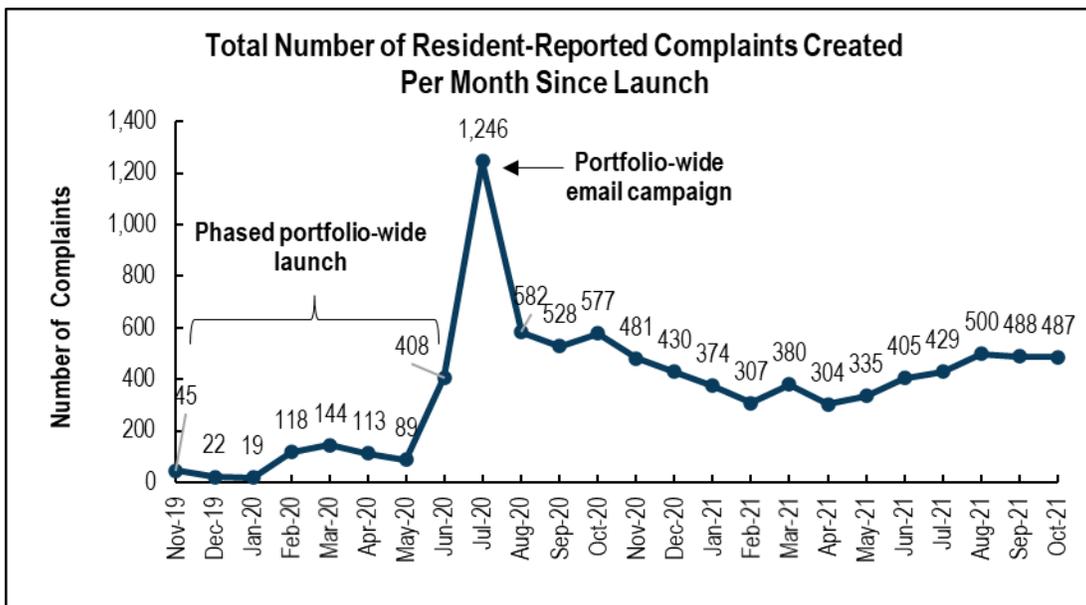
NYCHA’s dedication to better serve its residents and its commitment to ensure the success of the OCC has also been recognized by several sources, including (but not limited to):

- Congressman Ritchie Torres distinguished the Ombudsperson and OCC as “a powerful tool” helping NYCHA residents resolve mold and leak related complaints.
- News reporter Monica Morales from Pix11 News featured a story on the OCC, highlighting resident success stories.
- New York assembly members (15 collectively) issued a joint statement to NYCHA’s Chairman stating (in part) that the OCC and Ombudsperson have helped to ensure that needed repairs can be addressed by NYCHA to improve the quality of life in Public Housing.

**Demand for the OCC’s assistance remains due to the severity of the resident-reported mold and leak conditions.**

As demonstrated in Figure 1, there has been an on-going demand for the OCC’s assistance, with an average of 440 resident-reported complaints per month (after the portfolio-wide launch was completed in July 2020). In Q8, there was a 24% increase of new resident-reported complaints compared to Q7, with an average of 492 resident-reported complaints created per month.

**Figure 1**



In Q8, 45% of new resident-reported complaints created reported severe conditions and 36% reported they were living with respiratory health concerns that may have been caused by or exasperated by their current living conditions. Nearly 90% of the resident-reported complaints required NYCHA to complete substantial

repair work that required several appointments and quality assurance checks to ensure the work was adequately completed. These included on-going leaks and/or severe mold, oftentimes resulting in deteriorated walls, pest infestations, and unhealthy living conditions. For many of the complaints, residents were left with broken or missing fixtures such as sinks, cabinets, toilets, and/or showers or exposed holes in the wall due to wall breaks made to attempt a leak repair. See below for examples of the conditions originally reported by residents to the OCC in Q8:<sup>5</sup>



***The independence of the OCC and Ombudsperson remains essential.***

The independence has been and will continue to be essential to the success of the OCC. The OCC requires NYCHA to be held accountable for its work by following standard procedures, addressing the OCC's questions, and ensuring the resident's satisfaction. This has resulted in positive outcomes for NYCHA residents. More recently, NYCHA has made progress in conducting complex repair activities, ensuring the proper root cause(s) are identified, ensuring the proper remediation steps are being taken (sometimes requiring re-inspections or follow-up work at the OCC's request), and working to re-establish trust with residents. As shown above, the conditions within certain NYCHA units are very severe and NYCHA needs to continue to prioritize its efforts to repair them.

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<sup>5</sup> Progress has been made on each of these complaints, therefore, these pictures do not reflect current conditions. Refer to **Exhibit 1** for additional pictures.

César de Castro, the Ombudsperson, has been actively involved in the OCC. Mr. de Castro has been able to effectively communicate the significance of his appointment, the obligations he has under the Consent Decree, and the actions he can take if NYCHA does not use its best efforts to resolve resident complaints. Mr. de Castro continues to emphasize the need for prompt responses from NYCHA staff to assist and aid in the scheduling and completion of the necessary repair work. Mr. de Castro's extensive experiences engaging with NYCHA residents have been helpful in overcoming communication barriers and working with NYCHA to ensure residents' needs are met.

In Q8, additional efforts were required by the OCC and the Ombudsperson due to the increased number of resident-reported complaints with a lack of progress causing escalation and increased oversight, accounting for 62% of resident-reported complaints serviced in the quarter. As a result, the Ombudsperson issued 120 "Decision & Order" documents to NYCHA across 62 developments on August 23, 2021. The Ombudsperson indicated that each of these Orders had been previously escalated by the OCC and was pending scheduling dates for an extended period. If NYCHA can promptly conduct the necessary repair work and proactively communicate roadblocks from preventing progress on resident-reported complaints to the OCC, requests and Orders from the Ombudsperson can be prevented in future quarters.

***Continuing to raise awareness of the OCC to all residents using multiple communication channels, with frequent distribution, is required.***

In Q8, 40,493 unique apartments were eligible for the OCC's assistance, of which only 4% contacted the OCC with a new resident-reported complaint. There appears to be lack of resident awareness about the OCC.<sup>6</sup> The OCC does not currently conduct independent outreach to NYCHA residents. In Q8, NYCHA's outreach regarding the OCC was on social media only for the month of August. During the quarter, NYCHA did not conduct other outreach channels such as email notifications, rent mailers, robo-calls, flyering, canvassing or targeted phone outreach (as it had done during the initial launch in early 2020).<sup>7</sup> However, in Q7 NYCHA launched a new Mold Campaign that included a multi-channel outreach plan including written materials (educational packet, flyer, posters, door hangers) and social media materials (website, videos, social media posts) which was shared with residents in Q8. Some of that marketing collateral contained information regarding the OCC, which may help improve awareness of the OCC in the future.

In December 2020, legislation was passed that requires the City to provide NYCHA residents with information about the Ombudsperson and the OCC via the distribution of pamphlets, telephone calls and included in a rent statement.<sup>8</sup> The OCC has not been made aware of any progress regarding the implementation of this legislation.

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<sup>6</sup> The OCC has received feedback from tenant organizations, community organizations, and residents (through canvassing activities and Monitor Referrals based on work order reviews) that they were not aware of the OCC.

<sup>7</sup> NYCHA's OCC communication efforts are contemplated within the framework of all resident communication that NYCHA is doing. As such, considering NYCHA communication resources and other communication priorities, NYCHA believed the social media channels utilized were appropriate for promoting the OCC.

<sup>8</sup> **Int. 1911-A** requires that the City provide NYCHA tenants with information about the Mold Ombudsperson, the Ombudsperson's call center, and how to file a complaint about mold. An agency or office designated by the Mayor will distribute pamphlets to NYCHA residents with this information. NYCHA residents will also receive this information via a telephone call. Tenants who are enrolled in electronic billing may receive an email with the information instead of a paper copy. Elected officials and community representatives would also receive pamphlets. The designated office would also be required to hold a public briefing about the Mold Ombudsperson at least once a year. This legislation went into effect immediately and was sponsored by Council Member Ritchie Torres. The bill was passed on December 10, 2020.

The OCC is hopeful that NYCHA will continue to raise awareness of the OCC to all residents using multiple communication channels, with frequent distribution. NYCHA must continue to communicate to residents that the OCC and the Ombudsperson are independent of NYCHA and is an outlet for residents who are not satisfied with NYCHA's efforts.

***Need for effective, empathetic resident communication.***

NYCHA needs to continue to evolve to a customer-centric culture through increased and improved communication with residents regarding the results of inspections, remediation plans, and scheduling of work. It remains that nearly all resident-reported complaints to the OCC have involved a breakdown of communication between the resident and NYCHA. The OCC has identified a variety of resident communication strategies and best practices NYCHA should consider in its efforts to evolve to a more customer-centric culture and train its staff to better engage with residents.<sup>9</sup> NYCHA's Resident Community Associates ("RCA") within MRU, who respond to OCC resident-reported complaints, can set an example of how these strategies and best practices can be implemented. For NYCHA to operate effectively and efficiently, there will need to be a continued culture change to effectively communicate with residents (and internally) with the accountability and commitment needed to ensure that the proper repair work is completed. If this can be achieved, there will be a considerable reduction of resident-reported complaints to the OCC and significant improvements in NYCHA's ability to remediate mold and leaks efficiently and effectively.

***Other Key Observations Acknowledged in Q8 (discussed throughout this report):***

- **Widespread Mold and Leak Conditions** - Unresolved mold and leak conditions persist across NYCHA's portfolio with new resident-reported complaints created across 209 separate developments within all 5 boroughs, with a range of 1 to 45 created per development in Q8.
  - 45% of new resident-reported complaints received by the OCC involved reports of severe conditions and/or a lack of proper repair work leaving the resident without a fully operational apartment.
- **Increased Monitoring is Required** - Total number of resident-reported complaints included in the weekly OCC automated monitoring report (where there is a lack of progress) increased by 35% compared to Q7 and accounted for 62% of tickets serviced within the quarter. Increased responsiveness of certain developments will be critical for the success of NYCHA's MRU and the OCC. The goal is that with increased individual accountability by each development to conduct the proper remediation steps, resident satisfaction will increase and cause a decline in resident-reported complaints to the OCC. In Q8, NYCHA has taken steps to better understand which developments require enhanced oversight and technical assistance to improve its ability to promptly resolve mold and leak conditions.
- **Positive Shift in Resident-Reported Complaint Types** - There was an increase in Scheduling complaints created in Q8 due (in part) to work order backlog from prior COVID-19 restrictions, staffing shortages and a lack of proper communication to resident regarding upcoming scheduling dates causing missed appointments. The OCC observed a 30% increase of reported missed appointments for resident-reported complaints serviced in the quarter. However, the OCC also observed a reduction of Recurrence related complaints to the OCC which is a positive

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to **Exhibit 2** - Resident Communication Strategies and Scheduling Best Practices.

indicator that the work being performed by NYCHA related to OCC monitored repairs are addressing and resolving the root cause of the mold or leak condition.

- **Incremental Progress is Being Achieved** - The number of resident-reported complaints serviced this quarter declined 15% over the last year (since Q5) due to (in part) NYCHA's increased ability to resolve resident-reported complaints more efficiently through the completion of the necessary repair activity to the resident's satisfaction and NYCHA's ability to complete work orders that were once on hold due to COVID-19. NYCHA is currently working on several initiatives to improve its response to address mold and leak conditions through additional hiring of resources, clean vent initiative, roof fan replacements, expanding the number of staff that can clean mold, and making several operational changes as it rolls out a new neighborhood model which is aimed to empower local control at developments.

### ***Factors Necessary for Continued Success.***

For NYCHA to successfully effectuate continued and sustained culture change it will require substantial effort to serve residents through individual accountability at each development, a commitment to conduct the proper repair work, use of appropriate vendors to overcome staffing limitations, and a commitment to increased operational oversight via data strategy and operational processes. Refer to **Exhibit 3** for additional information regarding opportunities identified and shared with NYCHA for each of these topics. In Q8, NYCHA has made considerable progress towards the implementation of recommendations identified by the OCC and court-appointed IDA regarding strategies to improve its progress towards compliance in Baez. NYCHA began developing the infrastructure for a "Mold and Leak Scorecard" to index mold and leak performance at a development level, being able to show incremental progress and opportunities for change across a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Increased visibility and performance monitoring at a more granular level will offer NYCHA the opportunities to make substantial progress to improve operational performance at the development level based on each development's resources, capital needs, and backlog. In conjunction with the Mold and Leak Scorecard, NYCHA implemented an Enhanced Oversight Program ("EOP") which was executed at select developments (including Brownsville Houses and Wagner Houses) in Q8 to help provide technical assistance and support (e.g., scheduling aging work orders, vendor procurement, materials review and ordering, temporary staffing support to address the work order backlog, etc.) towards improving its compliance over a four-month period. This is a positive first step towards providing NYCHA residents with the help they need towards living in a healthier home and ensuring that NYCHA is held accountable to conducting the proper repair work.

## II. Resident-Reported Complaints to the OCC

### A. Resident-Reported Complaint Metrics Since Launch <sup>10, 11, 12</sup>

Since the OCC launched in November 2019, 8,811 resident-reported complaints have been received by the OCC, which increases to at least 11,289 when considering work involving multiple units (including other residents that did not directly contact the OCC for assistance).<sup>13</sup> It is estimated that the OCC has monitored the completion of more than 32,000 parent and child work orders (or 39,000 including open work orders) and conducted over 41,000 phone calls with NYCHA residents. The OCC has assisted with relocation (temporary and permanent) of over 175 NYCHA residents and conducted over 80 virtual inspections with NYCHA residents.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of resident complaints reported to the OCC, as of the end of the quarter. 76% have been resolved (including resolved (pending resident confirmation) and fully resolved), 7% have had most work resolved, 13% have work in progress, and 4% are awaiting contact or scheduling.

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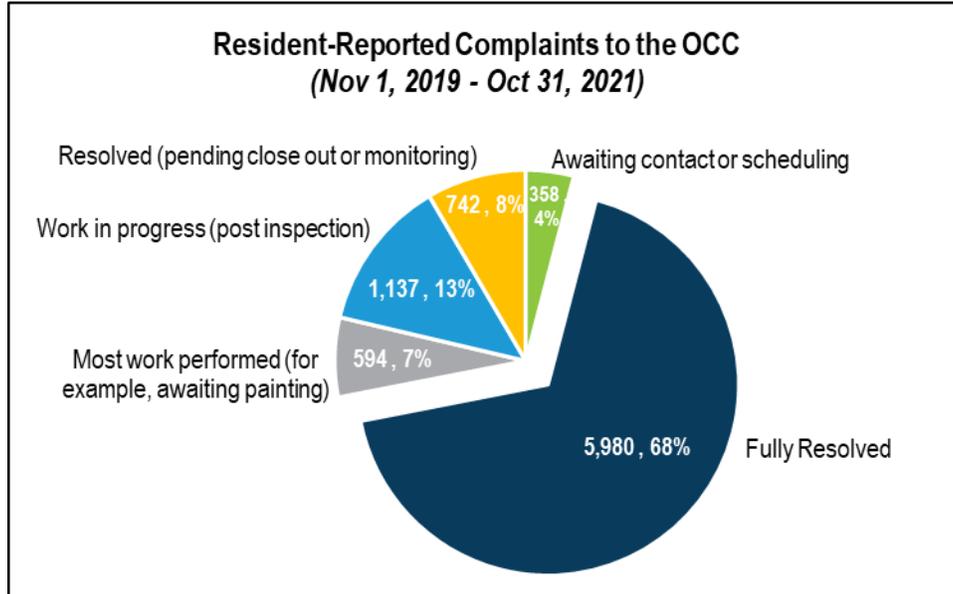
<sup>10</sup> Number of unique complaints can vary over time based on the source of the complaint (e.g., resident-reported complaint and referral complaint for the same unit may be reported as 2 unique complaints and later merged into 1 complaint), eligibility of assistance (e.g., a complaint may be created for a NYC resident but if it later determined that the resident is not a NYCHA resident, the complaint will be excluded from reporting), and number of complaints per unit (e.g., resident may have created a complaint in Month 1 in the bathroom and an additional complaint in the bedroom in Month 2, depending on the nature the complaint, it may be reported separately or merged into 1 complaint). The status of complaints can vary over time based on the required repair activity (e.g., work may have been completed but is re-opened due to recurrence), or the resident's requests (e.g., to place complaint on hold due COVID-19 delays). Therefore, the number of unique complaints and complaint statuses may change quarter over quarter. The number of monitored work orders is estimated based on work order activity recorded in Maximo during the period that the OCC resident-reported complaint was open. The work orders are likely understated since it excludes all work orders for units that were transitioned to RAD, inspection work orders conducted by OMAR or the QA department, remediation plans created and managed by OMAR or its vendors, work orders in other units that are connected to the OCC complaint (e.g., complex leak work), remediation plans with child work orders that are not linked to the mold or leak parent work order, etc.

<sup>11</sup> The resident-reported complaint metrics may change over time. The OCC evaluates call volumes, issues raised, escalations required, number of resident interactions, etc., to identify process refinement opportunities that could create operational improvements and efficiencies. Since adjustments to the data fields and methods of recording the data have been and continue to be modified and enhanced, it is possible that certain metrics are understated or not entirely representative of the actual activities conducted. The OCC relies on MRU to populate many of the data fields. We have been informed that due to MRU staffing limitations and training of new resources, data fields were not always populated. Therefore, some reported metrics are likely understated.

<sup>12</sup> On November 30, 2020, NYCHA announced that it transitioned 13 Manhattan developments with 1,645 apartments managed by NYCHA to private property management through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's ("HUD") Rental Assistance Demonstration ("RAD") and Permanent Affordability Commitment Together ("PACT") programs. The OCC worked to resolve all resident-reported complaints in those developments prior to the transition. Those resident-reported complaints have been excluded from the OCC reporting metrics once transitioned to RAD. As of the end of Q8, no additional developments were transitioned to RAD.

<sup>13</sup> For example, this includes resident-reported complaints that involve work within other units (e.g., the floors above or below) or if the resident submits an additional complaint after the initial complaint. This number is understated due to a lack of reporting on the number of units that each OCC resident-reported complaint affects.

Figure 2

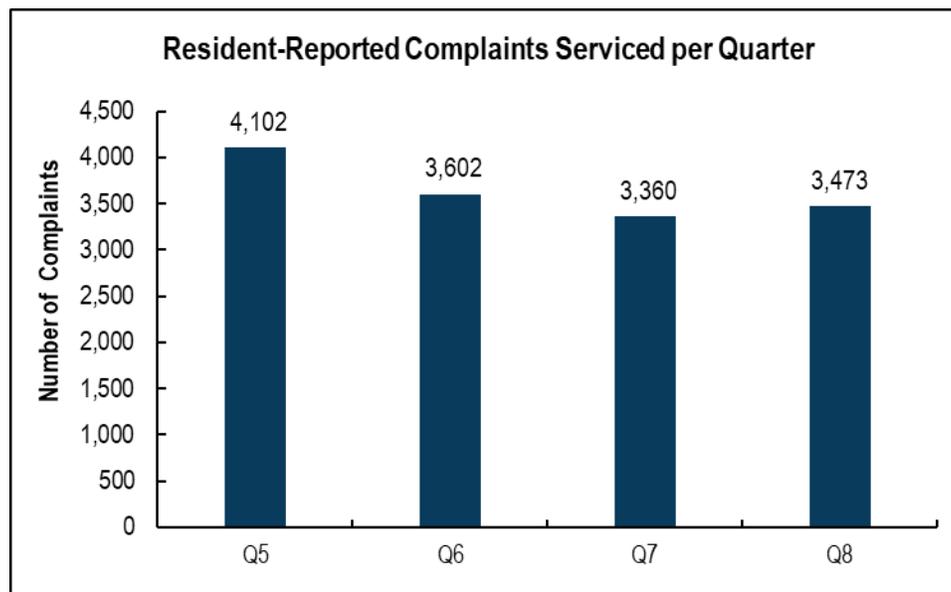


### 1. Resident-Reported Complaints Serviced in the Quarter

As demonstrated in Figure 3, there were 3,473 resident complaints worked on or “serviced” in the quarter, which were either open at the end of the prior quarter (2,021 or 58%) or opened within the quarter (1,452 or 42%). This is the number of complaints with which the OCC assisted during the quarter. Of the resident complaints serviced in the quarter, 40% were resolved in the quarter and 60% remained open (or unresolved) at the end of the quarter. There was a 3% increase in the number of resident-reported complaints serviced this quarter but a 15% decline over the last year (Q5). Contributing factors to the decline likely include:

- Declining rates of new resident-reported complaints in prior quarters (e.g., less than 1,000 tickets created in Q6 as shown in Figure 4 below);
- NYCHA’s ability to resolve resident-reported complaints more efficiently through the completion of the necessary repair activity (e.g., resident-reported complaints are being closed faster); and
- NYCHA’s ability to complete work orders that were once on hold due to COVID-19.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 3

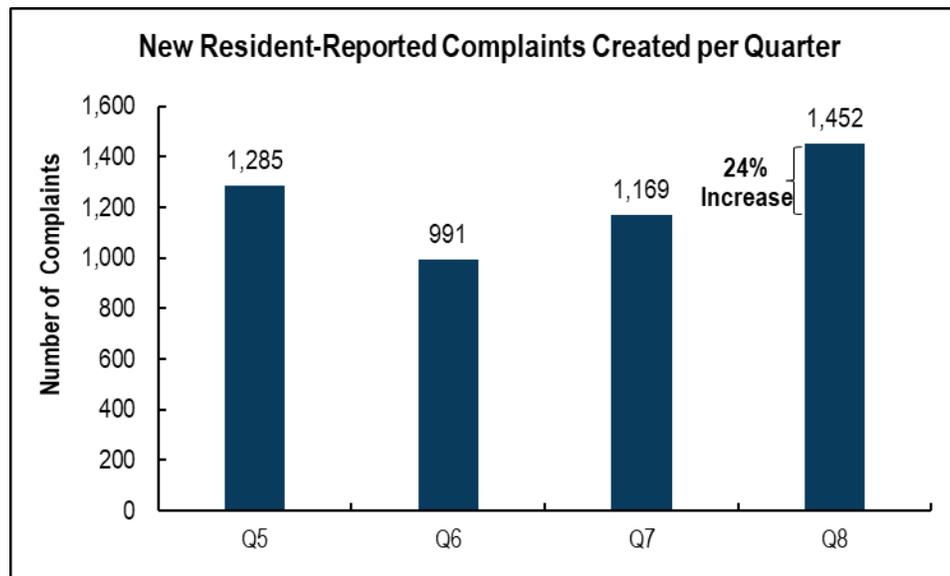


<sup>14</sup> Refer to Appendix A for information regarding NYCHA’s Work Order Guidance during COVID-19. All work was resumed to pre-COVID guidance by May 2021.

## 2. Number of New Resident-Reported Complaints Created this Quarter

In Q8, there was 1,452 new resident-reported complaints created, with an average of 121 per week or approximately 484 per month.<sup>15</sup> As demonstrated in Figure 4 there was a 23% increase over the last quarter and 13% increase since Q5.

Figure 4



The increase in new resident-reported complaints is likely attributable to several factors (discussed throughout the report) including:

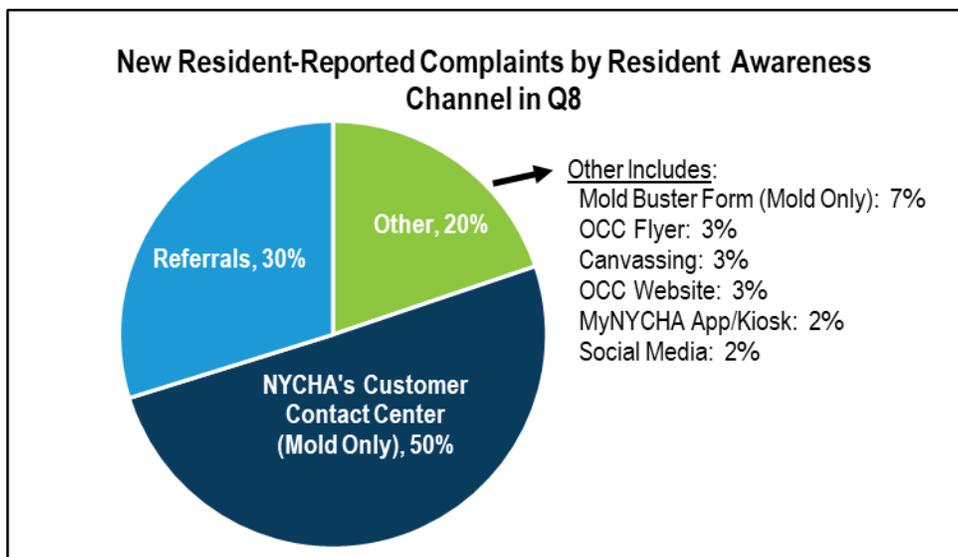
- Increased creation of mold work orders within NYCHA (30% increase from the prior quarter);
  - Increased resident awareness may contribute to the increase due to NYCHA's launch of its Mold Campaign in Q7.
- Increased of resident-reported complaints to the OCC referred through NYCHA's Customer Contact Center ("CCC") (666 tickets in Q8 compared to 466 in Q7); and
- Increased external referrals from NYCHA's Compliance department (100 tickets in Q8 compared to 64 in Q7).

<sup>15</sup> As discussed above, the number of unique complaints can vary over time based on the source of the complaint (e.g., resident-reported complaint and referral complaint for the same unit may be reported as 2 unique complaints and later merged into 1 complaint), eligibility of assistance (e.g., a complaint may be created for a NYC resident but if it later determined that the resident is not a NYCHA resident, the complaint will be excluded from reporting), and number of complaints per unit (e.g., resident may have created a complaint in Month 1 in the bathroom and an additional complaint in the bedroom in Month 2, depending on the nature the complaint, it may be reported separately or merged into 1 complaint). These variables will cause changes to the month of which a complaint may be created, based on the date it is resolved, excluded, or merged. As such, Figures 1 and 4 contain a 23 ticket variance.

### 3. Resident-Reported Complaints Created by Awareness Channel

As demonstrated in Figure 5, 50% of new resident-reported complaints were made aware of the OCC through NYCHA's CCC. The CCC informs NYCHA residents of the OCC when they create a mold service request (although not for leaks). Referrals (such as from tenant organizers, the HUD Monitor, 3-1-1, NYCHA's Compliance department, news press and other residents) accounted for 30% of complaints created in Q8. Other forms of targeted outreach that were effective during the first year such as email notification, rent mailers, robo-calls, door-to-door canvassing, flyering, or targeted phone outreach have not been conducted in recent quarters. As of the end of Q8, NYCHA was not performing any targeted OCC outreach such as social media posts, flyering, canvassing robo-calls, email communication, mailers, etc. due to its outreach efforts associated with its Mold Campaign.<sup>16</sup> NYCHA remains open to considering additional measures to continue to promote awareness of the OCC, balanced by the many other resident communications NYCHA plans.

Figure 5



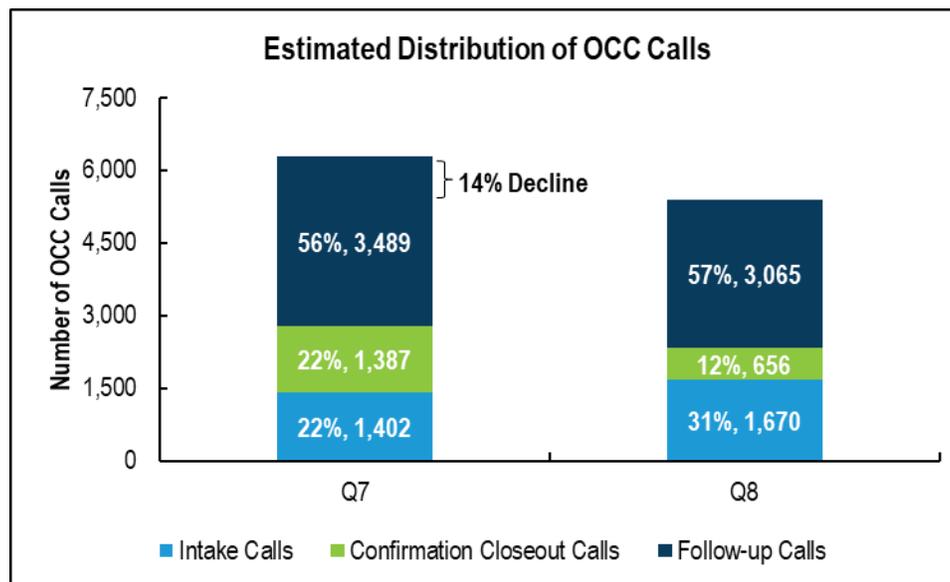
The OCC is hopeful that the legislation passed in December 2020 requiring the City to provide NYCHA residents with information about the Ombudsperson and the OCC via multiple awareness channels (e.g., distribution of pamphlets, telephone calls and included in a rent statement) will be implemented in Q9 and future quarters, increasing resident awareness of the OCC.

<sup>16</sup> As part of the Mold Campaign, OCC information is contained on NYCHA's website and on the last page of the educational packet. The OCC information is not included in the written materials such as the flyer, poster, or door hangers.

#### 4. OCC Call Volumes

In Q8, the OCC had 5,390 calls with residents, with an average of 86 calls per business day. The distribution of languages preferred by residents included 85% English, 14% Spanish, and 1% other languages (including Russian and Chinese). The OCC's main role is to process new complaints and confirm resident satisfaction once the complaint is resolved. It is expected that NYCHA will promptly address and resolve the residents' complaints, while the OCC (and Ombudsperson) monitor progress. As demonstrated in Figure 6, nearly 60% of calls this quarter were associated with follow-up calls for residents rather than new intake calls or confirmation calls.

Figure 6



There was a 14% decline in overall call volume compared to Q7. Despite the reduction in overall call volume, the number of calls per resident-reported complaint serviced in the quarter has remained consistent with Q7 (2 calls per resident-reported complaint). The overall decline in call volume is attributable (in part) to the following factors:

- Changes to OCC's outbound outreach through automation and increased email messaging to confirm resident satisfaction; and
- Focus and prioritization of calls for intake and follow-up calls, accounting for 88% of all calls within the quarter. As demonstrated above in Figure 2, there were 742 (8%) of tickets serviced in the quarter that were awaiting resident confirmation from NYCHA or the OCC to confirm satisfaction or were under monitoring.

The OCC expects no more than 10% of overall calls should be for follow-up interactions. Resident follow-up calls and interactions to the OCC may include questions regarding a scheduled date, results of an inspection or the remediation plan, a missed appointment or unannounced appointment, frustration with an interaction with a worker or a delayed scheduling date, complaint about the recent work performed (or lack thereof) or seeking an update from NYCHA. The OCC requests that the resident follow-up with the NYCHA's RCA for any questions about remediation activity or scheduling after the OCC intake process. However, the resident

is also informed that they can follow-up with the OCC directly if they have any questions or concerns that the RCA could not appropriately address (or if they are unable to reach the RCA). As demonstrated in Figure 6 shown above, 57% of calls were related to follow-up calls in Q8, which was consistent with Q7, and substantially higher than the expected 10%.<sup>17</sup>

In Q8, many residents contacted the OCC with the following types of follow-up calls:

- Failed attempt to contact the RCA and wanted an update from the OCC;
  - E.g., the resident had not yet heard from the RCA since OCC intake; the resident was unable to reach the RCA (voicemail was full or haven't received a returned phone call); the resident was unaware of who the RCA point of contact was and how that differs from the OCC; or the RCA does not speak their preferred language.
- A missed appointment or unannounced appointment (earlier than anticipated and/or without notice);
- Dissatisfaction with upcoming scheduling date (too far in the future), being asked to open a new work order for current remediation plan, or lack of progress on the repair activity (development delay in scheduling);
- Dissatisfaction with recent repair activity (e.g., work was not performed acceptably or improper interaction with the labor worker);
- Dissatisfaction with the on-going conditions within the unit associated with missing or inoperable components (e.g., tub enclosure, sink, cabinets, etc.);
- Recurrence (e.g., the leak has returned while waiting the next repair date); or
- Dissatisfaction with the overall work completed (e.g., the resident will not confirm satisfaction during the OCC close-out call).

If NYCHA can more effectively and promptly communicate with residents, a significant proportion of the follow-up calls to the OCC can be prevented in future quarters. NYCHA has been receptive to the OCC's recommendations of strategies to reduce the volume of follow-up calls and has already implemented some of the recommendations (while others are under development or consideration), including:

- Creation of an MRU "fact sheet" or "flyer" that provides an overview of the RCA's role and list of their contact information which the OCC can share with the resident after intake and post on its website;
- Possible modifications to the interactive voice response (IVR) of the OCC phone line to direct a resident to NYCHA if they wish to speak to an RCA, which would reduce the follow-up calls to the OCC;
- RCA increased frequency of resident communication throughout the remediation process (e.g., providing interim updates if there are delays in scheduling or awaiting inspection results);
- RCA process for ensuring the resident is available to reach a team member when there RCA is unavailable or out of the office (e.g., call forwarding or voice mail message to contact another team member);
- RCA supervisor monitoring of RCA resident communication to ensure contact is made within 1 business day after OCC intake is completed;

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<sup>17</sup> The estimated distribution of calls is calculated based on the number of newly created resident-reported complaints (+15% for follow-up attempts if resident is not reachable) + the number of resident-reported complaints (+10% follow-up attempts if resident is not reachable). The remaining calls are considered follow-up calls.

- RCA supervisor monitoring of RCA's response and action to OCC questions raised during intake to address the resident concerns;
- RCA supervisor monitoring of RCA's voicemail box to ensure the RCA is reachable to address the resident's questions or concerns; and
- RCA script for communication with residents to confirm satisfaction of all work performed, request pictures or video; and inform the resident that the OCC will follow-up to close out the ticket.

## 5. Resident-Reported Complaints by Location and Complaint Type

In Q8, 1,452 new resident-reported complaints were created across 209 separate developments, with a range of 1 to 45 complaints per development. 30% of all tickets created from the quarter came from 15 developments that each had at least 20 tickets created within the quarter. The top 5 developments with new resident-reported complaints included Brownsville, Red Hook West, Red Hook East, Jefferson, and Patterson. As demonstrated in Figure 7, new resident-reported complaints were opened in each borough (which were consistent with past quarters).

Figure 7

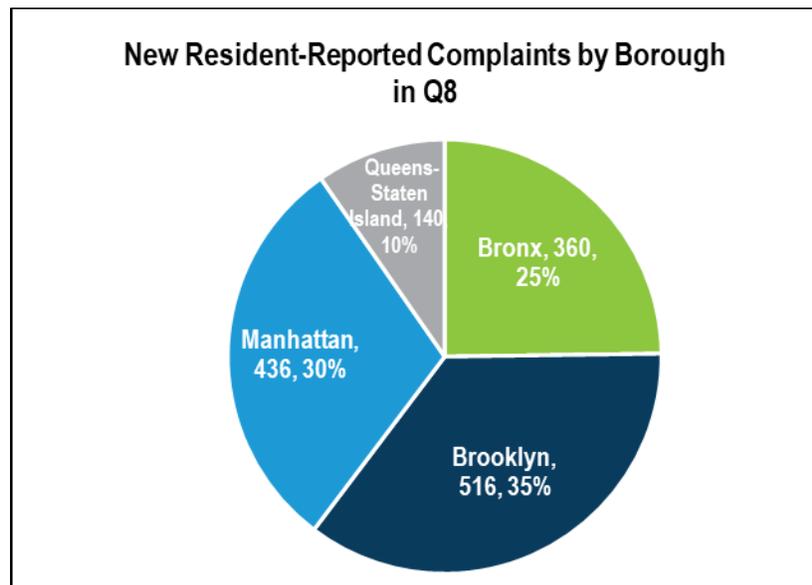
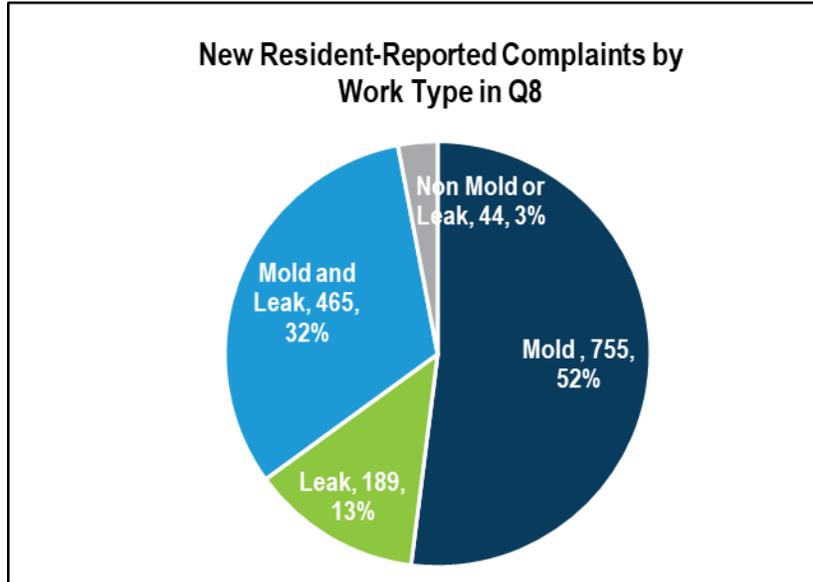


Figure 8 shows the distribution new resident-reported complaints made to the OCC by the work types in Q8.<sup>18</sup> The large proportion of mold-related complaints (84%) is consistent with prior quarters and is due (in large part) to NYCHA's outreach activities related to the OCC. In Q8, 50% of new resident-reported complaints were from the CCC. The CCC only informs residents of the OCC when mold-related complaints are made, not leak-related complaints.<sup>19</sup> If NYCHA increases outreach efforts across multiple channels with frequent distribution, the proportion of complaint types may change in future quarters.

<sup>18</sup> The reported work order type is determined after the inspections have been completed, therefore, all complaints filed in the quarter may not be included in this metric and complaint type may change over time.

<sup>19</sup> Refer to **Section II.E** of this report for further information. NYCHA has indicated that it is committed to expanding the CCC outreach for leaks once it has stabilized the MRU processes, procedures, training, and staffing levels and can be adequately prepared to process the anticipated increased number of resident complaints to the OCC. The OCC is in support of NYCHA's efforts to stabilize the MRU operations related to OCC response before significantly expanding notification through the CCC.

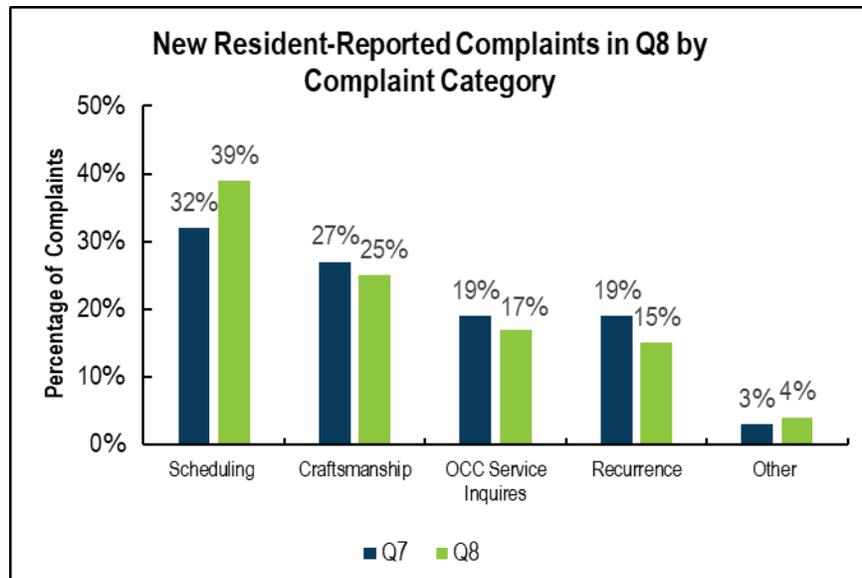
Figure 8



## 6. Resident-Reported Complaints by Complaint Category

Figure 9 shows the distribution of resident complaints made to the OCC by initial complaint category in Q8 compared to the prior quarter. While the distribution below reflects the residents' initial complaint to the OCC, the OCC found that residents complaint category may evolve over time (e.g., complaint may start out as a scheduling complaint but there could be components of recurrence or missed appointments, etc.).<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 9**



In Q8, there was an increase in Scheduling complaints due (in part) to work order backlog from prior COVID-19 restrictions and a lack of proper communication to resident regarding upcoming scheduling dates. In Q8, nearly 40% (compared to 50% in Q7) of new resident-reported complaints were for complex situations regarding recurrence or craftsmanship (incomplete or poor quality of work), indicating that NYCHA has shown improvement addressing more complex repairs.<sup>21</sup> These complaints take longer to resolve due to the complexity of the repair activity, need for supplemental inspections (when applicable), interaction with multiple Departments within NYCHA, and relocation (when applicable). Of the 25% Craftsmanship complaints, residents reported:

- Work was started but not completed - 90%;
- Repair work was completed but a missing component or fixtures was never replaced – 5%;
- Poor quality work performed (e.g., plaster or paint) – 4%; and
- Other reasons such as a conflict with the worker – 1%.

<sup>20</sup> Complaint category is used to determine the operational OCC process. Any OCC tickets that have not completed the intake process are excluded from this metric. The categorization does not go through a verification process or have specific requirements for eligibility (e.g., craftsmanship complaints do not require pictures or evidence of poor-quality work and recurrence complaints are resident complaint regarding the recurrence of an issue).

<sup>21</sup> The Recurrence percentage in Figure 9 above is not the overall recurrence rate for mold or leaks at NYCHA. Rather, the percentage is the percentage of OCC Complaints where the resident was indicating that their complaint was about a recurring issue.

## 7. Resident-Reported Complaints by Reported Conditions

In Q8, 45% (compared to 49% in Q7) of new resident-reported complaints received by the OCC involved reports of severe conditions and/or a lack of proper repair work leaving the resident without a fully operational apartment. These complaints often require substantial repair work that requires scheduling of several appointments, interaction with a variety of departments within NYCHA, and quality assurance checks to ensure the work was adequately completed. In Q8 there were:

- 341 (or 23%) resident-reported complaints to the OCC where the resident-reported a large area of visible mold (e.g., over 20 Sq. Ft. of mold);
- 134 (or 9%) resident-reported complaints to the OCC where the resident-reported a severe and/or active leak (often requiring repair work within several apartments within the building line);
- 125 (or 8%) resident-reported complaints to the OCC where the resident-reported a hole in the wall (exposed cavity due to mold or leak repair activity); and
- 55 (or 4%) resident-reported complaints to the OCC where the resident-reported an inoperable or missing sink, toilet, cabinet, etc.

## 8. Resident-Reported Complaints by Complex Situations

Many of the complaints received by the OCC involve reports of lack of proper repair work in the past, complex repair work requiring access to multiple units, or complexities involving active lawsuits or resident communication barriers between the resident and NYCHA. These complaints often require substantial repair work that requires scheduling of several appointments, interaction with a variety of departments within NYCHA (e.g., Legal, Family Services, Resident Engagement, etc.), and quality assurance checks to ensure the work was adequately completed. In Q8 the following tickets were created with one of the following criteria:

- 120 resident-reported complaints to the OCC where the resident was also involved in a Court case against NYCHA;
- 120 resident-reported complaints to the OCC that required complex building line leak investigations;
- 125 resident-reported complaints to the OCC that required work in other units in the building;
- 58 resident-reported complaints to the OCC that required extensive exterior building repair work (36 required roof repair work, 9 required facade repair work, and 13 capital repair projects); and
- 51 resident-reported complaints to the OCC of an additional mold or leak related complaint after OCC intake.

As a result of the complexities and the required repair work, the following requests and activities were completed in Q8:<sup>22</sup>

- Requested an immediate (urgent) action taken for 359 resident complaints to the OCC (e.g., abate flooding conditions, immediate temporary repair, etc.);
- Recommended re-inspections of a work order due to resident dissatisfaction of previous work performed for 355 resident complaints to the OCC;
- Recommended that NYCHA re-open a work order due to lack of proper completion for 129 resident complaints to the OCC;

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<sup>22</sup> Metrics include both resolved and unresolved complaints serviced in the quarter.

- Recommended that NYCHA's Compliance department conduct a review or investigation into 67 resident complaints to the OCC of improper closure of work order(s), reports of possible misconduct or other resident-reported concerns;
- Used OMAR secured vendor contracts for an inspection for 42 resident complaints to the OCC and Quality Assurance ("QA") for 31 resident complaints to the OCC;
- Conducted virtual inspections for 40 resident complaints to the OCC;
- Recommended that NYCHA have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, independent of the development, attend an inspection due to conflict between the resident and the development staff for 25 resident complaints to the OCC<sup>23</sup>; and
- Conducted a work order investigation for 8 resident complaints to the OCC.

### 9. Resolved Resident-Reported Complaints to the OCC

In total, 1,338 resident-reported complaints were resolved in Q8, accounting for 39% of the complaints serviced within the quarter (compared to 44% in Q7).<sup>24</sup>

- 596 resident-reported complaints were fully resolved;
- 736 resident-reported complaints were resolved (pending resident confirmation from NYCHA or the OCC); and
- 6 resident-reported complaints were placed on-hold (due to the resident's request).

Of the fully resolved resident-reported complaints, the resolution type included:

- Inspection or remediation completed for reported mold or leak issue – 52%;
- Responded to resident service inquiry or question (e.g., scheduling date) – 43%; and
- Referred to NYCHA's Compliance department or the resident was relocated – 5%.
  - 8 resident complaints resulted in relocation in Q8.

In Q8, the overall average number of days to resolve a resident-reported complaint to the OCC was 118 days. NYCHA's previous COVID-19 work order guidance will continue to impact the number of reported days to resolve resident-reported complaints in Q8 for situations when the only remaining work was previously outside of NYCHA's work order guidance due to COVID-19 (e.g., painting, or non-emergency leak). Many of these complaints were placed on hold for several weeks or months so the number of days is significantly higher than the actual number of days it took NYCHA to conduct the necessary repair work. The OCC has found that many residents who were previously on-hold reported new complaints to the OCC during the re-opening process or required additional repair work (e.g., recurring mold, flaking plaster) due to the length of time that had passed since the remaining work was placed on hold.

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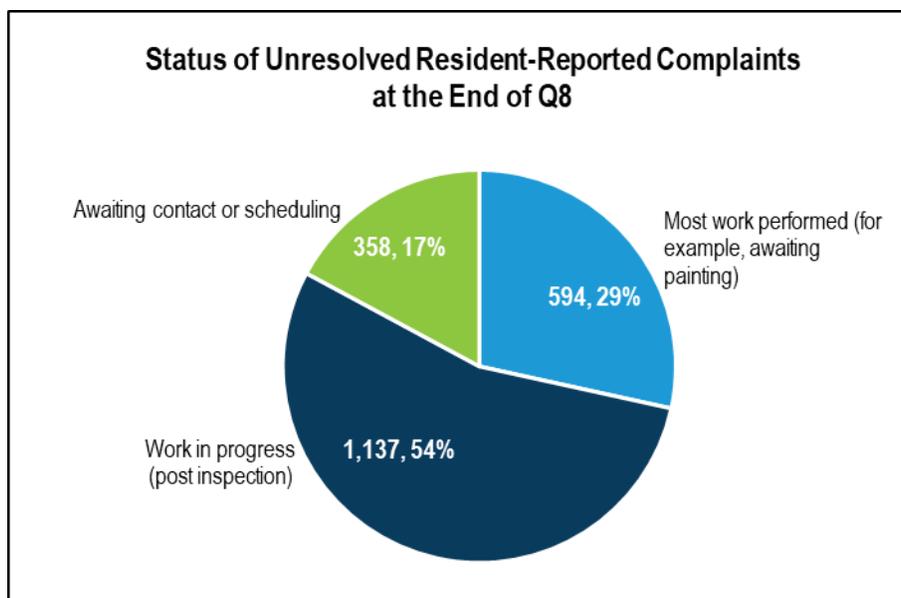
<sup>23</sup> OCC has recommended that NYCHA consider the use of virtual inspections as an effective tool for situations where there is a dispute between the resident and development staff regarding resident dissatisfaction of the work (or lack thereof) performed.

<sup>24</sup> There were 59 resident-reported complaints created within the quarter and closed by merging the complaint into another ticket, which have been excluded. This situation can occur if two members of a household create separate complaints to the OCC or if there is an overlap from a referral whereby the resident has already directly reported the complaint to the OCC (e.g., Tenant organizer informs the OCC of the resident complaint, and the resident directly contacts the OCC with the same complaint).

## 10. Unresolved Resident-Reported Complaints to the OCC

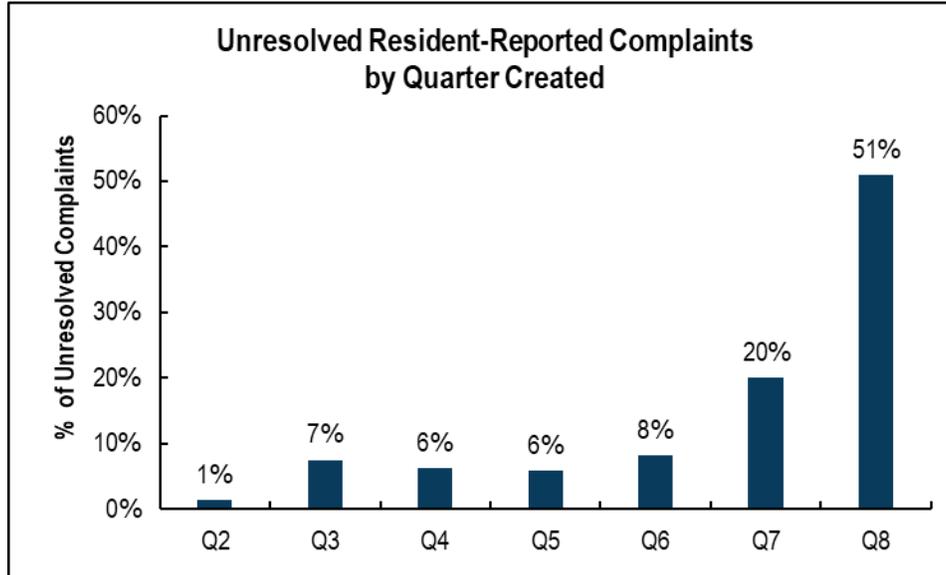
There were 2,089 resident complaints to the OCC in Q8 that were open (or unresolved) at the end of the quarter. Figure 10 shows the status of unresolved resident-reported complaints, of which 17% were awaiting scheduling dates or contact from the resident to finalize the intake process, 54% had work in progress (post inspection), and 29% had only follow-up work remaining (e.g., painting).

Figure 10



As demonstrated in Figure 11, over 50% of the unresolved complaints opened at the end of the quarter were created within the quarter.

Figure 11



Unresolved resident-reported complaints to the OCC created prior to Q7 are complex complaints requiring monitoring for relocation, complex repair work being conducted by a vendor, delayed scheduling due to a resident's request, or the remaining follow-up work has been delayed due to COVID-19.<sup>25</sup> Other factors contributing to resident-reported complaints being open for greater than 60 days include (but are not limited to):

- Resident-reported complaints requiring extensive repair work in several rooms of the unit (where resident relocation may be required);
- Residents' requests for advanced scheduling to accommodate their work schedules, doctors' appointments or other personal reasons;
- Delayed scheduling at certain developments that required scheduling delays of 6+ weeks;
  - The OCC found that so long as the resident was informed of the next scheduling date and the reason for the delay, they often did not raise a concern as to the proposed timing of remediation activities, particularly once the mold cleaning or immediate leak issue had been resolved and only follow-up work was required (e.g., painting).

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<sup>25</sup> The Ombudsperson is monitoring the activity associated with these complaints and is working with NYCHA to resolve them within a reasonable period of time. If such action is not taken, the Ombudsperson may issue an Order to NYCHA to complete the necessary repair work within a specific timeframe.

## B. Positive Resident Feedback

The OCC received positive feedback, gratitude, and appreciation from many residents throughout the quarter, as highlighted (and paraphrased) in Figure 12.

**Figure 12**

- “Everything has been done. Plumbers fixed the recurring leak, plasters repaired the walls, and the painters did a great job. The OCC has been so great, I really thank you for the help. I waited for almost over a year for this to be done. You have been so good for me. I am so grateful. Thank you!” (*Grant Development*);
- “NYCHA did a good job! Everything has been done to my satisfaction. Thank you!” (*Throggs Neck Development*);
- “I am very satisfied with NYCHA’s work. The mold was triggering my asthma and I am so happy it is resolved. I appreciate the OCC’s monitoring.” (*Gun Hill Development*);
- “The repair work has been completed to my satisfaction. The recurring leak since last year has been repaired. I am so happy you [the OCC] helped me fix this.” (*Pelham Development*);
- “Great news, the leak has been fixed. Additionally, the RCA is constantly in contact with me. I am so grateful to OCC.” (*Metro North Plaza Development*);
- “I am very grateful for the help, this is the first time the job got done in a timely manner. I am very satisfied with the quality of the repairs. Thank you, OCC and RCA” (*Grant Development*); and
- “I am so thankful for the assistance that the OCC and MRU provided me. MRU was very persistent with the Development which lead to the work being completed. My kitchen was replaced and my whole bathroom was repaired. Before calling the OCC, NYCHA wasn’t getting the work done” (*Vladeck Development*).

## C. OCC and Ombudsperson Ticket Monitoring

In Q8, the OCC serviced 460 (or 13%) resident-reported complaints without the assistance of NYCHA due to the nature of the complaints (such as providing the resident with an upcoming scheduling date that had already been set). The OCC monitored the remaining 3,013 (or 87%) complaints serviced in the quarter that required NYCHA's MRU assistance, due to the complaints involving requests for assistance from various NYCHA departments.

### 1. OCC Ticket Monitoring Process

The OCC monitors the complaint activity to ensure that NYCHA is communicating with the resident and scheduling the necessary inspection(s) and repair work. OCC requests that the RCA reach out to the resident within one business day of assignment to the RCA and schedule the next step within 2-business days after speaking to the resident (or a later agreed upon time with the resident). Thereafter, the RCA should provide scheduling of the next step to the resident after the previous step has been completed. Historically, if the OCC did not receive an update of progress made or received a follow-up call from a resident regarding a lack of responsiveness, the OCC would "escalate" the complaint by informing NYCHA (the RCA assigned to the complaint, the RCA supervisor, and/or MRU). The OCC would also escalate resident-reported complaints that involved reports of severe conditions such as a flooding condition, mold growth of greater than 20 sq. ft., mold or leak issues involving several rooms of the unit, or other possible health hazards that did not indicate progress. That is, an escalation of a resident-reported complaint was triggered by severe conditions, lack of MRU responsiveness to the resident, or lack of scheduling or progress by the development. The OCC may escalate a complaint to NYCHA more than once. Any resident-reported complaint requiring escalation more than once (e.g., due to a lack of progress communicating with the resident or lack of scheduling repair activity) are placed under monitoring through the Ombudsperson.

In Q6, the OCC developed an automated ticketing monitoring system and report that allows NYCHA opportunities for increased oversight and management to ensure that progress is being made on all resident-reported complaints. This system includes 9 key categories (listed below) that are updated daily and emailed weekly to NYCHA stakeholders (MRU and RCA Supervisors). The categories have been selected based on the key operational steps required to ensure that NYCHA is communicating with the resident and scheduling the necessary inspection(s) and repair work, which will prevent resident-reported follow-up calls or complaints to the OCC. The first page of the report is a summary providing a count of OCC tickets flagged per category. Each tab after the summary provides information regarding the total number of tickets, distribution charts (by RCA assigned, aging charts, priority level, etc.) and ticket details per category. The goal of this report is to ensure that the number of tickets flagged for increased oversight and management are very minimal and if there are tickets flagged in this report they are promptly reviewed and addressed. If NYCHA utilizes this report appropriately, the number of follow-up calls to the OCC and escalations should significantly decline in future quarters.

1. Initial Communication Not Made with Resident within 1 Day of the MRU Assignment Date;
2. Inspection Not Completed within 7 Days of the MRU Assignment Date;
3. Remediation Plan Not Created within 10 Days of the MRU Assignment Date;
4. Next Scheduled Appointment Date has Passed;
5. Ticket Not Updated within 7 Days and Next Appointment Date Pending;
6. Remediation Plan Not Assigned to a Craft After Inspection is Completed;

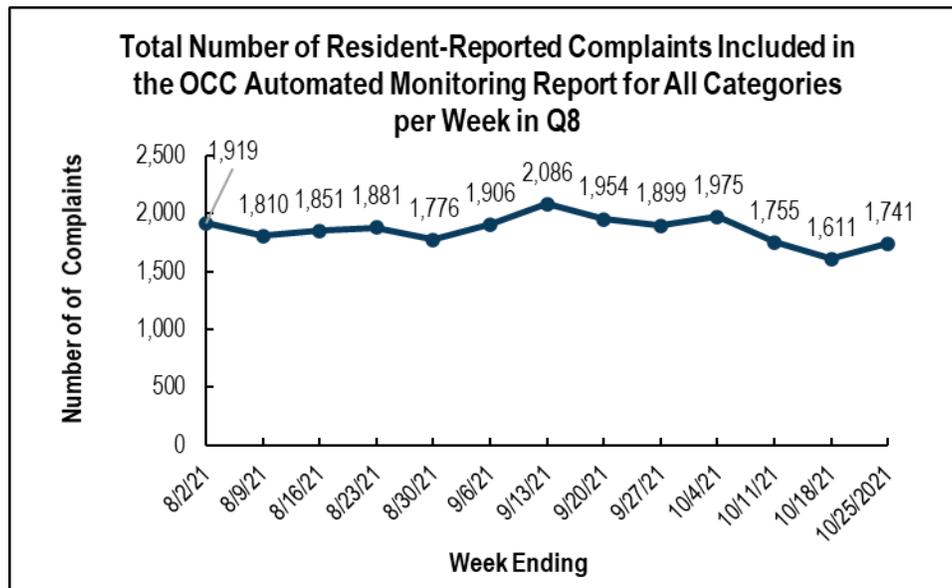
7. High Priority Ticket Not Updated within 2 Days and Next Appointment Date Pending;
8. OCC Escalated High Priority Ticket Open for Greater Than 90 Days and Next Appointment Date Pending; and
9. OCC Escalated High Priority Ticket (Escalated At Least 2x) and Next Appointment Date Pending.

In Q6, the OCC also developed an automated ticketing monitoring system and report for the Ombudsperson to ensure that progress is being made on all resident-reported complaints. This report is designed similarly to the report designed for NYCHA but is focused aging and high priority complaints.

As demonstrated in Figure 13, the weekly average of resident-reported complaints flagged in the automated ticketing monitoring report ranged from a total (across all categories) of 1,611 (weekly low) to 2,086 (weekly high), with an average of 1,859 (weekly average).<sup>26</sup> The weekly average in Q8 increased by 35% compared to Q7 and accounted for 62% of tickets serviced within the quarter.

It should be noted that each category may involve responsiveness required by MRU or other NYCHA departments, of which some situations involve complex situations regarding relocation, capital repairs, building repairs (e.g., façade, roof), or vendors.<sup>27</sup> Additional contributing factors causing a ticket to be flagged on this list include lack of response or follow-up from a resident, access to other units to repair the root cause, engagement with family services, or access dates granted by the Court.

**Figure 13**



<sup>26</sup> The number of resident-reported complaints included in this report may be duplicative across various categories (particularly in Categories 8 and 9). The number of unique resident-reported complaints flagged in this report is not tracked because each element (or Category being flagged) needs to be independently reviewed and addressed.

<sup>27</sup> The OCC has informed NYCHA of opportunities to refine the automated ticketing monitoring system and report to exclude certain complex resident-reported complaints from these reports, which can be tracked and monitored through separate channels with extended timelines for responsiveness. NYCHA is considering these enhancements as it makes progress on reducing the number resident-reported complaints flagged in the report in the next quarter.

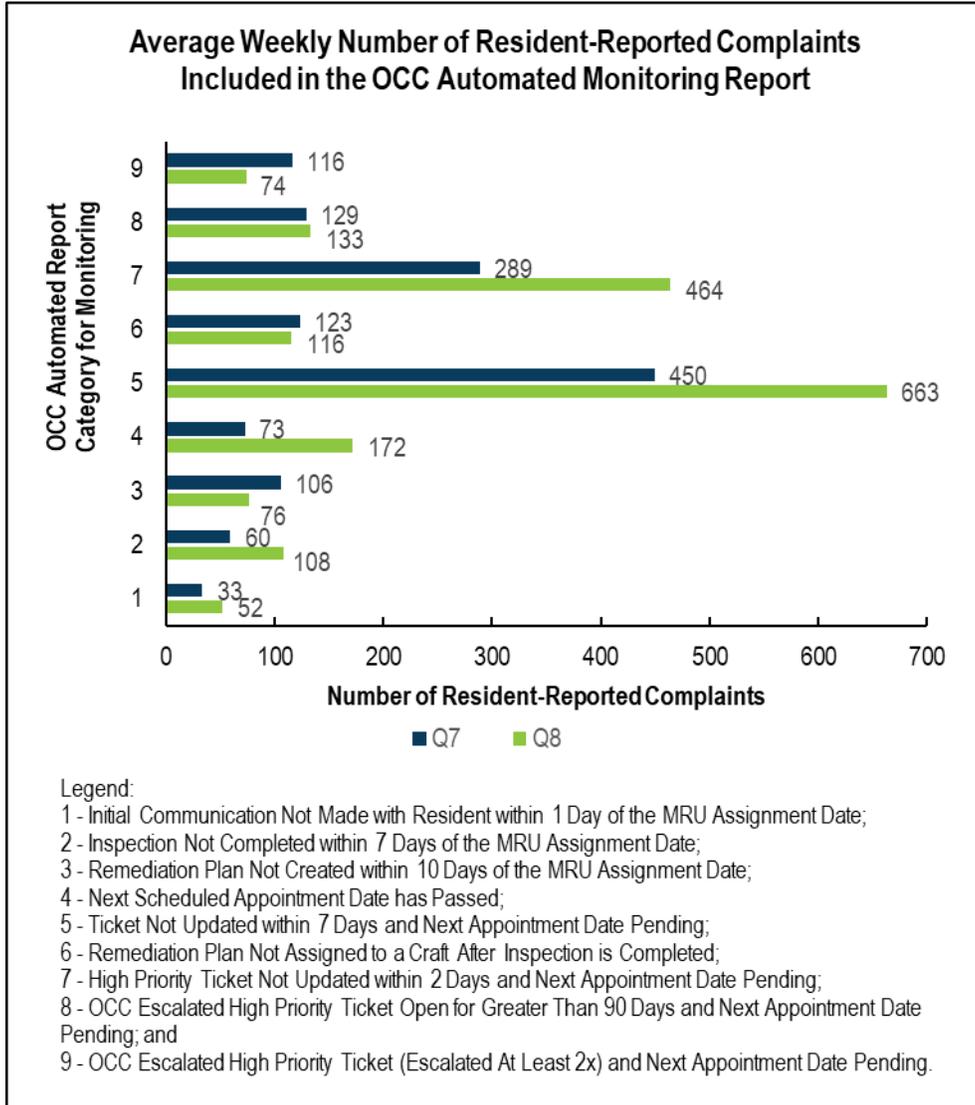
As demonstrated in Figure 14, the weekly average per category ranged from 52 (in Category 1 - Initial Communication Not Made with Resident within 1 Day of the MRU Assignment Date) to 663 (in Category 5 - Ticket Not Updated within 7 Days and Next Appointment Date Pending).<sup>28</sup> As discussed throughout this document, there are opportunities for NYCHA to continue to focus on improved resident communication and scheduling the next step in the repair process efficiently which will reduce the number of resident-reported complaints contained within this report.

- For example, in Q8 there was an average of 121 new resident-reported complaints created each week, indicating that on average, 43% were not contacted within 1 business day after being assigned to MRU (compared to 36% in Q7).
- For example, in Q8 there was an average of 3,013 resident-reported complaints served in the quarter that required MRU's assistance, of which 656 (or 22%) did not have a next scheduling date or an update from the RCA assigned to the ticket within the last week regarding the delay.

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<sup>28</sup> The number of resident-reported complaints for Categories 5 – 7 are contingent upon the RCA assigned to the complaint to provide an update. If another RCA not assigned to the complaint provides an update, it will not be reflected in this report.

Figure 14

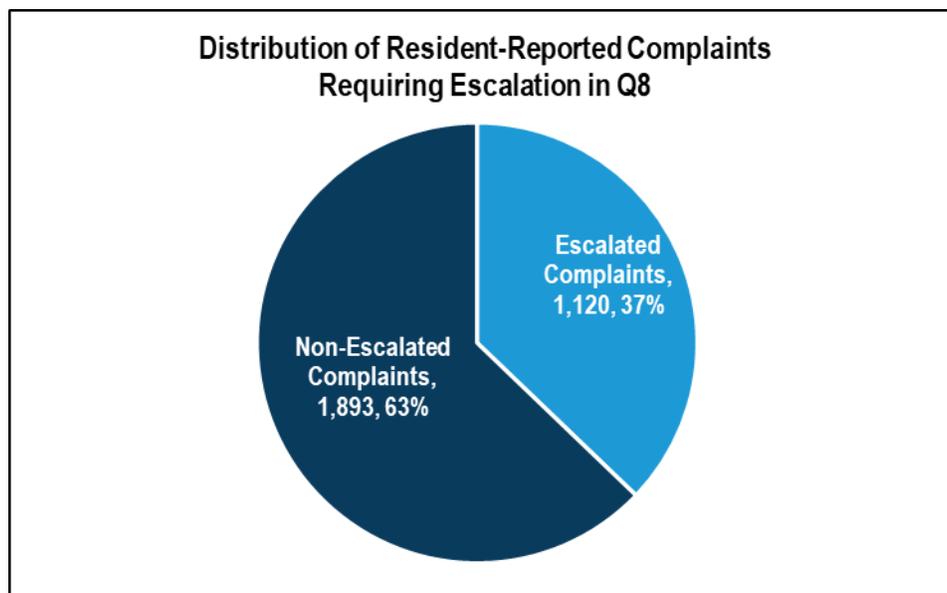


## 2. OCC Escalations to MRU

Since the creation of the automated ticketing monitoring system in Q6, the OCC has reduced its efforts to proactively escalate resident-reported complaints lacking updates from NYCHA or next scheduling date since these situations are included in the automated ticketing monitoring report. The OCC escalations are focused on resident-reported follow-up complaints or reports of dissatisfaction. In Q7, the OCC revised its escalation notification process and expanded the escalation path due to the large volume of escalated complaints. In collaboration with MRU, the OCC created a more granular escalation path allowing for increased transparency of escalated tickets. The escalations includes: Step 1 – RCA (with a copy to RA); Step 2 – RA (with a copy to MRU); Step 3 – MRU (with a copy to OMAR), and Step 4 – OMAR (with a copy to the Ombudsperson). The process includes an email push notification outside of the call center platform and allows for prompt action. For any resident-reported complaint that is escalated to Step 3 – MRU, it is automatically included in the weekly coordination call with the OCC and various departments within NYCHA including OMAR, Compliance, Environment Health and Safety (EH&S), and the CCC for increased oversight to ensure process is made.

As demonstrated in Figure 15, the OCC escalated 1,120 resident-reported complaints in Q8, accounting for 37% of tickets serviced in the quarter requiring MRU's assistance. These complaints required immediate action by NYCHA and frequent updates on the progress made or information regarding why such progress was not attainable.

**Figure 15**

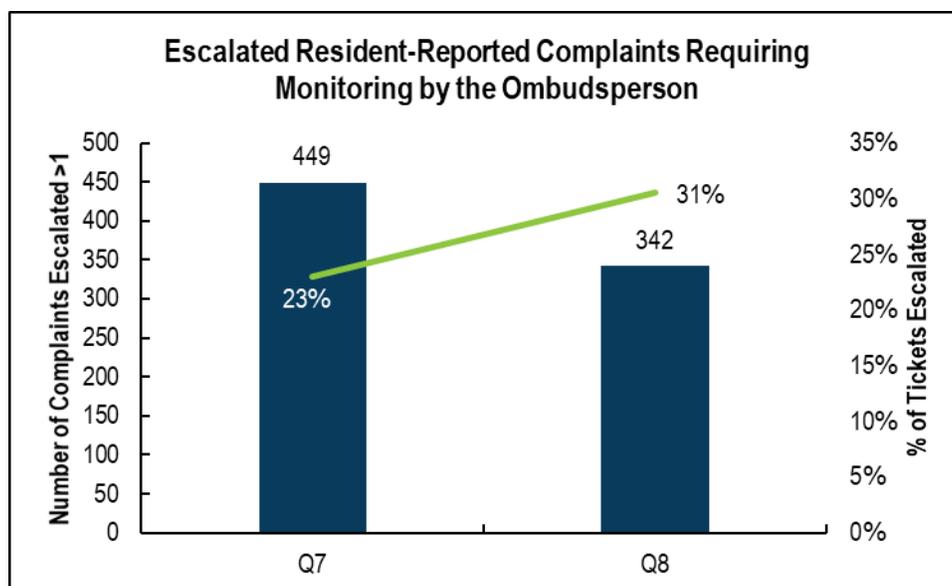


The OCC is hopeful that this new process will allow NYCHA to communicate more effectively and promptly conduct the necessary repair work, which will lead to a decline in resident-reported follow-up complaints and the necessary number of escalations by the OCC. If this can be achieved, a significant proportion of the OCC follow-up communication and administrative burden can be prevented in future quarters.

### 3. OCC Escalations Monitored by the Ombudsperson

In addition to the automated ticketing monitoring system and report, all resident-reported complaints that required escalation more than once were placed under monitoring through the Ombudsperson. In Q8, 342 (31%) of resident-reported complaints required escalation more than once, resulting in the Ombudsperson monitoring. As demonstrated in Figure 16, there was a decline in the number of tickets escalated at least once (given changes to the escalation process) but an increase of the percentage escalated more than once. If NYCHA can communicate more effectively and promptly conduct the necessary repair work, a significant proportion of the OCC follow-up communication and administrative burden can be prevented in future quarters.

Figure 16

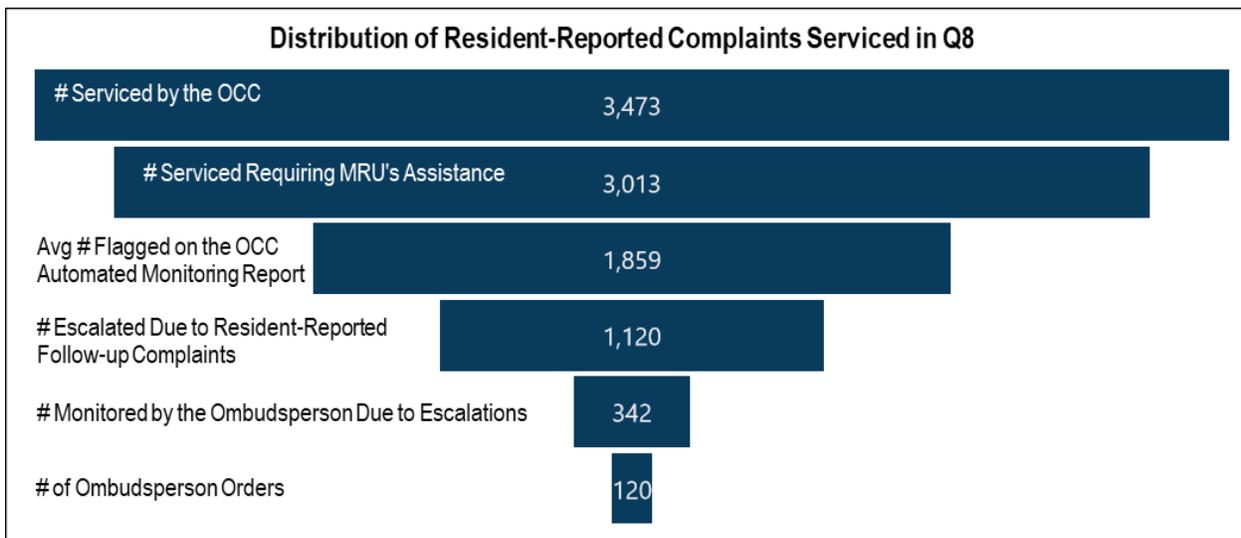


**4. Ombudsperson Activity**

Figure 17 demonstrates the waterfall or distribution of resident-reported complaints that the Ombudsperson oversaw. In Q8, the Ombudsperson’s actions and requests to NYCHA included (but are not limited to):

- The Ombudsperson issued 120 “Decision & Order” documents (referred to as “Orders”) to NYCHA across 62 developments on August 23, 2021. This accounted for 4% of resident-reported complaints serviced in the quarter requiring MRU’s assistance. The Ombudsperson indicated that each of these Orders had been previously escalated by the OCC and was pending scheduling dates for an extended period. The Ombudsperson requested specific actions for each Order but generally required NYCHA to “(1) within 3 business days, calendar the next necessary inspection, remediation, and/or repair work and appropriately communicate that date to the residents; and (2) complete the next necessary inspection, remediation, and/ or repair work within 14 calendar days of this order.”.
  - As of October 22, 2021, MRU reported that 96 (or 80%) were completed and 24 (20%) were still open / unresolved and NYCHA was working on the Ombudsperson’s requests for each complaint.
- Escalated Complaints – The Ombudsperson was involved in 12 resident-reported complaints due to a resident-reported follow-up complaint, disputes between the resident and NYCHA, and/or a delay in progress. The Ombudsperson provided questions and/or specific requests for each resident-reported complaint. As of the end of Q8, NYCHA was working on the Ombudsperson’s requests for each complaint.

**Figure 17**



If NYCHA can communicate more effectively, promptly conduct the necessary repair work and proactively communicate roadblocks from preventing progress on resident-reported complaints to the OCC, requests from the Ombudsperson can be prevented in future quarters.

## D. NYCHA's Responsiveness to Resident-Reported Complaints to the OCC

The OCC interacts directly with NYCHA's MRU to assist in the facilitation and scheduling of inspections, the creation of the remediation plan, and the scheduling of repair work. For all resident complaints to the OCC where a resident has had an open mold or leak work order for more than 7 or 15 days (depending on the repair) before contacting the OCC, an RCA is assigned to the resident to ensure proper levels of communication and case management.<sup>29</sup> The OCC relies on MRU to provide prompt, resident-focused responses throughout the complaint process and ensure that the resident is being informed of progress throughout the process. The OCC monitors the complaint and remains available to assist the resident if they have any questions or concerns that the RCA cannot address. MRU must interact with various stakeholders at NYCHA for each complaint (such as property management staff, borough schedulers, skilled trade management staff, neighbor administrators, NYCHA's Legal Department, vendors, etc.). To effectively resolve resident-reported complaints to the OCC, a continuous level of prompt, detailed, resident-focused responsiveness is required by all parties involved. The RCA must also provide the OCC responses to questions raised during intake and maintain a log of recent activity, including the root cause of the issue, the remediation plan, upcoming scheduling dates, resident questions, and other relevant information.<sup>30</sup>

### 1. OCC Interactions with MRU (and RCAs)

Overall, MRU has demonstrated a commitment to resolve resident-reported complaints to the OCC in Q8. MRU is in a unique position where it does not have control over the volume of complaints provided to it, nor can it control the complexity of the complaint or rate of responsiveness that it will receive from the developments to act. The RCA must proactively communicate with the resident, NYCHA, and the OCC to ensure progress is being made on each resident-reported complaint. The RCA must balance effective communication with the review of work order data to ensure the proper remediation plan is being created and scheduled appropriately. Despite MRU's best efforts to promptly respond and process each resident-reported complaint assigned to it, there were increased delays in responsiveness in Q8 (as discussed above) which led to the Ombudsperson issuing 120 Orders. If NYCHA can schedule the necessary repair work, limit the number of missed appointments, and promptly respond to MRU requests, such delays, and related resources, could be considerably reduced in future quarters.

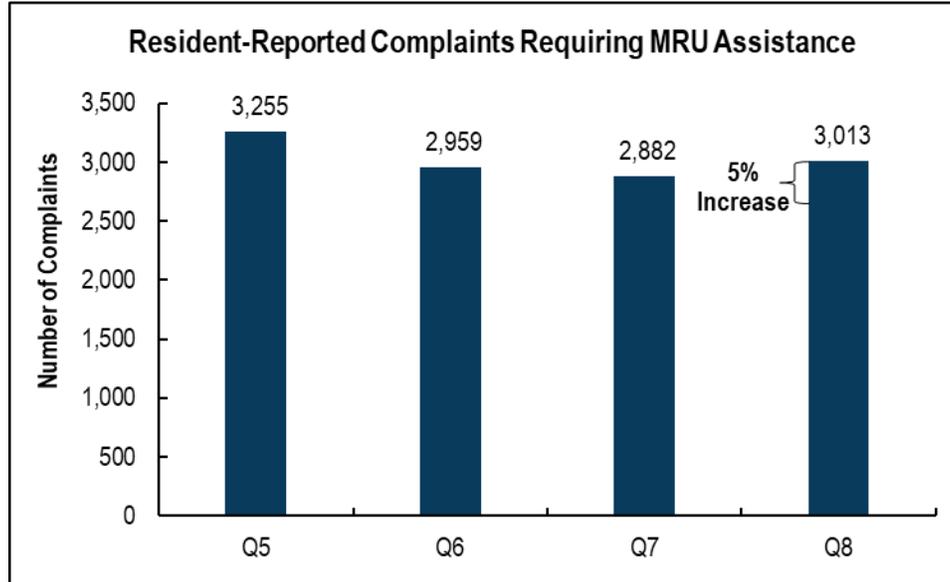
As demonstrated in Figure 18, MRU had a 5% increase in requests for assistance on resident-reported complaints this quarter, accounting for over 85% of resident-reported complaints serviced in the quarter. In Q8, MRU continued to dedicate time and resources to create processes, procedures, tools, and templates to create efficiencies and prioritization plans for its internal workflow to best serve residents and train its staff (with a focus on the new supervisors). The OCC is hopeful that the increased oversight and management of the supervisors and the new operational tools (such as the automated ticket monitoring system) will increase responsiveness and therefore reduce the resources required of the OCC in future quarters (through a reduction of resident-reported follow-up calls and complaints).

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<sup>29</sup> The RCA position was created by NYCHA's MRU department in Q1 with a singular focus and responsibility to communicate with residents and relevant teams within NYCHA (e.g., property management staff, maintenance workers, MRU, etc.) to ensure successful completion of resident complaints to the OCC. The RCA position is a dedicated resource to service mold and leak related complaints.

<sup>30</sup> To effectively resolve resident complaints to the OCC, and ensure transparency regarding active cases and new developments, the MRU facilitates a weekly coordination call with the OCC and various departments within NYCHA including OMAR, Compliance, EH&S, and the CCC.

Figure 18



Please see below for additional information regarding progress and opportunities identified this quarter:

- **MRU Staffing Resources** – NYCHA created an organization chart for its MRU team which contained a total of 38 employees including 30 RCAs; 6 RCA supervisors (5 RCAs assigned to each supervisor); 1 Program Manager; and 1 Senior Administrator. MRU reported several staff disruptions during the quarter due to NYCHA’s return to work guidance (where staff were no longer able to work remotely), office move (where certain staff were no longer local to their workplace), and a vaccine mandate (requiring vaccinations or regular testing). Due to these obstacles, MRU had several staff out of the office for extended periods of time and increased turnover (at one point only having 7 of 30 RCAs). Throughout the quarter, MRU’s Senior Administrator provided frequent updates to the OCC and Ombudsperson of its efforts to fill the vacant positions and best efforts to service the OCC resident-reported complaints. At the end of the quarter, MRU had a vacant Program Manger position and 4 vacant RCA positions. In Q9, it will be important for NYCHA to fill the vacant positions and train the new resources to ensure there is a greater level of ticket oversight and progress made on OCC resident-reported complaints.
  - In Q8, MRU and the OCC continued to work to identify opportunities to streamline case management processes by developing workflow prioritization protocols and procedure views, modifications to data collection processes, and a feedback system to share OCC ticket activity with other stakeholders. In Q8, a new increased oversight program for priority tickets (with reported severe conditions categorized as “Urgent Priority”) was successfully implemented. This program allowed for awareness and participation of several departments within NYCHA including Compliance, EH&S, and OMAR to ensure the immediate health and safety concerns were addressed and progress was made. These resident-reported complaints remained on a weekly call agenda for increased oversight until the issue was fully resolved.
  - In Q8, MRU provided the OCC and Ombudsperson a weekly update regarding MRU’s progress on its operations within the department. This was provided for a limited number of

weeks only due to its staffing constraints and other priorities. In Q5, it was requested that MRU expand this over time to provide additional information regarding ticket activity, level of backlog/non-responsiveness, delays and responsiveness concerns at certain developments, notable activity on open complaints, complex resident communication situations, etc. As NYCHA can continue to take a proactive steps towards managing the resident-reported complaints and systemic opportunities to reduce future resident-reported complaints, the OCC's role can be considerably reduced in future quarters.

- In future quarters, it will be important for MRU to analyze the OCC resident-reported complaint volumes that each RCA can effectively manage to ensure they are appropriately staffed to meet the demands of the OCC volume. MRU will also need to evaluate its staffing structure to determine if additional RCAs would be required to ensure the proper levels of case management when NYCHA activates the CCC notification of the OCC to residents reporting leak complaints.
- **RCA Productivity and Monitoring Reports** – In Q6, the OCC worked with MRU to develop a preliminary RCA automated monitoring system and report to gage and compare individual RCA productivity levels and manage the volume of open resident-reported complaints. Information including the volume of tickets, the average days open, the average days to update, the volume of complex cases (e.g., court cases, complex leak investigations, roof repairs, relocation, etc.), and the number of updates made per day is available for each RCA. This report is intended to provide the RCA supervisors with the tools to needed to ensure that the RCAs are successfully positioned to be able to manage caseloads assigned to them and prevent OCC escalations, which could considerably reduce the OCC efforts in future quarters.
  - In Q8, MRU's program manager was reviewing the monitoring system and report to identify opportunities to integrate it into the RA's workflow and oversight processes. In Q8, the OCC received several resident follow-up complaints associated with one RCA who was non-responsive. It was found that this RCA was responsible for over 100 resident-reported complaints and had not provided the OCC with updates for 2+ weeks. MRU's program manager was made aware of the situation and personally contacted those residents to re-establish trust and get the remaining work scheduled.
  - The OCC is hopeful that in future quarters, NYCHA will use this monitoring system and report to inform its business decisions regarding RCA assignments and resources to ensure that there is an increase in responsiveness for all resident-reported complaints.
- **RCA Communication with Residents** – There is currently no process in place for MRU to monitor RCA communication (or lack thereof) with residents. Each RCA is assigned a mobile device with a unique phone number. The calls are not recorded, and the calls cannot be re-routed to other RCAs if the assigned RCA is on another call or not available.<sup>31</sup> This process makes it difficult for the RCA supervisors to monitor and provide feedback to the RCAs on communication strategies and best practices with the residents it serves.
  - In Q7, MRU developed a process to inform residents if the RCA will be unavailable (e.g., out of the office or unavailable) and offer their supervisor's contact information if the resident

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<sup>31</sup> During Q4, MRU conducted a pilot project for RCAs to communicate with the resident through the OCC call center platform, which provides complete transparency of call volumes and records the conversations, but due to operational inefficiencies identified during the pilot, RCA's current process and phone structure will remain.

needs assistance in their absence. However, given MRU's recurring staff disruption throughout Q8 (as discussed above), the OCC received multiple complaints from residents that, at times, the RCAs were not reachable (via live phone or the ability to leave a voicemail). While MRU implemented the OCC's recommendation for processes around monitoring voicemails and conducting monthly audits of the RCAs' adherence to such policies, additional actions may be required. NYCHA should consider the creation of an overflow phone number that calls could be forwarded to if the RCA isn't accessible. This phone number could be monitored by any RCA to ensure the resident can reach someone from MRU to assist with their concern.

- In Q8, the OCC received over 450 complaints (compared to nearly 350 in Q7) from residents that there was a missed appointment, or the resident was unaware of the next scheduled date (after creating a resident-reported complaint with the OCC). These situations should be avoided if the RCAs are adhering to MRU processes and procedures regarding appointment confirmation and work completion confirmation with residents and associated data entry. In Q6, MRU increased its oversight of these procedures to ensure that RCAs are keeping residents informed of the scheduling dates or making them aware of any anticipated delays, however there was a 30% increase of reported missed appointments in the quarter.
  - In future quarters, MRU should consider strategies to monitor and identify opportunities for improved resident communication by the RCAs such as resident feedback surveys, RCA supervisor shadowing, and/or creation of an overflow phone number for resident access of MRU.
- **RCA Training** – Due to MRU's staffing constraints, it has hired and trained many RCAs, RCA supervisors, and program managers throughout the last several months. It is our understanding that the training program included resident interaction techniques, responding to and reporting updates to the OCC, data field updates and case management, interacting with developments and the need for prompt escalation, understanding NYCHA's work order data system, and use of tools and technologies to gain efficiencies. In Q8, the OCC observed the need for additional training and oversight associated with data field updates, case management and workflow prioritization, prompt escalation, and responding and reporting updates to the OCC (including sharing of resident communication, pictures, and other important information).
    - In Q8 (consistent with prior quarters), the OCC provided feedback and recommendations on individual RCAs and/or resident-reported complaints where there were opportunities for training, development associated with data field updates, need for prompt escalations, need for clear responses to OCC questions or structured notes, need for remediation plans with root cause inspection results, need for follow-up questions with the development to address the resident-reported complaint, and increased oversight based on resident-reported complaints about engagement with the RCA. The OCC also developed and shared a data integrity dashboard with the RCA supervisors that flags select data fields that may not have been updated. The OCC recommended that MRU conduct weekly reviews to ensure each RCA is getting customized feedback and training to properly adhere to MRU processes and procedures.
    - In Q7, MRU indicated that it was conducting daily audits of the RCA's adherence to updating the appropriate data fields and providing feedback on individual cases. However, in Q8 this was reduced and limited due to staffing constraints.

- The OCC is hopeful that in Q9, the OCC will see an increase in RCA productivity and adherence to MRU processes and procedures which will reduce the level of follow-up interactions currently required by the OCC and reduce the number of failed data field audits.
- **Complex Resident Communication Circumstances** – In Q8, there were 455 resident-reported complaints to the OCC that involved communication barriers between MRU (or the development) and the resident. These were situations whereby the resident did not agree with the inspection results (or remediation plan) associated with the reported complaint or the resident was not satisfied or willing to allow NYCHA to conduct the repair work. In many of these cases, the OCC suggested that MRU have a 3rd party from outside the development participate in the inspection and/or remediation activities (e.g., MRU representative, OMAR, representative, Compliance representative, Quality Assurance representative, or the IMA). NYCHA supported all of these requests in Q8, and it found it to be a good use of resources to circumvent resident refusal of scheduled appointments. In other cases, the OCC will suggest that MRU communicate with the resident via email (rather than phone) if there is a lack of responsiveness from the resident or refusal to engage. In some of these complaints, other departments may be involved to assist in communication with the resident (e.g., Property management office, NYCHA Borough Liaisons, or NYCHA Family Services). However, there have been resident complaints where these efforts have not been successful and agreed-upon next steps have not been determined.<sup>32</sup>
  - The OCC recommended that MRU and the RCA supervisors closely monitor these resident-reported complaints to aid and support the RCAs to ensure progress can be made and roadblocks can be avoided (e.g., via the identification of triggers or areas of concerns) by proactively addressing them.
  - It is our understanding that in future quarters, NYCHA will consider creating guidelines on how it will define its “best efforts” to support resident-reported complaints involving complex circumstances.
- **MRU Demand for Spanish Language** – In Q8 (consistent with prior quarters), nearly 15% of complaints (486) required Spanish language interaction. It is our understanding that MRU has only 2 RCAs with Spanish language capabilities and that the other RCAs use language services to communicate with residents that require Spanish language. It is our understanding that the RCAs have some inefficiencies using the languages services and limits their ability to establish a rapport with the resident.
  - In Q8 (and prior quarters), the OCC received feedback from some residents that it was difficult to ask their RCA questions due to the inefficiencies associated with the language services or it was frustrating that the RCAs would contact them (or leave them messages) in English rather than Spanish. In some situations, MRU has requested that the OCC assist with resident communication for Spanish residents.
  - In Q9, MRU should consider retaining additional Spanish-speaking RCAs for the vacant positions to ensure prompt, effective resident responsiveness.

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<sup>32</sup> Resident-reported complaints in these circumstances are referred to the Ombudsperson for assistance regarding next steps.

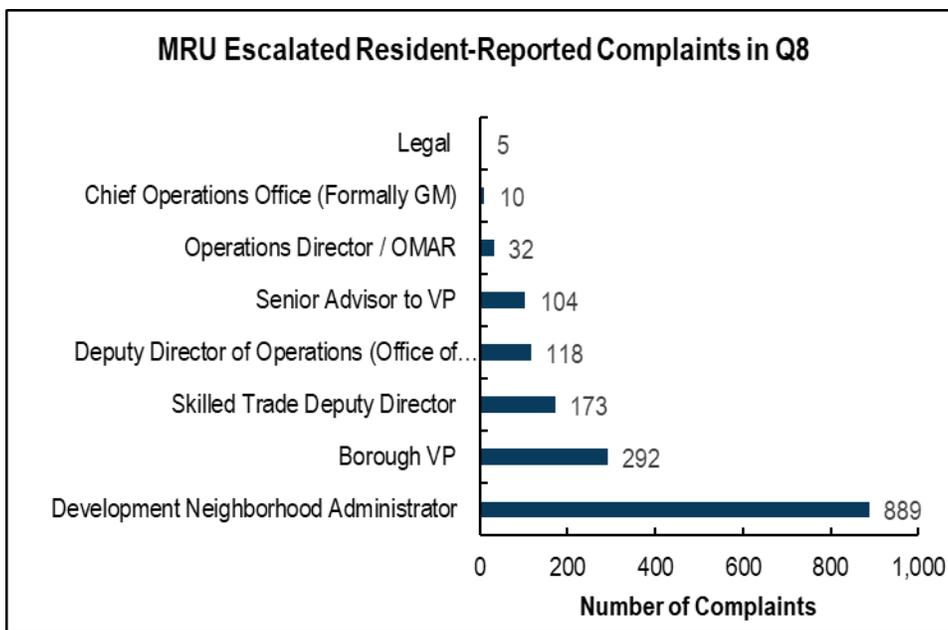
**2. Overall Responsiveness with NYCHA Stakeholders**

The OCC has continued to observe incremental progress towards effectuating a culture change within NYCHA. NYCHA has made progress in conducting complex repair activities, ensuring the proper remediation steps are being taken (sometimes requiring re-inspections or follow-up work at the OCC’s request), and working on re-establishing trust with residents at certain developments.

However, MRU also experienced on-going responsiveness issues at certain developments requiring substantial efforts and follow-up communication (and internal escalations) to receive the necessary information needed (e.g., scheduling date, updated remediation plan, a question regarding a missed appointment, verification of work being completed, or ensure the proper information is logged and created in the data system) to respond to the OCC and provide an update to the resident.

While it is our understanding that some of these delays in responsiveness have been due to staffing, coverage and management constraints, there will need to be a greater level of prompt and continuous, detailed, resident-focused responsiveness for all resident-reported complaints handled by the MRU. As demonstrated in Figure 19, MRU internal escalations for resident-reported complaints included 8 different management offices among the boroughs, whereby some complaints were escalated to NYCHA’s highest level (COO). MRU internal escalations to the Neighborhood Administrator (NA) (889 in Q8) are often done proactively by MRU to ensure prompt action is taken to address the resident-reported complaint and increase transparency across the development. If there is still a lack of progress due to staff coverage or delayed responsiveness (after multiple follow-up attempts to the NA) MRU will further escalate the complaint, accounting for 734 internal escalations in Q8. Increased responsiveness of the developments will be critical for the success of MRU and the OCC. As the rate of response from the developments increase, the volume of work for the RCAs will decline.

**Figure 19**



In addition to the internal escalations, MRU indicated the following activities associated with interactions with NYCHA developments in Q8:

- Follow-up with the development to seek a response regarding inspection findings or remediation plans for 2,423 resident-reported complaints (80% of complaints requiring its involvement);
- Requested expedited scheduling or a revision to the remediation plan for 2,012 resident-reported complaints (67% of complaints requiring its involvement); and
- Follow-up with the development (or skilled trades) regarding 1,289 resident-reported complaints (43% of complaints requiring its involvement) due to a lack of adequate information included in the remediation plan, inspection findings, notes with the Maximo data system, and/or an upcoming scheduling date.

See below for additional information regarding progress and opportunities identified this quarter:

- **Executive Dashboard for Operations** – In past quarters, the OCC and the court-appointed IDA worked with NYCHA to create and share a new data platform and data visualization dashboards to NYCHA executives to provide greater visibility and clarity regarding open and closed work orders in combination with feedback from residents contacting the OCC. This data platform contains data regarding work order trends, resident-reported complaint trends, and data associated with the strategies identified throughout this report. The OCC recommended that MRU should facilitate recurring meetings with the borough groups to offer opportunities for collaboration and further discussions regarding best practices and strategies to reduce the number of follow-up requests required by MRU.
  - In Q8, as discussed later in this report, Compliance implemented an Enhanced Oversight Program (EOP) to provide technical assistance and support developments towards improving its compliance whereby these dashboards are reviewed on a weekly basis over a four-month period. The dashboards help develop goals, performance milestones, and facilitate dialog regarding roadblocks (lack of staffing, IT issues, procurement issues).
  - Aside from the use for EOP, it does not appear that the borough groups assigned access to the data platform have utilized it. We are hopeful that in future quarters, NYCHA will begin to utilize these dashboards (which show aggregated information and trends) and facilitate recurring meetings to review and respond to development-wide strategies and best practices to reduce resident-reported complaints to the OCC.
- **Participation from Other Departments (Legal, Family Partnerships, Social Services)** – In Q8, MRU (with the support of the Ombudsperson and OCC) worked with various departments to ensure certain resident-reported complaints could be effectively resolved. The OCC found that there are situations where the resident's complaint to the OCC can be linked to or associated with, other situations beyond the mold and leak complaint (on-going legal cases, disputes between the resident and development, and/or cases with Social Services or Family Partnerships). These departments have helped ensure that proper protocols and appropriate actions are being taken to best serve the resident. Such activities included:
  - Providing feedback on protocols for interaction with residents (including instructions to development for scheduling and staffing repair work), notice to the resident (two weeks in advance, two days in advance, etc.), and procedures for access dates;

- Written reports of resident legal cases and associated legal documentation (e.g., complaint, rulings, etc.);
  - Written reports or interoffice memos from Family Partnerships on activities, history of complaints/referrals, and emergency points of contact; and
  - Assisting MRU with effective communication with residents. It is our understanding that in Q8 the Legal department was involved in 5 resident complaints to the OCC and Family Services (and/or Social Services) was involved in 7 resident complaints to the OCC.
- **Feedback Sessions with Developments** – The OCC and Ombudsperson have recommended that MRU host monthly feedback sessions with the borough groups (and developments) to identify constraints and limitations associated with promptly resolving resident-reported complaints to the OCC. This process could assist MRU to develop plans and strategies to reduce the number of follow-up requests. In past quarters, MRU held feedback sessions with the borough groups to hear about their experiences working with MRU and servicing resident complaints to the OCC. During these sessions MRU provided feedback on resident communication best practices, need for responsiveness (and the number of escalations), scheduling difficulties, and capital repair constraints.
    - In Q8, the top 10 developments with responsiveness delays included:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Red Hook West;</li> <li>▪ Jefferson;</li> <li>▪ Saint Nicholas;</li> <li>▪ Forest;</li> <li>▪ Lafayette;</li> <li>▪ Albany;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mitchel;</li> <li>▪ Morrisania Air Rights / Jackson;</li> <li>▪ Pelham Parkway; and</li> <li>▪ Sotomayor.</li> </ul>
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    - Feedback received from the developments in Q8 and prior quarters included:<sup>33</sup>
      - COVID-19 vaccine mandates causing staff disruptions while getting vaccinated or regular testing;
      - Vacancies at the staff and management levels causing missed appointments and/or scheduling delays (several weeks in advance);
      - Delays regarding planned capital repairs and asbestos inspections;
      - Lack of vendor contract funding or vendor availability;
      - Lack of inventory (e.g., tub enclosures, cabinets, etc.);
      - Complex resident communication barriers preventing the resident's allowance of work; and/or
      - Inability to provide a response to OCC requests (to MRU) in a reasonable amount of time with appropriate action steps due to competing demands of an unreasonable workload (based on resources available) and a large number of competing requests from other internal and external parties (such as NYCHA's Compliance department, and COO office, and external parties such as the Monitor team, Mayor's office, court mandates, HUD inspections etc.).
    - Strategies developed and implemented to reduce the number of follow-up requests in Q8 and prior quarters included:

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<sup>33</sup> It is our understanding that OMAR takes the feedback provided to them under advisement to determine strategies to assist each development and find opportunities to use its vendor contracts on complex matters.

- Greater transparency at the senior leadership level of resident-reported complaints experiencing non-responsiveness from NYCHA to take action, with a listing of all open work orders associated with that unit;
- Creation and access to an executive dashboard that the OCC provides for each borough grouping with data regarding OCC activity (and escalations) associated with the resident-reported complaints, reports of severe conditions, and metrics associated with open work order volumes and backlog;
- Creation of various dashboards (by the IDA) containing information regarding open work orders with missing fixtures (e.g., tub enclosures, cabinets, etc.), aging vendor work orders, or backlogs by craft where inventory may be required, vendor scheduling and procurement may be required, or staffing assistance from other developments within the Borough; and
- Creation of a data flag in Maximo for OCC work orders so the development can query live reports of open work orders.

Through MRU's continued support and oversight, the OCC is hopeful that cultural and operational changes will continue to take effect resulting in more effective communication with residents (and within NYCHA) and continued improvement in the accountability and commitment needed to ensure proper repair work is completed and addressed promptly.

### 3. Reduction of Recurrence Complaints

As discussed in prior quarters, NYCHA needs to properly address resident recurrence complaints associated with complex building repairs (e.g., roof repairs, façade or exterior brickwork repairs, pipe replacement, ventilation etc.) and develop interim solutions to ensure the health and safety concerns raised by the residents and reduction of duplicative work currently required by NYCHA. The creation of the Mold Buster standard procedure will assist in reducing the recurrence of mold, along with NYCHA's efforts implement a new leak standard procedure to trace and resolve root causes of leaks. In Q8, there was a reduction of recurrence related complaints to the OCC from 19% to 15%.

Please see below for information regarding progress and opportunities identified this quarter:

- **Roof Fan and Ventilation System Upgrade** – In Q4, NYCHA started to replace roof fans at certain developments that provide mechanical ventilation (rather than natural ventilation using windows). The mechanical ventilation upgrade increases air circulation and improves indoor air quality, reducing humidity and mold growth. As of the end of Q8, NYCHA had replaced over 4,230 fans across the portfolio. The efforts taken to replace roof fans should else reduce or eliminate the future occurrence of mold, particularly in the bathroom and kitchen with mechanical ventilation and units on lower floors. These efforts are expected to continue in Q9.
- **Interim Repairs and Routine Inspections** – In Q8, 15% of resident-reported complaints to the OCC were recurrence-related, whereby NYCHA had completed the mold or leak repair in the past but the resident-reported that the problem had returned within a year. These are often situations related to poor ventilation within the unit or lack of root cause remediation due to building needs (such as needed roof repair work, pipe replacement work, façade, or exterior repair work) that is left unfinished which leads to a recurrence of the reported mold or leak condition. For many of these complaints, the OCC was informed that complex building repair work is required and despite any remediation work within the unit, there is a higher likelihood of recurrence. The OCC can assist these residents to ensure that the conditions within the unit are being regularly addressed to ensure the health and safety of the resident.
  - MRU works with the developments with these capital repair issues to develop interim solutions to ensure the health and safety of the resident. Such solutions included temporary roof repair work and waterproofing the unit to try and prevent recurrence. It is also our understanding that routine inspections will be conducted by the development on a bi-annual or annual basis to ensure the conditions are remediated if they return.
  - In Q8 (consistent with prior quarters), the OCC was informed by some residents that the mold or leak had recurred. As a result, the OCC created follow-up complaints for these residents and requested a re-inspection to be conducted. If requested, the OCC and the court-appointed IDA can analyze these follow-up complaints in further detail (including work order investigations and building line analyses) to better understand the reported recurrence and offer any opportunities for training, required inspections (e.g., roof, façade, building line pipes, individual units, etc.) or interim repairs.

## E. Continuing to Raise Awareness of the OCC

Information about the OCC is available for residents on NYCHA's website (Mold Prevention section), on NYCHA's Mold Busters Inspection Review Form (available for residents who have founded mold), NYCHA's Kiosk and MyNYCHA App (when a resident reports a mold condition), or when a resident contacts the Customer Contact Center (CCC) to report a mold condition.<sup>34</sup> As of the end of Q8, NYCHA was not conducting any proactive outreach to residents (e.g., flyer, posters, rent mailer, outbound calling, robo-calls, email notifications, intergovernmental newsletters, or sharing it during Tenant Association meetings). In Q6, OMAR created new social media outreach content regarding the OCC which was published regularly through August 2021 (first month of Q8). However, new resident-reported complaints created through this channel accounted for only 2% in the quarter. While a multi-channel, frequent outreach campaign would raise awareness of the OCC to all residents, as discussed above, NYCHA's efforts to raise awareness about the OCC must be balanced against other communication and outreach commitments by NYCHA to residents on a wide range of topics. NYCHA has indicated its commitment to ensuring residents are made aware of the OCC and the importance of regular, multi-channel outreach. The OCC is hopeful that NYCHA will continue to evaluate the opportunity to expand its outreach efforts to other communication channels, balanced against its other communication priorities. There may also be opportunities to raise awareness about the OCC through the efforts of other stakeholders and community groups.

In Q7, NYCHA launched its new Mold Campaign that contained a multi-channel outreach plan including written materials (educational packet, flyer, posters, door hangers) and social media materials (website, videos, social media posts) which was shared with residents through rent mailers, door-to-door canvassing, building canvassing, social media posts, and other forms of resident engagement. Some of the marketing collateral contained information regarding the OCC, which may help improve awareness of the OCC.<sup>35</sup>

Please see below for information regarding progress and opportunities identified this quarter:

- NYCHA Communication with Residents Regarding the OCC** – It will be important for NYCHA to reinforce the independence of the Ombudsperson and OCC to residents as well as the fact that NYCHA is taking action to become more resident-focused and accountable. Residents have expressed confusion in calls to the OCC, and the Parties, about whether the OCC is part of NYCHA, creating the potential for lack of engagement from residents because of factors such as skepticism or fear. The fact of its independence has been an important element of the OCC's communication with residents and provides an opportunity for dialogue and trust with the resident. The Ombudsperson and the OCC have emphasized to NYCHA that it must communicate to residents that the OCC and the Ombudsperson are independent of NYCHA. The OCC and Ombudsperson have reviewed and approved all content published within the quarter to ensure that the independence of the OCC is clearly stated in outreach materials about the OCC. MRU has made continual progress to reinforce the independence of the OCC to both residents and development staff.

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<sup>34</sup> Refer to **Appendix B** for outreach examples.

<sup>35</sup> The OCC information is contained on NYCHA's website and on the last page of the educational packet. The OCC information is not included in the written materials such as the flyer, poster, or door hangers.

- **Pending Outreach Channels** – In Q1, in coordination with the Ombudsperson and OCC, NYCHA developed a monthly communication plan to inform residents about the OCC and to clearly demonstrate that the Ombudsperson is independent of NYCHA. The communication plan contemplated multiple communication channels (over several weeks) for each borough grouping launch.
  
- OCC contact information has not yet been made accessible to residents on:
  - OCC Flyer for Leaks
  - MyNYCHA app for reports of leaks.
    - Residents who report mold conditions through the app are notified that if the resident has a complaint after opening the work order the OCC can be contacted. However, reports of leaks or moisture conditions included in the RCD are not provided this notification in the app at this time.
    - It is our understanding that NYCHA plans to re-consider this once the Leak standard procedure has been implemented (which is not anticipated until Fall 2023) and MRU is adequately staffed.
  - NYCHA's Customer Contact Center (CCC) interactive voice response (“IVR”) system for reports of leaks.
    - Residents who report mold conditions through the CCC are notified that if the resident has a complaint after opening the work order the OCC can be contacted. However, reports of leaks or moisture conditions included in the RCD are not provided this notification at this time.
    - It is our understanding that NYCHA plans to re-consider this once the Leak standard procedure has been implemented (which is not anticipated until Fall 2023) and MRU is adequately staffed.
  - NYCHA residents who have a mold inspection conducted that is considered “unfounded” and informed that no mold is present. As mentioned above, the court-appointed IMA estimated that nearly 45% of mold inspections that are closed as “unfounded” in 2021 may actually have mold or excess moisture problem.
    - It is our understanding that the OCC contact information is provided on the mold inspection review form (shown in Appendix B) which is only provided to residents when the inspection results are “founded” and require a remediation plan.
    - NYCHA is in the process (scheduled for December 2021) of including the OCC contact information to the Mold Inspection Receipt form which indicates whether the mold is “founded” or “unfounded”. This will ensure all residents who report mold conditions are provided with the OCC contact information.

**F. The Commitment to Data Strategy, Individual Accountability at NYCHA, Collaboration and Resident Engagement Creates Significant Opportunities for Improvement**

NYCHA must maintain a commitment to data strategy, individual accountability, collaboration, and resident engagement with a continuous pursuit of opportunities for improvement.

The OCC's resident engagement, findings from detailed work order reviews, and collaboration with various internal and external stakeholders (including the Parties and Tenant Associations) have already provided significant opportunities for operational changes across the NYCHA portfolio. This combination of perspectives, activities, and processes informs standard procedure, use and interpretation of data, resident communication, and the effective use of NYCHA resources. Understanding the feedback from both the residents' perspective as well as the operations perspective offers a unique opportunity for ongoing and sustainable transformative change in NYCHA's response to mold and leaks, and its efforts to effectively prevent recurrence.

In June 2021 (within Q7), at the request of the Plaintiffs, the Stout issued a report and recommendations regarding strategies to improve NYCHA's progress towards compliance in Baez. This 40-page document outlines the four phases necessary to develop a comprehensive, sustainable, data-driven, effective strategy to improve its compliance required by the Baez RCD, including the development of interim milestones, iterative processes, daily / weekly / monthly operational responses, collaboration with Compliance and other NYCHA departments, continual evaluation mechanisms, feedback sessions from the field, technical training of staff, leadership training of management, resident communication best practices and training, culture change initiatives, identification of staffing constraints and barriers to improvement, etc.

In Q8, NYCHA has made considerable progress towards the implementation of the recommendations identified in the June 2021 report, including:

- Towards the end of Q7, Compliance launched an Enhanced Oversight Program (EOP) to improve compliance indicators at Brownsville Houses with the IDA, OCC, and various departments within NYCHA (e.g., EH&S, OMAR, Property Management, Skilled Trade, etc.). During the four-month oversight period (within Q8), EH&S, OMAR, and Compliance provided technical assistance and support to development staff on the Mold SP, Maximo, and leak tracing. EH&S performed periodic compliance oversight of key activities such as mold inspections and mold remediation. The EOP team also identified roadblocks to improved compliance (lack of staffing, IT issues, procurement issues) and actively took steps to remove roadblocks identified to meet the four-month performance milestones. Weekly meetings and a regular onsite presence helped to build connectivity between Property Management staff and the overall NYCHA support departments, as this connectivity is key to fostering a shared agency mission of Baez compliance. The EOP team also placed a focus on OCC cases to ensure they were addressed and to improve the development's responsiveness to the RCA. The results of the of the EOP showed strong positive effects including a reduction of the backlog of work orders greater than 100 days old, increase of mold inspections completed, increased rate of root cause repairs which were able to be identified through increased training, and increased responsiveness to emergency leaks. In NYCHA's Federal Monitor's Ninth Quarterly Report Letter (issued within Q8), it "recommends that the program be applied to all NYCHA's developments as soon as possible. Further, access to dashboards developed by the IDA should be provided to Borough personnel, Neighborhood Administrators, and Property Managers (as a tool in identifying and

fixing mold and leak work order issues) and to NYCHA leadership involved in tracking and assessing the Neighborhood Model as it is implemented over the next year.”

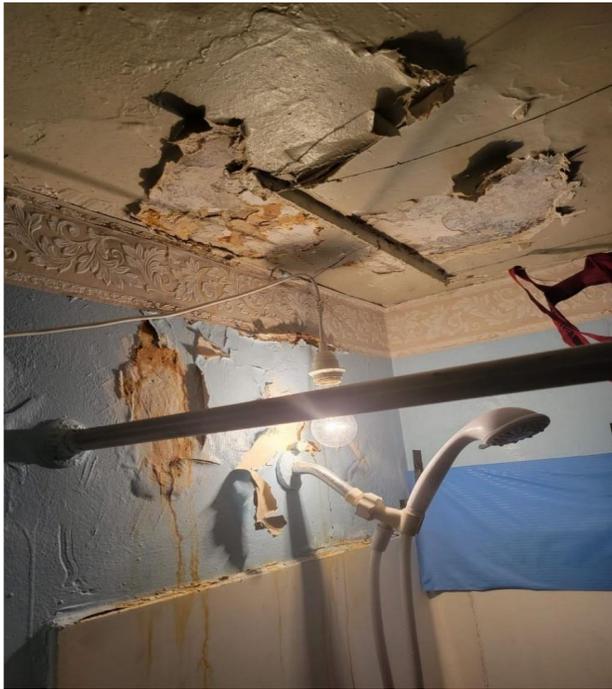
- Towards the end of Q8, NYCHA began developing the infrastructure for a “Mold and Leak Scorecard” as presented by the IDA in the June 2021 report. The purpose of the Scorecard is to index mold and leak performance at a development level, being able to show incremental progress across a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The development of the Scorecard is very complex and NYCHA is working in conjunction with the IDA to develop the framework and methodology. This Scorecard will allow for the expansion of the EOP program, across NYCHA through identification of low performers.

**Exhibit 1 –Resident-Reported Complaint Examples to the OCC**

**A. Before and After Example**



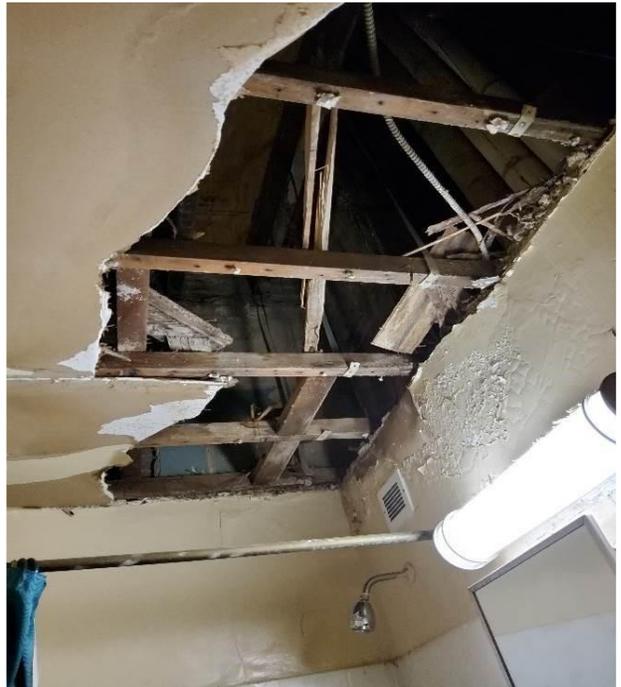
**B. Brooklyn Residents**



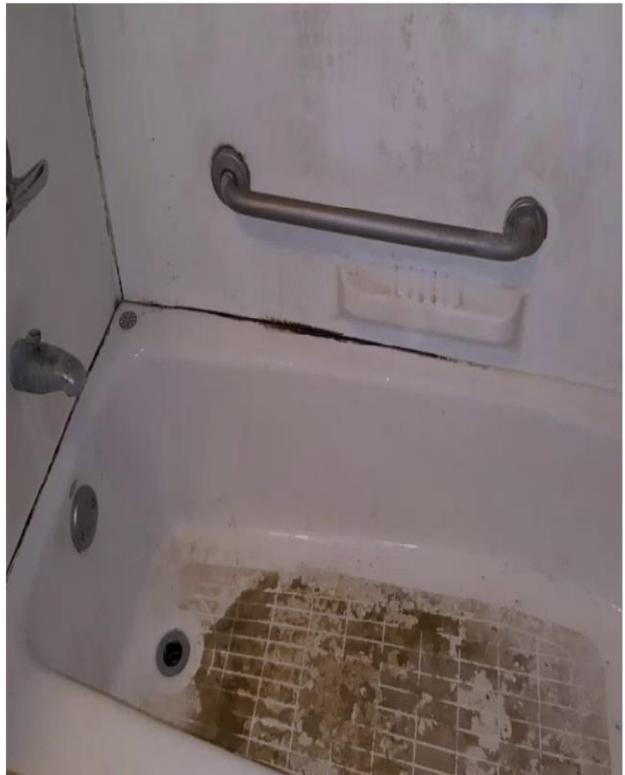
**C. Bronx Residents**



**D. Manhattan Residents**



**E. Queens and Staten Island Residents**



## **Exhibit 2 - Resident Communication Strategies and Scheduling Best Practices**

### Key Elements of Empathic Resident Communication:

- Active listening - NYCHA listening to the residents' description of health concerns, safety concerns, and prior experiences with NYCHA;
- Knowledgeable about the subject matter - NYCHA listening to the residents' description of the current complaint (diagnosis of the historic problem, not just the current situation and ensuring the proper classification of the reported conditions);
- Attentiveness - NYCHA responding immediately, with commitment and accountability, to the results of inspection findings and the conditions identified within the unit (e.g., sharing virtual inspections and/or pictures) and the sense of urgency to internally escalate severe conditions to supervisors and upper management (as needed);
- Accuracy - NYCHA carefully and empathetically discussing with the resident the findings of any inspection, the series of activities/work that need to be completed to effectively remediate the situation, any unknowns or uncertainties that are still being reviewed, whether a relocation may be necessary (and if so, what that process will be and why) when they will hear from someone regarding the next step in the process (and who that person will be), and what they can do if they have any questions or concerns about what was discussed or about work that is completed later;
- Proactive approach - NYCHA feedback from residents via a survey (or other methods) to gauge the effectiveness of the communication efforts being implemented and to offer the residents the ability to provide feedback; and
- Empathy - NYCHA listening to the resident's feedback with acknowledgment and concern with offering an opinion.
- Resident communication expectations and timing should be adhered to rather than unannounced visits.

### **Considerations and Strategies for Complex Resident Communication Situations**

- Identification of situations or information that may cause the resident to feel strong emotions based on previous experiences (e.g., the idea that someone will "paint over mold" rather than remediated it properly);
- Develop strategies to proactively avoid communication roadblocks or conflict (e.g., ensure the resident is aware of the mold remediation process so their concern about "painting over mold" is addressed);
- Address communication setbacks or hostile interactions (e.g., resident refusal) by allowing the resident space and providing the resident an outlet to voice their concerns;
- Identify ways to re-establish trust after a conflict such as use of alternative methods of communication or additional points of contacts for communication (e.g., communication via email rather than via phone);
- Collaboration with other internal stakeholders (e.g., another family member or emergency contact) or external stakeholders (e.g., NYCHA's Family Services; Non-for-profit organization or community advocate) to assist in communication if progress is limited; and
- Develop guidelines or recommendations for assisting residents with complex situations such as hoarding, barriers due to mental health, or residency concerns regarding head of household.

## Key Elements of Effective Resident Communication Regarding Scheduling

- During initial intake of condition to CCC -
  - Confirm resident contact information (also confirm this in follow-up interaction with the resident);
  - Identify the preferred method of communication for the resident (e.g., phone number, email, mail, etc.);
  - Provide an initial scheduling date to the resident and confirm the resident's availability (also provide a copy via mail, email or MyNYCHA App message); and
  - Provide information for where the resident can easily check on the status and schedule of upcoming work and how the resident can reschedule, if needed.
  - Prior to scheduled appointment (1-2 days prior) -
  - Confirm scheduled appointment in advance of the date via robo-call or push notification to the resident using the preferred method of contact for the resident;
  - Use scheduling windows that are as narrow as possible and avoid all-day windows to minimize resident inconvenience;
  - Review the results of the appointment confirmation process to identify any scheduled appointments that need to be rescheduled for a future date;
  - Use real-time staffing assessments to identify when scheduled appointments cannot be met (due to planned or unplanned absences) and contact residents to reschedule; and
  - Avoid unannounced visits or unscheduled appointments;
- Day of scheduled appointment -
  - Effective planning to ensure work has been sequenced properly, the worker understands the scope of the work and materials required, and estimated time required to complete the work;
  - Effective communication with the resident regarding the timeframe of the scheduled appointment, the anticipated duration of the appointment, and the type of work being performed;
  - Monitor data related to all calls to residents to confirm that calls are being made for all scheduled work prior to arrival;
  - Pre-call to the resident 30-60 minutes before arrival to confirm availability and expected arrival time;
  - For situations regarding inspection or repair activity in more than 1 unit, the residents should be informed of possible delays or awareness that the work may not be in their unit at certain times;
  - Communicate any anticipated delays or need to reschedule due to staff shortages in advance; and
  - Communicate next steps and timing before leaving the appointment to ensure the resident understands what the next step will be.
  - Inform resident that they will be contacted about a post-work resident survey requesting feedback regarding the resident's experience and satisfaction.
- Post scheduled appointment -
  - Provide the resident with written confirmation that the work performed has been completed;
  - Provide the resident with written information regarding any Quality Assurance check (e.g., Mold Busters) that will occur in the future (e.g., 45 days later) with information on when it will be scheduled and communicated to the resident;

- Complete a survey of resident experience and satisfaction using the preferred method of communication for the resident; and
- Track and monitor survey results to ensure any concerns or dissatisfaction is addressed via a follow-up call with the resident to learn about what went wrong and how it can be resolved.

### **Exhibit 3 - Factors Necessary For Continued Success at NYCHA**

#### **A. Need for Continued Effective, Empathetic Resident Communication**

NYCHA needs to continue to evolve to a more customer-centric culture through increased communication with residents regarding root cause issues, remediation plans, scheduling of work, and confirming satisfaction. It remains that nearly all resident-reported complaints to the OCC have involved a breakdown of communication between the resident and NYCHA. Residents were often unaware of the Mold Busters remediation standard procedure, the status of the repair work needed in their unit, or the next scheduling date. For MRU to operate effectively and efficiently (servicing OCC resident-reported complaints), there will need to be a continued culture change at NYCHA to effectively communicate with residents (and internally within the Authority) with accountability and a demonstration of commitment to ensure that the proper repair work is completed.

See below for information regarding opportunities and recommendations identified through the OCC:

- **Relocations and Reasonable Accommodation Requests** – The OCC has observed that some complaints require the resident to be relocated (either temporarily while work is being performed or permanently via reasonability accommodation transfer) due to the severity of the conditions in the unit or where asbestos abatement is required. It appears that each relocation is handled differently based on the facts and circumstances of the complaint or conditions within the unit. Resident communication regarding the relocation varies based on the circumstances but of the involves the Property Manager, the Compliance department, MRU and/or NYCHA’s highest level (Chief Operating Officer “COO) office. The OCC has observed that there are often complexities associated with these complaints regarding the location of the relocation (requiring the identification of one or several units, ensuring the comparable size of the unit (e.g., same number of bedrooms), the lack of availability of vacant units, the costs associated with the relocation, and other complexities regarding lease agreements and storage.
  - There are also situations when a resident files a Reasonable Accommodations request to relocate due to a health or safety concern (e.g., breathing condition/asthma because of mold). The OCC found that residents who get to this point are often placed on a long waiting list (often lasting months or years) for a transfer due to a lack of available vacant units, particularly those that are 3+ bedrooms or larger. These residents do not appear to always be provided information about their location options and variations of estimated wait times based on the availability and number of people on the waiting list. The OCC has also found that some residents did not have an open or pending request, despite their belief that they were on the waiting list.
  - NYCHA should create clear guidelines and policies regarding relocation criteria, moving expenses, temporary lease agreements, resident communication strategies for complex situations and residents’ responsibilities to promptly respond to vacant units.
  - NYCHA should develop alternative solutions for residents who require relocation to ensure their health and safety concerns are being addressed (within reasonable expectations) and ensure that all communication is provided and understood by the resident.
  - NYCHA should regularly update residents that are awaiting a Reasonable Accommodations to check-in on the status of the relocation and ensure that the request is not closed without the resident’s written consent.

- **Resident Satisfaction Robo-Call Survey** – The OCC learned that NYCHA conducts an automated robo-calling survey to record resident satisfaction, including for mold and leak work orders. Based on feedback from MRU, it appears that this survey is not being used consistently across NYCHA to understand resident satisfaction and identify areas for improvement or best practices. The court-appointed IDA created data visualizations to help NYCHA identify high and lower performers (individuals, developments, consolidations, and boroughs) as it relates to the resident satisfaction survey responses.<sup>36</sup>
  - NYCHA should utilize this survey data to identify which developments need additional resident communication training and enhanced oversight.
  - In Q8, NYCHA was analyzing this data for consideration towards incorporating it into a new operational tool (Mold and Leak Scorecard which is discussed below).
  
- **Resident Communication Regarding Complex Leaks** – There are hundreds of resident-reported complaints to the OCC that required complex building line leak investigations. The OCC receives extensive feedback from residents indicating they reported leak issues to NYCHA in the past and nothing was done after the inspection. Residents reported that NYCHA would come to inspect the leak and be informed from a maintenance worker that they will return after they identified the root cause of the leak which was outside of their unit (e.g., the roof or units above or below). In many situations, residents report that nobody ever returned or informed them about whether repair work was performed to address the root cause of the leak or assist them to repair the water damage that the leak caused.
  - The OCC is hopeful that the implementation of the Leak Standard Procedure will improve NYCHA's communication process with residents regarding root cause repair work being completed outside of their unit.
  
- **Resident Communication Regarding Mold Buster QA Inspections** – The OCC observed that some residents with open or recently closed Mold Buster Quality Assurance (QA) inspections were unaware of the inspection, confused about its purpose (to re-inspect the area to confirm that the root cause was addressed, and the mold had no re-occurred), and were not informed about the scheduling or results of the inspection. The OCC and court-appointed IDA have asked OMAR for information regarding the resident communication process (written and verbal) regarding the lifecycle of the Mold Busters QA process, including resident education regarding the purpose and process, scheduling, and understanding the results.
  - It is our understanding that the property manager at the development is responsible for scheduling the QA inspection and educating the resident of its purpose. After the inspection is completed, the inspector is responsible to inform the resident of the results. If the mold has not recurred, the resident will be verbally informed, and the work order will be closed. If the mold has recurred, a re-inspection will be performed, and the resident will receive a written summary of the results and remediation plan (mold receipt).
  - The OCC is hopeful that the launch of NYCHA's Mold Campaign (as discussed above) will provide additional training and resources to each development to better educate residents of the lifecycle of the Mold Busters QA process, including resident education regarding the purpose and process, scheduling, and understanding the results.

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<sup>36</sup> Refer to **Exhibit 4** for a listing of data visualizations that the court-appointed IDA developed for NYCHA.

## **B. Transparency and Individual Accountability are Necessary to Effectuate Culture Change**

NYCHA needs to continue to increase oversight of work order activity to ensure that standard procedures are being followed and proper remediation steps are being taken through on-going training and staff development. Additionally, NYCHA needs to prioritize the completion of the Leak Standard Procedure to properly identify and repair complex leaks.<sup>37</sup>

The OCC has received extensive feedback from residents indicating they reported mold and leak issues to NYCHA in the past and nothing was done to fix the issue. Through our review of these situations, the residents' reports are almost universally correct. For all resident-reported complaints, there is an increased level of case management and oversight of work performed, which requires accountability for each worker involved in the remediation process. The OCC will not close a complaint until the resident has indicated that the work has been completed to their satisfaction. There have been situations where the resident does not report satisfaction and the OCC will go back to NYCHA to understand what happened and seek additional work or a re-inspection if needed. The OCC will also provide a referral to Compliance or Quality Assurance for any resident-reported complaint where there is an indication of improper proper repair work.

See below for information regarding opportunities and recommendations identified through the OCC:

- **Re-inspections** – For situations where the resident contacts the OCC dissatisfied with repair work, the OCC requests that MRU conduct a re-inspection of the work to determine the root cause and ensure the appropriate remediation plan is created. The OCC has, on several occasions, requested that NYCHA conduct a thorough leak investigation for complaints of leak recurrence or non-visible leaks. The OCC has stressed the importance for NYCHA to identify situations where the root cause of an issue cannot easily be identified so that outside resources (such as the court-appointed IMA or vendors) can be enlisted. The OCC has found that the necessary investigation and remediation required for these complex complaints take a very long time for NYCHA to repair and requires substantial follow-up from the OCC to ensure progress and effective resident communication.
  - The OCC is hopeful that the implementation of the Leak Standard Procedure will improve NYCHA's ability to properly identify and repair complex leaks and reduced the need for re-inspections.
  - For certain developments with extensive leak-related issues, advanced training for leak investigation and remediation repair solutions for underlying root causes should be offered to maintenance workers and an emphasis to maintenance workers that non-visible leaks need to be investigated.
- **Work Orders Closed with No Work Done** – The OCC continues to receive feedback from residents in some situations indicating they reported mold and leak issues to NYCHA in the past and NYCHA closed the work order without completing the work. Residents noted they would create work order tickets (on the MyNYCHA app or through the CCC) but they would be closed

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<sup>37</sup> NYCHA completed a pilot project throughout Q4 and Q5. It is our understanding that NYCHA is developing the second phase of the pilot project, which is tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2022.

- without ever hearing from anyone (which could be seen on the MyNYCHA app or would be communicated to the resident from the CCC if the resident followed-up on the scheduling date). The OCC has found that these situations often fall into the following situation: (1) Leak work order is closed “no work done” or “unfounded” by NYCHA because the leak is coming from a unit above the resident who reported the leak; or (2) Labor worker closed the work order as “resident not home” or “resident refusal.” The OCC has also learned of instances where according to residents they were informed that a wall break was needed but was not performed.
- The court-appointed IDA created data visualizations to help NYCHA track this situation by worker, job description (craft), development, and borough. NYCHA should utilize this data to identify which developments need enhanced oversight and staff development.
- **Resident-Reported Follow-up Complaints to the CCC** – The OCC has received feedback from numerous residents that they reported a complaint to CCC concerning a missed appointment, unsatisfactory repair work, inability to create a mold complaint on the MyNYCHA App (due to having another mold ticket open), or a lack of inspection scheduling when creating a mold ticket on the MyNYCHA App. During the conversation with the CCC, the resident would be informed that someone from NYCHA would reach out to them to reschedule or inspect the situation. In some situations, residents reported that they followed-up with the CCC several times before contacting the OCC to assist with scheduling their mold or leak work order ticket. Scheduling of repair work is the first step in the process and the CCC must be equipped to be able to resolve these issues directly with the resident.
    - The OCC has worked with NYCHA to better understand the operational processes and procedures associated with processing CCC follow-up complaints and the mechanisms for the developments to review and respond to such complaints. Based on the information gathered there does not appear to be an operational strategy or senior level oversight to ensure accountability of these complaints or understand the magnitude of the volume within each development. The OCC and court-appointed IDA recommended that immediate action should be taken to address these resident complaints.
  - **Need for Better Data Recording** – The OCC consistently observes instances where MRU indicates that work was completed for a work order but there would be no indication of any progress in the Maximo data system.<sup>38</sup> In situations where there were complex leak investigations, there was no information in Maximo to understand what investigative steps had been completed, where access was denied, and what the next steps were to resolve the issue. The OCC also observed instances where the resident would indicate that the work has been completed but the work order was still open in the Maximo data system.<sup>39</sup> This creates significant inefficiencies for NYCHA as people will eventually have to confirm that the repair work was completed or not and delays the completion of sequenced work for the completion or a waste of resources if the work was already performed. Feedback from property management and borough

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<sup>38</sup> This was also found through the court-appointed IMA’s mid-stream quality assurance inspections where the data indicated that there were wall-breaks conducted with no follow-up repair work. However, upon inspection, the wall breaks were completed and repaired. This was also found through the Compliance department in its efforts to monitor delinquent mold work orders and follow-up SR complaints.

<sup>39</sup> The court-appointed IDA issued a report and recommendation based on the OCC’s outbound calling survey, that a reasonable range of 40% - 60% of residents with long-term pending work orders could have had the work completed already.

schedulers indicated that there is a need for better training and reinforcement to record detailed notes and pictures in Maximo. It was also communicated that some workers do not have access to hand-held devices to enter such information and they needed to go back to the office to record the information.

- The OCC has also observed that there were several instances where NYCHA would create a child work order for a remediation plan but not link it to the parent inspection.<sup>40</sup> This creates significant inefficiencies for MRU to track and maintain the progress of the remediation plan and can complicate Baez compliance metrics and the QA process for mold complaints.<sup>41</sup>
  - MRU consistently reaches out to the development (or skilled trades) regarding a lack of adequate information included in the remediation plan, inspection findings, notes with the Maximo data system, and/or an upcoming scheduling date. MRU provided feedback to the management staff regarding the administrative burden that can be alleviated when appropriate information is proactively populated.
  - The OCC also observed situations where the reported sq. feet of mold were greater than 100 sq. feet. Upon further review it was found to be an error during the inspection process. Feedback from the field indicated that this was caused by adding the sq. feet of mold per room on a single inspection ticket, rather than creating multiple mold inspection tickets per room. This creates significant inefficiencies for MRU to track and maintain the progress of the remediation plan, ability to confirm the root cause was repaired and can complicate Baez compliance metrics and the QA process.
  - NYCHA should consider conducting regular formal training on the importance of updating Maximo work order data in real-time, providing more detailed notes in the system, and uploading pictures for each work order. NYCHA should also consider conducting quarterly assessments of physical inventory to ensure staff has the proper equipment and materials available to complete the repairs at each development.
- **Need for Updated Resident Contact Data** – The OCC consistently observes instances where NYCHA was unable to reach the resident due to the phone number being out of service. For many of these situations there was no email address on file. When alternative phone numbers cannot be retrieved, the RCA will request that the development send a letter (via mail or under the door) or visit the resident’s home to request updated information. This process causes delays in scheduling repair activity and inefficiencies for the RCA and NYCHA in completing repairs. As discussed above, the OCC has provided NYCHA with Resident Communication Strategies and Scheduling Best Practices (Exhibit 2) that would ensure updated contact information is regularly collected, verified, and maintained.
  - **Process to Reduce Missed Appointments** – The OCC consistently observes instances where missed appointments continue to be a common reason for resident-reported complaints. Based on conversations with NYCHA, it appears there are no data reporting processes in place to notify the property management office or borough scheduler of appointments scheduled for the day for

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<sup>40</sup> It is our understanding that in these situations, the RCA requested that the development re-link the child work order to the parent inspection.

<sup>41</sup> In a prior quarter, MRU analyzed 93 resident-reported complaints to the OCC and determined that 64 (nearly 70%) were affected by this.

- each worker.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, there is no automated efficient process to review and prioritize work orders, identify staffing and capacity constraints, and reschedule any anticipated missed appointments. The court-appointed IDA created the architecture of an automated daily user report of scheduled work orders to provide to the property management office, borough schedulers, and/or RCAs the ability to prioritize and communicate any anticipated rescheduling demands in advance of a missed appointment. The creation of a new process to reduce the number of missed appointments will positively impact all residents (not just those that reached out to the OCC) and will likely reduce the number of resident complaints to the OCC regarding missed appointments.
- It is our understanding that NYCHA's Strategic Planning Department may be working to develop an automated daily user report of scheduled work orders, but it had not yet been operationalized.
- **Develop Operational Processes and Procedures for Increased Oversight** – NYCHA needs to use data to develop regular operational processes, procedures, and responses to effectively monitor and prioritize inspection, work order and QA activity, resident-reported complaints, and requests from internal and external stakeholders. NYCHA needs to develop iterative processes to address new issues that arise with effective strategies and goals to best utilize current resources, identify opportunities for change, and ensure accountability.
    - Each quarter, the court-appointed IDA identified several analyses and data visualizations for OMAR and Compliance's review that are intended to allow NYCHA the ability to monitor individual accountability and compliance such as resident satisfaction survey responses, children work orders closed with no work done, repeated unfounded work orders, QA failures, etc. It is our understanding that Compliance has been using these tools in its daily operations. The OCC is hopeful that these tools will also be utilized by NYCHA's management team at each development to ensure there is local accountability.
  - **Preventing Resident Complaints to the OCC** – While NYCHA works on the systemic factors outlined in this report to reduce resident-reported complaints and prevent the need for residents to contact the OCC, NYCHA has the opportunity to utilize data strategy to identify residents that may have a higher propensity to have a complaint (e.g., the long term open work order, recurring mold and leak work orders, open or exposed wall, awaiting the repair or replacement of a sink, toilet, shower, or cabinets, several open work orders, etc.) and proactively reach out to ensure the proper repair work is conducted.
    - NYCHA planned to conduct proactive outreach to residents that have several open mold and leak work orders to lower the number of resident complaints to the OCC, but this has been delayed due to staffing and resource limitations.
    - The OCC is hopeful that NYCHA will conduct this outreach in future quarters.

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<sup>42</sup> It is our understanding from OMAR that the property management supervisory staff can create a query in the data system to identify work order tickets that have a past scheduled date without a proper labor record to identify missed appointments.

### C. Critical NYCHA Resource Constraints Necessary to Overcome to Ensure the Continued Success of the OCC

NYCHA needs to retain additional resources to remediate mold and leak complaints promptly including maintenance workers and skilled trade resources such as plumbers, painters, and carpenters. NYCHA should also utilize virtual inspection technology to ensure efficient use of current staffing available.

It is our understanding that NYCHA is rolling out the Neighborhood Model as part of NYCHA's Federal Monitor's Implementation Plan, which is aimed to empower local control of developments, and among other things, increase staffing through hiring of over 400 maintenance workers, skilled trades workers, and support staffers (such as Neighborhood Planners and Secretaries). These additional resources will better equip the developments to resolve and prevent resident-reported complaints to the OCC. more efficiently and effectively.

See below for information regarding opportunities and recommendations identified through the OCC:

- **Vacant Management Positions** – There are currently vacant management positions across NYCHA developments, such as Property Manager, Supervisor of Caretakers, etc. Because these management positions are unfilled, the existing management staff is required to complete all required inspections, scheduling and follow-up work, and interaction with the RCAs for resident-reported complaints. It is our understanding that NYCHA sent temporary relief (or floating staff) to help alleviate the constraints, when possible. While temporary support was encouraging, the OCC found that there appeared to be a breakdown in communication associated with the knowledge transfer regarding resident remediation plans, resident communication, and coordination with the RCAs. NYCHA has indicated that there are often staffing constraints or delays to conduct mold inspections due to the lack of management positions (e.g., only one superintendent or assistant superintendent on staff).
  - In Q8, OMAR launched a pilot project to allow maintenance workers at selected developments to perform mold inspections which is intended to help expedite the completion of mold inspections.
  - For NYCHA and the OCC operations to be efficient and effective, these management positions will need to be filled promptly. The OCC is hopeful that NYCHA will fill vacant positions as soon as possible and the interim solution of allowing maintenance workers to conduct mold inspections will be successful.
- **Staffing Constraint – Maintenance Workers** – All developments across NYCHA have a significant number of open work orders. Many of the open work orders are complex, requiring two maintenance workers to work together (across different units) to identify root causes and repair the issue(s). Based on feedback from NYCHA, there are severe staffing constraints at the maintenance worker level due to turnover and its inability to replace those positions. The Ombudsperson and OCC were also made aware of staffing limitations due to a lack of funding for overtime and loss of available workers due to other demands such as pest programs. Also, NYCHA's previous COVID-19 work order guidance has created a severe backlog of open work orders for non-emergency leaks that will need to be addressed since the work order restrictions have been lifted.

- In Q8, NYCHA reported staffing constraints at Edenwald, Mill Brook, Saint Nicholas, WRUR (Brownstone), East River, Lafayette, Randall Avenue-Balcom Avenue, Rangel, and Unity Plaza, Throggs Neck, Gowanus, Mitchel, Sotomayor, and Tilden.
  - For NYCHA and the OCC operations to be efficient and effective, these vacant positions will need to be filled promptly.
- **Staffing Constraint – Skilled Trades** – Many developments across NYCHA have a significant number of complex work orders that can take a long time to effectively repair. It is our understanding that many of the work orders require pipe repairs and that nearly all pipes in certain buildings require asbestos abatement, causing delays in remediation. Also, many work orders involve multiple units, requiring more time to investigate and repair these complex circumstances. NYCHA indicated that the skilled trade resources are very short-staffed in all skilled trade positions, most importantly plumbers, painters, and carpenters. Such work can require 2 or 3 different skilled trades and each trade often has a backlog (sometimes up to several weeks away). This often requires work in more than one apartment so scheduling and sequencing the work by skilled trade becomes a challenge. Also, NYCHA’s previous COVID-19 work order guidance created a backlog of open work orders for non-emergency mold and leak-related repairs that are being addressed since guidance lifted in Q6.
    - In Q8, NYCHA reported staffing constraints at Edenwald, Mill Brook, Saint Nicholas, WRUR (Brownstone), East River, Lafayette, Randall Avenue-Balcom Avenue, Rangel, and Unity Plaza, Throggs Neck, Gowanus, Mitchel, Sotomayor, and Tilden.
    - The OCC has also observed significant delays and missed appointments for asbestos inspection work orders. MRU has closely monitored these work orders but indicated that NYCHA is severely short-staffed with only one 3-person team across all NYCHA for this work.
    - For NYCHA and the OCC operations to be efficient and effective, adequate skilled trade resources will need to be available in each development.
  - **Virtual Inspection Technology** – Since Q2, the OCC has offered virtual inspections to NYCHA residents to assess the severity of mold or leak issues. The OCC has found virtual inspections to be a very effective method to expedite repair work and/or resident relocation because the internal escalation process (within NYCHA) allows for transparency of the conditions. Virtual inspections can also create efficiencies for NYCHA by reducing the time spent conducting inspections, accelerating the creation of work orders, identifying necessary materials for repairs, assist with complex triage, etc. In Q3, a working committee for virtual inspections was formed consisting of representatives from different teams within NYCHA (including OMAR, Compliance, and EH&S) to consider how to integrate virtual inspections for a variety of use cases including reports of simple complaints (that a worker could walk the resident through the repair), reports of resident dissatisfaction of repair work performed, pre-remediation inspections or assessments (for vendors or skilled trade), virtual unit walkthroughs for relocations, oversight of common space cleanliness, opportunities for training, etc. In Q4, the OCC memorialized the pilot with a document regarding insights and recommendations for implementation in NYCHA’s operations including sections on technology, use cases, process details for conducting virtual inspections, and spreading awareness of virtual inspections.
    - NYCHA was committed to the pilot, and it is our understanding that it is working with leadership to evaluate the integration of the technology into its operations.

#### D. Effective Use of Vendors

NYCHA must effectively use vendors (and have the appropriate contracts in place) to overcome temporary staffing constraints. It is our understanding that NYCHA has been increasing its vendor capacity to compensate for certain staffing constraints. NYCHA had allocated \$32 million for contracts focused on mold and leaks over a period of several years.

See below for information regarding opportunities and recommendations identified through the OCC:

- **Vendor Backlog** – Due to the limited availability of skilled trade resources, the use of vendors is increasingly important for leak-related work orders. However, based on the open work order data, the average days a work order is pending awaiting vendor work is very long. NYCHA’s property management has indicated that there was a 6- to 8-week backlog for certain vendors, such as plumbers and painters. These vendors can only be utilized to assist with leak-related work orders, not mold remediation due to State laws.
  - It is our understanding that it is the responsibility of the vendor to communicate with the resident regarding the scheduling of work and the responsibility of the property superintendent (and/or OMAR and MRU) to monitor completion of the work and closing of the work order, depending on the vendor contract. It will be important for NYCHA to monitor such activity to ensure vendor(s) are appropriately communicating with residents and the superintendent is promptly reviewing such activity and updating work order information.
  - The OCC has observed continued vendor backlogs, and high levels of open long-term pending work orders. In Q8, MRU reported that there were vendor delays for 38 resident-reported complaints. In Q8, OMAR was in the process using vendors to assist select OCC complaints with only paintwork remaining whereby the resident was interested in having their entire unit painted (not just the affected room). It is our understanding that NYCHA will contact some of these residents for scheduling and prioritization when the vendors become available at each development (under a “development blitz approach”) and will refer the remaining complaints to the developments to perform the remaining work.
  - The OCC is hopeful that vendors can be further utilized in future quarters to complement NYCHA staff and ensure work is being completed within 7- or 15-days, as required by the RCD.
- **OMAR’s Mold Assessor and Remediator Contracts** – It is our understanding that NYCHA has executed Mold Assessor and Mold Remediator contracts to remediate and repair complex cases of mold (where conditions impact multiple rooms, involve repair work in a ceiling or wall cavity, and require multiple skilled trades to satisfactorily resolve).
  - In Q8, OMAR used these contracts on several resident-reported complaints to the OCC that required substantial repair work. While this is a great resource to remediate severe conditions, the OCC has observed that these contracts have limited resources and it can take a long time to schedule an inspection and develop a scope of work (weeks or months),

before beginning the repair work.<sup>43</sup> The OCC often doesn't receive the OMAR CM inspections reports and is not provided with work orders associated with the remediation plan so tracking progress is not possible. MRU has since set up recurring meetings with the OMAR CM team to receive updates of progress on OCC cases so that the resident could remained informed of the next steps.

- Throughout the last several quarters, OMAR awarded additional vendor contracts for a total of \$10 million to address leak repairs and \$50 million for the ventilation program. In Q8, OMAR (partnered with other departments) launched a Mold and Leak Prioritization – Interdepartmental Effort (MLP) program with the goal to strategically reduce the mold and leak work order backlog, with an initial focus on mold work orders.
- For the OCC operations to be efficient and effective, management must continue to prioritize skilled trade resources to mold-related work orders and increase the availability of vendor contracts to conduct remediation work on leak issues. There must be a greater level of oversight and management of the vendor contracts to ensure repair activity is expedited. The OCC is hopeful NYCHA will continue to utilize these contacts in future quarters.

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<sup>43</sup> It is also our understanding that these contracts may be very costly to NYCHA, reaching hundreds of thousands of dollars for just one unit and often require asbestos investigation (and abatement) and resident relocation.

## **Exhibit 4 - IDA Initiatives Identified in Support of the OCC**

The court-appointed IDA worked with NYCHA (OMAR, Compliance, EH&S, and Operations) to identify and/or implement data tracking and/or information provided to residents regarding mold and leak remediation including, but not limited to:

- Identification of building lines with high volumes of mold and/or leak work orders to help identify certain buildings that may be prioritized for capital repairs;
- Identification of different mold work order classifications that the CCC agent can select when creating a mold inspection work order with a resident that does not follow the Mold Busters standard procedure;
- OMAR inspections associated with mold complaints do not follow the Mold Busters standard procedure and do not have parent or child work orders created which circumvents Baez compliance;
- Identification of progress toward compliance (by development) to remediate mold and leak work orders within Baez 7 or 15-day requirements;
- Information and data tracking associated with repair work conducted by developments that were scheduled to transition to RAD within the quarter;
- Discrepancy between resident provided a scheduling time frame on the MyNYCHA app (8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.) and NYCHA worker provided scheduling time frame (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) which can lead to missed appointments and resident frustration;
- Identification of long-term pending work orders that have been resolved but are recorded as being open in the system;
- Identification of improper CCC communication to residents and lack of calls being recorded by the CCC agents;
- Identification of resident satisfaction survey response data that does not appear to be operationalized or utilized by OMAR, MRU, or Compliance;
- Identification of CCC follow-up ticket data for reports of missed appointments or unsatisfactory work that does not appear to be operationalized or utilized by OMAR, MRU, or Compliance;
- Identification of children work orders that are not associated with the leak or mold parent work order, which may be understating NYCHA's compliance with the Baez Consent Decree;
- Identification of concerns with how CCC was classifying certain conditions which have caused significant inefficiency and confusion that frequently occurs when NYCHA staff arrive at a unit expecting one condition only to learn that it is a very different condition that the resident is experiencing (e.g., peeling paint or flaking plaster);
- Identification of priority building lines (and individual floors) that are in the most need of repair work based on the history of created parent work orders for both mold and leaks;
- Identification of Mold Busters inspection work orders that were conducted in less than 5 or 10 minutes that were closed as "Unfounded";
- Identification of labor workers with large volumes of Mold Busters inspection work orders that were conducted in less than 5 or 10 minutes that were closed as "Unfounded";
- Dust wipe child work orders creating an administrative hold on the completion of paintwork orders;
- Data tracking and need for an operational monitoring process to ensure proactive inventory re-stocking for tub enclosures, cabinets, etc.;

- Data tracking of work orders closed as “Completed on Arrival” that could be contributing to recurrence or failed Mold Busters QA inspections because the root cause repair work was not completed; and
- Data tracking of open work orders where the last labor record indicates “Resident Not Home” and whether there is a future scheduling date or not, which could be contributing to delays associated with completing work within the Baez requirements.

## Appendix A – NYCHA’s Work Order Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

On March 12, 2020 (amid Q2) New York’s Mayor, Bill de Blasio, declared a state of emergency in New York City in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>44</sup> As a result, NYCHA has communicated various updates regarding the measures that it has taken in response to the pandemic.<sup>45</sup> In Q7, NYCHA continued to expand the types of work employees will be permitted to conduct in-units, including work associated with mold and leak complaints. As of May 3, 2021 (in Q7), NYCHA provided notice to all staff that it had lifted suspension on all work orders.

The OCC has included a link to the NYCHA Journal on its website and informs residents of the current guidance. The OCC also makes sure the resident is comfortable with having repair work scheduled and conducted. For residents who do not wish to have work conducted, the OCC can request advanced scheduling or place the resident’s ticket on-hold until they are comfortable having repair work conducted.

Please see below for historic guidance pertaining to mold and leak work orders conducted within units that were made available to residents via the NYCHA Journal (emphasis added):

- March 13 and 16, 2020 – NYCHA would conduct some leak-related complaints that were considered “emergency repair (e.g., gas/**water leaks**, stoppages, etc.)”<sup>46,47</sup> This guidance unintentionally excluded mold work orders.
- March 20, 2020 – NYCHA provided more context regarding leak-related work orders that were being conducted including “...**water leaks**, gas leaks, **flooding conditions**, stoppages, electrical issues, and hazardous conditions.”<sup>48</sup> This guidance excluded mold work orders.<sup>49</sup>
- April 6, 2020 – NYCHA expanded the work orders it would address including “...conducting mold inspections and, if mold conditions are found, the necessary remediation and repair work. Paint related to mold conditions is suspended.”<sup>50</sup>
- April 17, 2020 – NYCHA requires that all staff wear face coverings (also referred to as PPE) during work within a unit - “Governor and the City issued another Order requiring all essential employees to wear a face-covering that covers the mouth and nose when in direct contact with members of

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<sup>44</sup> <https://nychajournal.nyc/update-from-nycha-chair-and-general-manager-on-covid-19-measures/>.

<sup>45</sup> NYCHA is informing residents about COVID-19 updates through emails from NYCHA Chair Gregory Russ and General Manager Vito Mustaciolo, direct phone calls, robocalls, notices posted in buildings, push notifications from the MyNYCHA app, and updates on NYCHA websites and social media. (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/covid-19-FAQ.page>).

<sup>46</sup> <https://nychajournal.nyc/covid-19-update-on-staff-working-in-apartments/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://nychajournal.nyc/covid-19-updates-related-to-nycha-property-management-offices/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://nychajournal.nyc/nycha-development-property-management-offices-services-update/>

<sup>49</sup> It is our understanding that the COVID-19 work order guidance disseminated to the property management staff included mold work orders as of March 20, 2020, although this was not communicated directly to residents via the NYCHA Journal.

<sup>50</sup> <https://nychajournal.nyc/development-services-update/>

the public – that is, when employees are within six feet or less of any other person in the workplace, including coworkers and residents.”<sup>51</sup>

- October 6, 2020 – NYCHA expanded the work orders it would address related to leak related complaints - “**Perform all repairs associated with a defined set of leak work orders**, described in further detail in the Work Order Guidance, regardless of Priority Code.”<sup>52</sup>
- November 12, 2020 – NYCHA expanded the work orders it would address related to leak related complaints - “Perform all repairs associated with an additional set of leak work orders, described in further detail in the Work Order Guidance, regardless of Priority Code” associated with **water leaks or stoppages affecting the walls, toilets, and sinks**.<sup>53</sup>
- February 3, 2021 – “NYCHA is now authorizing painting related to mold.”<sup>54</sup>
- May 3, 2021 – “All work in occupied units, including scheduled repairs for non-emergency work, annual inspections and other skilled trades or maintenance work, is no longer suspended.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> <https://nychajournal.nyc/face-coverings-additional-protections-nycha/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://nychanow.nyc/guidance-regarding-covid-19/>

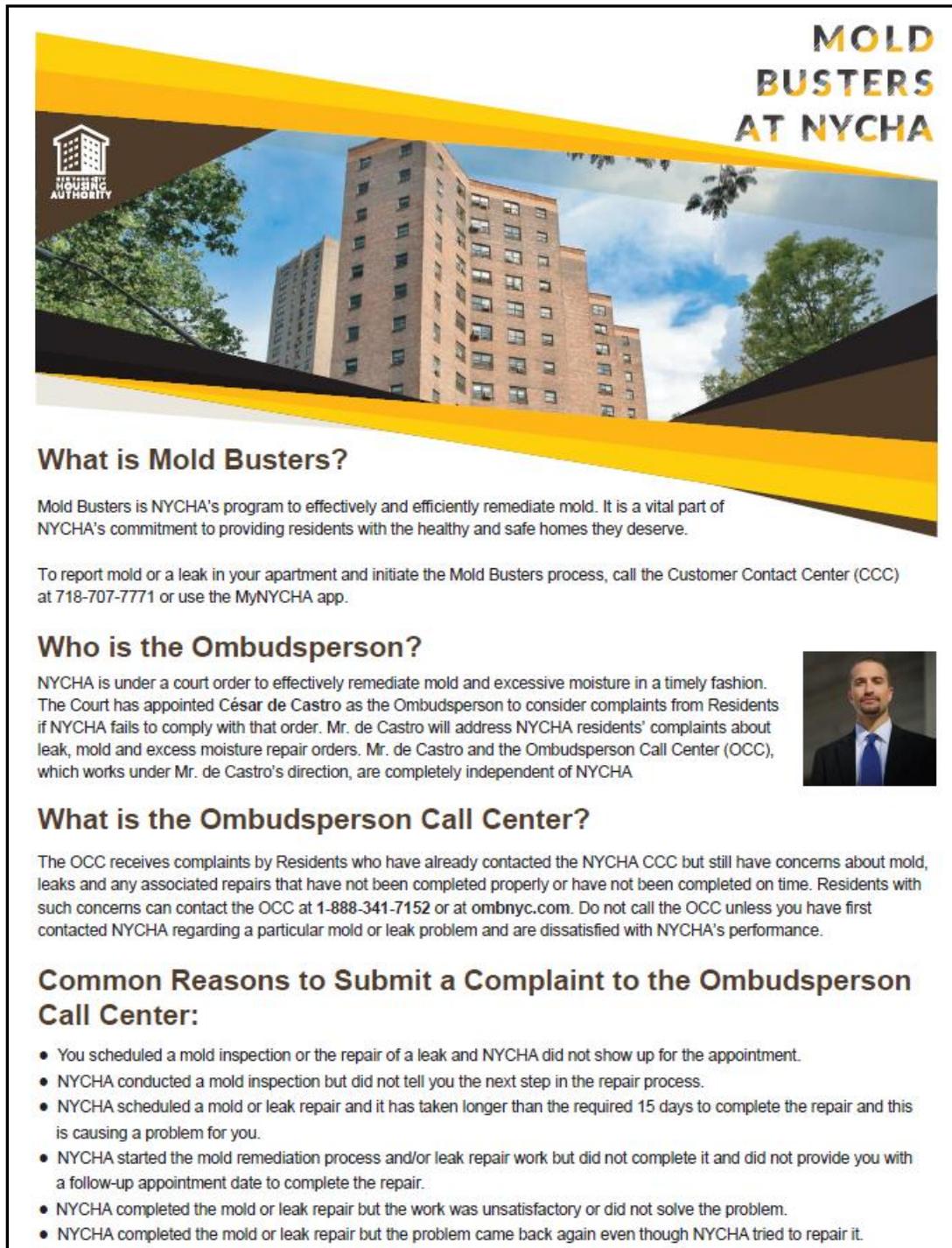
<sup>53</sup> <http://nychanow.nyc/guidance-regarding-covid-19/>

<sup>54</sup> [https://my.nycha.info/Public/Mailer/docs/Phase-3-of-Work-Order-Guidance-Expansion-version10-1-19-2021.pdf?utm\\_source=chair%2bwork2%2b3&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=chair%2bwork2%2b3](https://my.nycha.info/Public/Mailer/docs/Phase-3-of-Work-Order-Guidance-Expansion-version10-1-19-2021.pdf?utm_source=chair%2bwork2%2b3&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=chair%2bwork2%2b3)

<sup>55</sup> <http://nychanow.nyc/guidance-regarding-covid-19/>

## Appendix B – OCC Outreach Examples

### A. OCC Mold Flyer (Not Distributed Since Launch)



The flyer features a background image of a brick apartment building under a blue sky with clouds. A yellow diagonal banner runs across the top. In the top right corner, the text "MOLD BUSTERS AT NYCHA" is written in bold, yellow and black letters. In the top left corner, the NYCHA logo is displayed. The flyer contains several sections of text and a small portrait photo of César de Castro.

**MOLD BUSTERS AT NYCHA**

**What is Mold Busters?**

Mold Busters is NYCHA's program to effectively and efficiently remediate mold. It is a vital part of NYCHA's commitment to providing residents with the healthy and safe homes they deserve.

To report mold or a leak in your apartment and initiate the Mold Busters process, call the Customer Contact Center (CCC) at 718-707-7771 or use the MyNYCHA app.

**Who is the Ombudsperson?**

NYCHA is under a court order to effectively remediate mold and excessive moisture in a timely fashion. The Court has appointed César de Castro as the Ombudsperson to consider complaints from Residents if NYCHA fails to comply with that order. Mr. de Castro will address NYCHA residents' complaints about leak, mold and excess moisture repair orders. Mr. de Castro and the Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC), which works under Mr. de Castro's direction, are completely independent of NYCHA.



**What is the Ombudsperson Call Center?**

The OCC receives complaints by Residents who have already contacted the NYCHA CCC but still have concerns about mold, leaks and any associated repairs that have not been completed properly or have not been completed on time. Residents with such concerns can contact the OCC at 1-888-341-7152 or at [ombnyc.com](http://ombnyc.com). Do not call the OCC unless you have first contacted NYCHA regarding a particular mold or leak problem and are dissatisfied with NYCHA's performance.

**Common Reasons to Submit a Complaint to the Ombudsperson Call Center:**

- You scheduled a mold inspection or the repair of a leak and NYCHA did not show up for the appointment.
- NYCHA conducted a mold inspection but did not tell you the next step in the repair process.
- NYCHA scheduled a mold or leak repair and it has taken longer than the required 15 days to complete the repair and this is causing a problem for you.
- NYCHA started the mold remediation process and/or leak repair work but did not complete it and did not provide you with a follow-up appointment date to complete the repair.
- NYCHA completed the mold or leak repair but the work was unsatisfactory or did not solve the problem.
- NYCHA completed the mold or leak repair but the problem came back again even though NYCHA tried to repair it.

**B. MyNYCHA Kiosk**

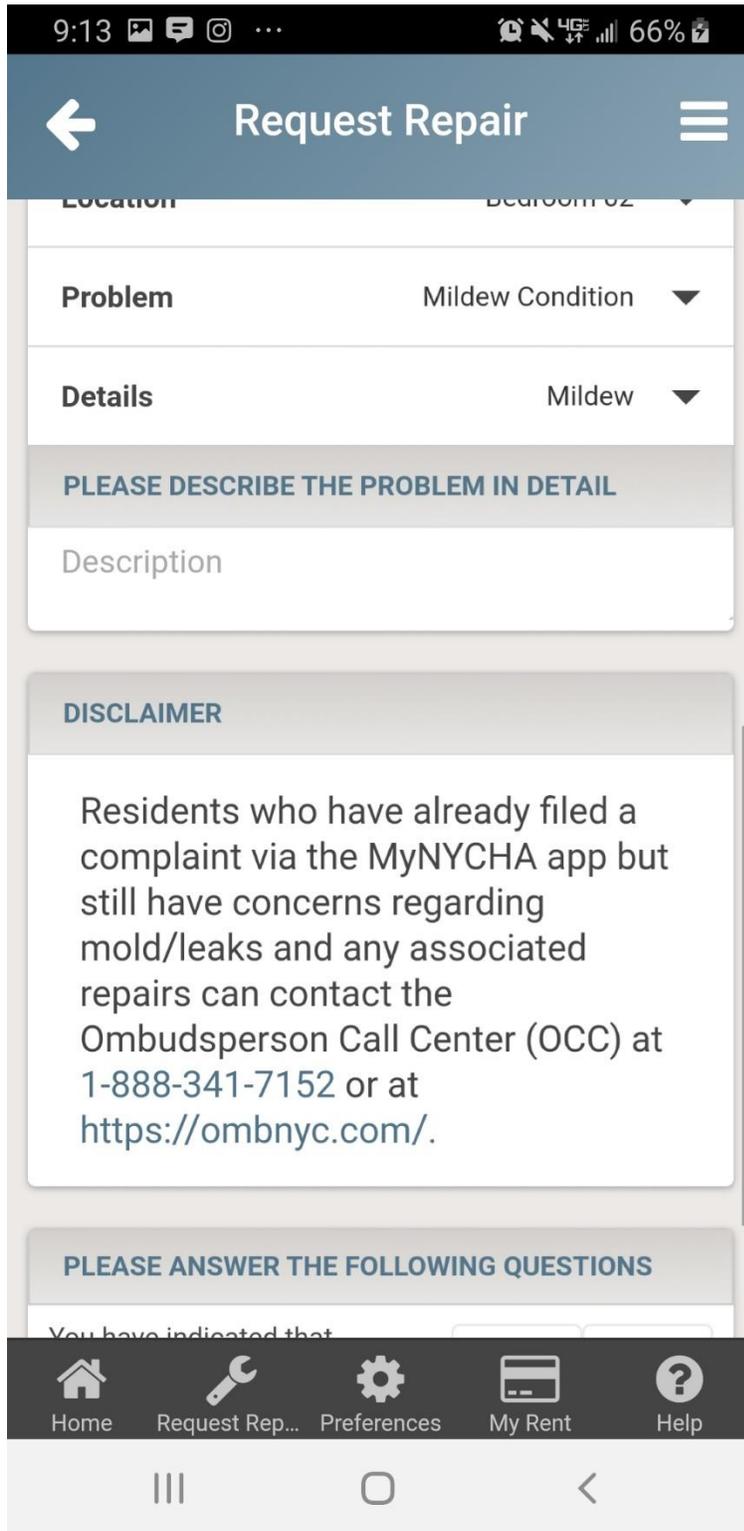
Residents with mold or active water leaks in their apartment should enter a work order by calling the **NYCHA Customer Contact Center at (718) 707-7771**. Residents can also use the MyNYCHA app or website.

**Touch Screen to Begin**



Residents who have already contacted the NYCHA Customer Contact Center but still have concerns regarding mold/leaks and any associated repairs can contact the **Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC) at 1-888-341-7152 or at ombnyc.com**.

C. MyNYCHA App Notification – Mold



**D. NYCHA Mold Busters Mold Inspection Review Form**



## Notice: Mold Inspection Review

**11/04/18**

JANE DOE  
100-10 100<sup>TH</sup> STREET 3G  
QUEENS, NEW YORK 11433

On **10/31/18** NYCHA conducted the initial inspection for work order # **60070080** NYCHA has found mold, water damage, and/or a moisture level indicating excessive moisture and/or a possible leak.

The likely root cause is: **LEAK ABOVE OR ASIDE**

Based on this root cause and the remediation method selected, follow-up work orders have been automatically generated. Below is a summary of the work that is needed to correct this root cause and remediate the mold or moisture condition:

Work Order #	Failure Class	Problem Code	Craft	Estimated Scheduled Date
62711365	Floor	FloorTilesDML	Maintenance	
62711366	Floor	Needs Cleaning	Caretaker	11/11/18
62645326	Mildew Condition	Mildew	Painter	11/13/18

If you do not have a scheduled date listed above, NYCHA will contact you to schedule appointments needed to complete the repairs or to discuss next steps if capital repairs are needed to remediate mold or moisture in your unit.

NYCHA is committed to completing all mold and excessive moisture work orders within 7 days for simple repairs and 15 days for complex repairs, starting from the date that the initial complaint is reported to the Customer Contact Center. If resident access is not provided for the scheduled follow-up appointments, NYCHA may use its right to access a resident's apartment, immediately after providing 48 hours' notice, as indicated in the NYCHA Resident Lease Agreement.

A final quality assurance re-inspection will be conducted by NYCHA staff 30 to 45 days after the necessary work orders are completed to ensure that the mold and excessive moisture remediation work was done correctly and effectively.

If you have any concerns regarding this notice or repair, you can reach the Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC) at 1-888-341-7152 or at <https://ombnyc.com/>. If OCC cannot resolve your concerns, they will contact Cesar De Castro, the Ombudsperson, to resolve the issue.

A translation of this document is available in your management office.
La traducción de este documento está disponible en la Oficina de Administración de su residencial.
所居公房管理處備有文件譯本可供索取。
所居公房管理处备有文件译本可供索取。
Перевод этого документа находится в офисе управления Вашего жилищного комплекса.

## E. NYCHA Website – Mold Busters

NYCHA NYC Housing Authority
311 | Search all NYC gov websites


Italiano | Translate | Text-Size

Home
About
Eligibility
Residents
Section 8
Business
Submit Concern
Search

Resources
Pay Rent
Engagement
Service Interruptions

Customer Contact Center

MyNYCHA

Domestic Violence

Emergency Management

Extermination Visits

Family Partnerships

Lead-Based Paint Inspections

Mold Busters

NYCHA Journal

Parking

Reasonable Accommodation

REES

Residents Policies & Procedures

Smoke-Free NYCHA

Share

Print

### Mold Busters



The Mold Busters process introduces new mold inspection tools (clockwise from top): borescope (camera/viewing device for tight spaces); hygrometer (humidity detector); prolometer (surface moisture detector) and anemometer (airflow detector).

Photo: Mold Busters Inspection Tools

NYCHA is committed to providing residents with the healthy and safe homes they deserve. To fulfill this commitment, NYCHA is taking proactive measures to meet the obligations of both the 2018 Revised Base Consent Decree and the 2019 HUD Agreement. As part of this process, NYCHA has revised its standard procedure for addressing mold complaints and introduced "Mold Busters" – an innovative new program informed by industry standards to effectively and efficiently remediate mold. NYCHA began a citywide roll out of Mold Busters in January 2019 and completed implementation on September 2, 2019.

NYCHA will take the following measures to comprehensively address mold and moisture conditions:

- **Better Tools:** Staff will use new tools to find and fix mold's root causes, including moisture meters and new mold-fighting paint.
- **Enhanced Training:** Beginning in January 2019, over 2,500 staff members will receive comprehensive hands-on training in performing apartment inspections for mold and mold remediation.
- **More Accountability:** A new inspection and record keeping process will identify the underlying causes of mold and/or moisture problems. A new quality assurance process will ensure that staff properly address the root causes of mold and moisture. Finally, NYCHA has implemented a regular schedule to ensure that malfunctioning roof fans are identified and repaired in a timely manner.
- **Streamlined Response:** NYCHA will prioritize and better coordinate mold-related repairs across skilled trades.
- **Improved Communication:** NYCHA will improve communication with tenants by creating new informational tools and meeting with local Resident Associations to share information about the Mold Busters process.
  - [Mold Busters Public Presentation NYCHA 2.0 Resident Webinar Video](#)
  - [NYCHA's Mold Standard Procedure](#)
  - [Ombudsperson and Ombudsperson Call Center Information](#) [English](#) | [Español](#) | [中文](#) | [हिन्दी](#) | [Pусский](#) | [Bengali](#)

Residents who have already contacted the NYCHA Customer Contact Center but still have concerns regarding mold/leaks and any associated repairs can contact the independent, Court-appointed Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC) at 1-888-341-7152 or at [ombnyc.com](http://ombnyc.com). If the OCC cannot resolve your concerns, they will contact Cesar de Castro, the independent, Court-appointed Ombudsperson, to resolve the issue. The Ombudsperson's Call Center has been in operations since November 2019 and is available for all NYCHA residents. Please refer to [www.ombnyc.com](http://www.ombnyc.com) to learn more about how the OCC can assist you.

**F. Email Notification (Not Distributed Since Launch)**

From: New York City Housing Authority <noreply@everbridge.net>  
 Date: Thu, Jul 23, 2020 at 2:23 PM  
 Subject: Ombudsman\_7\_23



[Please click here to acknowledge receipt of this message](#)

Hello, this is the New York City Housing Authority calling to remind you that the Ombudsman Call Center (or OCC) that is independent of NYCHA is active at your development. Residents who have already contacted NYCHA but still have concerns about mold, leaks and any associated repairs that have not been completed properly or on time can contact the OCC at 888-342-7152 or email at [ombnyc.com](mailto:ombnyc.com)

With the recent spread of COVID-19, NYCHA is still committed to its residents. During this time, NYCHA will be focusing on emergencies only. Mold inspections will continue, however, all non related emergencies will be postponed until further notice.

**G. NYCHA Intergovernmental Newsletter (Not Distributed Since Launch)**



**COVID-19 Update #48**

We hope that this has reached you in good health. Thank you for your commitment in serving the residents and employees of NYCHA. Together, we can support our communities in need. This issue will highlight the following topics:

- Customer Contact Center Annual Recertification Prompt Update
- Ombudsman Call Center: Mold Busters
- The Summer Bridge 2020 Program: Application Due Tomorrow
- NeON Food Pantries

**Customer Contact Center (CCC) Annual Recertification Prompt Update**

Calling the CCC for Annual Recertifications? The new prompt to be connected with the unit is option 5. For this and other options, please see below.  
 CCC Hotline: 718-707-7771

- For Maintenance Press 1.
- For Section 8 Housing Press 2.
- For Applications press 3
- For Public Housing Emergency Transfers press 4.
- For Annual Recertifications and Rent Hardship press 5.**
- For Lockbox and Parking press 6.
- For the Compliance Department, the Environmental Health & Safety Department or the Quality Assurance Unit, press 7

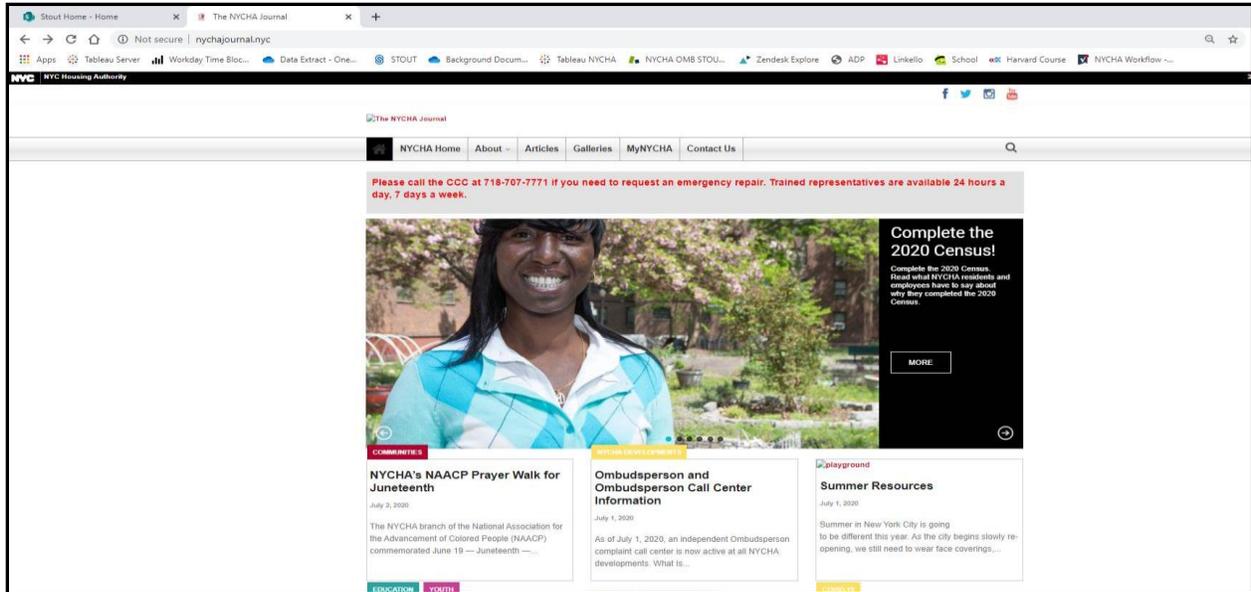
**Ombudsman Call Center: Mold Busters**

NYCHA is under a court order to effectively remediate mold and excessive moisture in a timely fashion. The Court has appointed César de Castro as the independent Ombudsman to consider complaints from residents if NYCHA fails to comply with that order. Mr. de Castro and the Ombudsman Call Center (OCC) are completely independent of NYCHA. The OCC is now active at all NYCHA Consolidations.

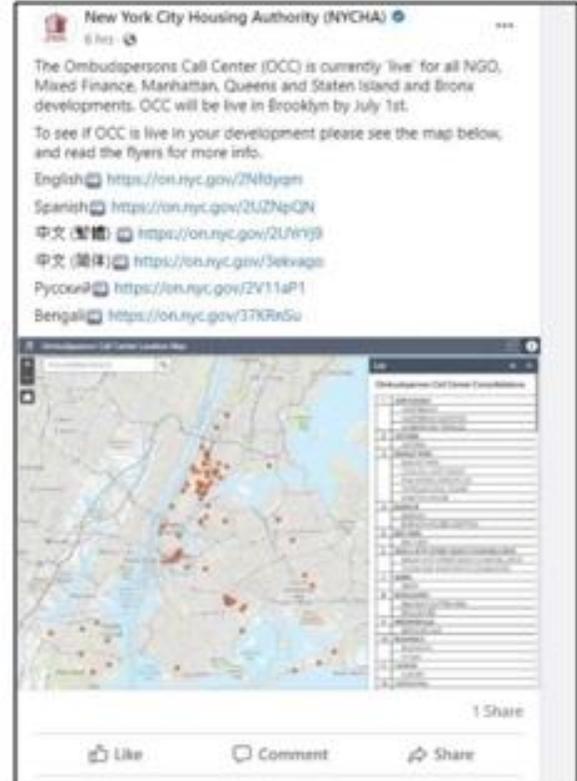
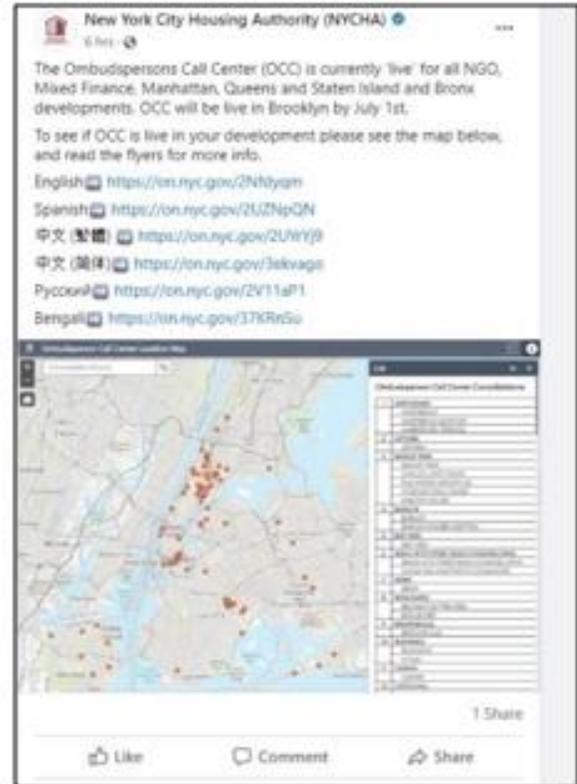
Residents with mold concerns can contact the independent OCC at 1-888-341-7152 or at [Please refer \[here\]\(#\) for additional information regarding Mr. de Castro and the Ombudsman Call Center \(OCC\).](http://secure.web.cisco.com/1aGSEW8d_KRISDECruuMtuGrtA7PFuL_vv5ZWvR9_Xhek7UNf7cRHxv8fBY13k5p22AAuGW9mMj6JEJ8f68JZcaXGb4_m561_YZqEFG-nvWQny92CJJe8sv6RtB0B09cQbSL-rlJvD9n4618owYD3qefrON40964v0TjHqTX34uu9D5z8BppaR6TxA3771Da3j11KCYDZx2Ajw0mGIXOukuQmes7No7USPFTqFmAk-WLaOSDqbOOWaFdlJQaW2_Tu1xwtV8JUNPvLe0rZBbw7k055v45-Naw7BfFo8wD_qy9pFD6Gpd0XKShu5Q2i9GmjDvNq_WVDhxCBuUj-SaCaMZzPkFBxppWSESchb-JM_HXhniaMCTeID7_SMDie-KuDoMwnis3eh44UP6nN8http://www.ombnyc.com</a>. Residents should not call the OCC unless they have first contacted NYCHA regarding a particular mold or leak problem and are dissatisfied with NYCHA's performance.</p>
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## H. Social Media Posts (Not Distributed Since August 2021)

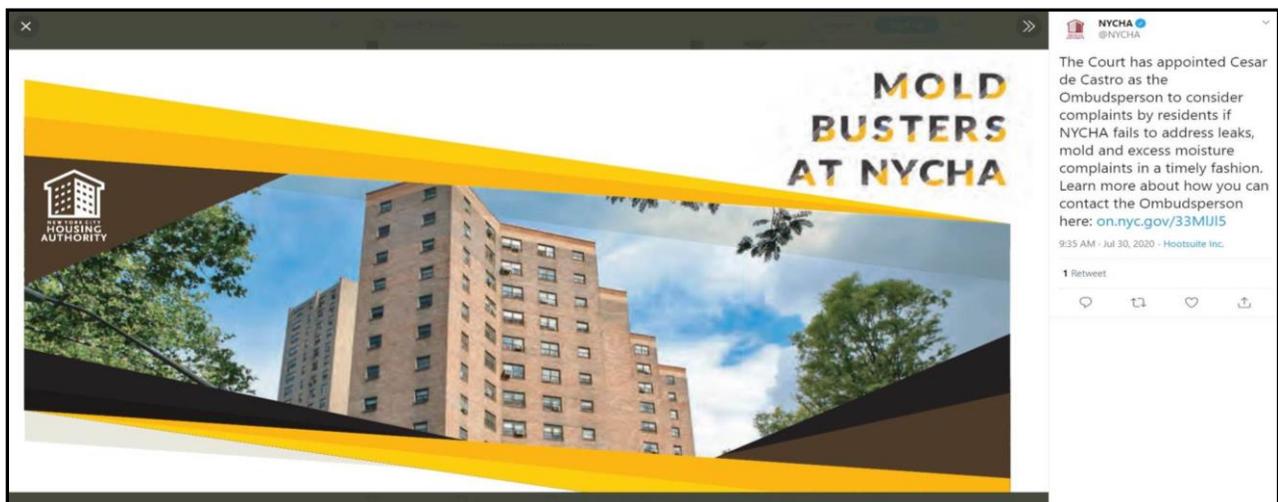
### 1. The NYCHA Journal



2. Facebook



3. Twitter



4. Instagram



## **Appendix C - OCC Operation Overview**

The OCC has been created to receive complaints from residents who have already contacted the NYCHA Customer Contact Center (CCC) but still have concerns about mold, leaks and any associated repairs that has not been completed properly or has not been completed on time. Complaints can be submitted to the OCC via phone (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm) at 1-888-341-7152 or through a web-form at [www.ombnyc.com](http://www.ombnyc.com).

The OCC's operations are guided by this general process:

- Provide an independent and supportive resident experience through effective and empathetic listening, proactive communication, and establishment of trust.
- Determine the process needed to seek resolution to the resident's satisfaction (based on the resident's complaint).
- Ensure there is timely case management and escalate the complaint if there is a lack of responsiveness or willingness to resolve the issue raised. A complaint will not be closed until the remediation of the work has been completed to resident's satisfaction or a relocation has been conducted.
- Evaluate and investigate resident complaints through data analysis of NYCHA's Maximo work order database and offer observations and recommendations to NYCHA's Mold Response Unit (MRU), Compliance department and/or Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) department.<sup>56</sup>
- Perform strategic data collection and recommend operational enhancements.

Common reasons for residents to contact the OCC include:

- A resident scheduled a mold inspection or the repair of a leak and NYCHA did not show up for the appointment (Missed appointment complaint).
- NYCHA conducted a mold inspection but did not tell the resident the next step in the repair process (Scheduling complaint).
- NYCHA scheduled a mold or leak repair, and it has taken longer than the required 15 days to complete the repair and this is causing a problem for the resident (Scheduling complaint).
- NYCHA started the mold remediation process and/or leak repair work but did not complete it and did not provide the resident with a follow-up appointment date to complete the repair (Scheduling complaint).
- NYCHA completed the mold or leak repair, but the work was unsatisfactory or did not solve the problem (Craftsmanship complaint or Improper closure of a work order complaint).
- NYCHA completed the mold or leak repair, but the problem came back again even though NYCHA tried to repair it (Recurrence complaint).
- A resident who has a report of mold or a leak related issue but does not have an open work order (New mold or leak related issue complaints).
  - In these situations, the OCC assists the resident in opening a mold or leak work order with the CCC, if requested. If the resident, however, experiences any issues (discussed above) after opening the work order with NYCHA, they are advised to contact the OCC back.

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<sup>56</sup> NYCHA supports this data analysis by extracting mold and leak data twice a week to populate a Tableau report that allows OCC call center representatives and NYCHA's RCAs to rapidly view a unit's history of mold and leak complaints by inputting easy-to-obtain resident information: name, address, etc.

- The OCC also receives service inquiries to better understand what the OCC is and how it can help them (OCC service inquires complaints).

The OCC interacts with NYCHA's Office of Mold Assessment and Remediation (OMAR) unit. OMAR developed a specialized task force, the Mold Response Unit (MRU) within OMAR that monitors complaints received from the OCC to ensure successful resolution and closure. For all resident complaints to the OCC where a resident has had an open mold or leak work order for more than 7 or 15 days (depending on the repair) prior to contacting the OCC, a NYCHA Resident Community Associate ("RCA") (formally known as a Resident Coordinator or "RC") may be assigned to the resident to ensure proper levels of communication and case management, if needed.<sup>57</sup>

Once the OCC receives the complaint from the resident, they will contact the resident to discuss the proposed next steps for anything that cannot be resolved during the initial intake. The OCC's objective is to have an actionable next step for the resident within 1 business day. Such next steps may involve the OCC to request:

- OCC and/or NYCHA to receive photos, video, and/or conduct a virtual inspection with the resident to better understand the issues they are facing;
- NYCHA RCA to contact the resident within 1 business day of OCC intake and assignment;
- NYCHA immediately schedule and conduct a re-inspection of prior work performed;
- Expedited scheduling for work orders that have been open for longer than 7 or 15 days;
- NYCHA to reach out to the resident to discuss the results of the Mold Busters initial inspection and/or associated remediation plan; or
- Referral of the complaint to NYCHA's Compliance or EH&S departments depending on the circumstances.

The length of time to resolve a complaint is contingent on a variety of factors including the complexity of the repair, the scheduling availability (and preferences) of the resident, and the staffing constraints, scheduling limitations, and inventory of materials at NYCHA.

The OCC completed the phased portfolio-wide launch by July 1, 2020. Throughout the launch, the Parties facilitated meetings with each borough grouping (before and after the launch) to identify staffing limitations and resources that NYCHA will need to address resident complaints to the OCC. For the OCC to continue to be successful, NYCHA will need to continue to assess the staffing limitations and other resource constraints at each development and work to ensure those positions are filled or other resource solutions are identified. Effective (and regular), multi-channel communication and collaborations within various departments within NYCHA, will be critical to the continued success of the OCC.

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<sup>57</sup> The RCA position was created by NYCHA's MRU department in Q1 with a singular focus and responsibility to communicate with residents and relevant teams within NYCHA (e.g., property management staff, maintenance workers, MRU, etc.) to ensure successful completion of resident-reported complaints to the OCC. The RCA position is a dedicated resource to service mold and leak related complaints.