



# NYCHA Ombudsperson Call Center Periodical Report

(Data From November 2019 Through January 2025)

*Baez, et al. v. New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)*

Docket No. 13-cv-8916 (LAP)

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## I. Preface

On April 17, 2014, the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York approved a Consent Decree requiring the New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”) to promptly and effectively address mold, excessive moisture, and their root causes. In July 2018, the Court approved a Revised Consent Decree (“RCD”), appointing an independent Ombudsperson to oversee compliance and ensure residents’ concerns were properly addressed. Since September 20, 2019, Mr. César de Castro has served as the Ombudsperson, with Stout Risius Ross, LLC (“Stout”) operating the independent Ombudsperson’s Call Center (“OCC”) to respond to resident complaints related to leaks, mold, and moisture.<sup>1</sup> Under the Consent Decree, the Ombudsperson is empowered to investigate mold and excessive moisture complaints and mandate appropriate remedies. This includes ordering NYCHA to take specific actions, such as completing repairs within a set timeframe, prioritizing tenant transfers, hiring independent contractors to perform repairs at NYCHA’s expense, or engaging the Independent Mold Analyst (“IMA”) to develop a remediation plan. If NYCHA is found to have acted in bad faith or failed to effectively address mold or moisture issues, the Ombudsperson may impose additional relief, including fines payable to the Court. 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. The independent OCC offers effective and empathetic listening, proactive communication, and timely case management to ensure complaints are resolved to the resident’s satisfaction.

Since its launch in November 2019, the OCC has served nearly 30,000 NYCHA households involving over 26,000 unique apartments.<sup>2</sup> It has processed nearly 19,000 resident-reported complaints associated with over 15,000 unique apartments and overseen repairs for over 100,000 work orders. Through this process, the OCC has extensively engaged with residents. It has completed over 100,000 phone calls and conducted more than 300 virtual inspections to better understand apartment conditions. The OCC assisted residents throughout all five boroughs, across more than 270 developments, representing more than 95% of NYCHA’s public housing portfolio.

Over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, the OCC and Ombudsperson have collaborated with the Baez Plaintiffs, non-profit organizations, the Special Master, the court-appointed Independent Data Analyst (“IDA”), the IMA (NYCHA and PACT), the HUD Monitors, and NYCHA (collectively, the “Parties”). These partnerships have been instrumental in supporting NYCHA residents and fostering operational and cultural transformation at NYCHA. By leveraging insights from resident interactions, complaint data, and operational feedback, the OCC has contributed to NYCHA’s improvements in repair quality, resident communication strategies, response efficiency, and the reduction of recurring issues. Together, these efforts continue to shape a more effective and resident-centered approach to complaint resolution. By providing independent oversight, the OCC

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<sup>1</sup> On December 20, 2021, the “PACT Agreement” expanded the OCC’s scope to include NYCHA Section 9 apartments converted to Section 8 under the HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (“RAD”) and Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (“PACT”) programs, which are managed by private partners. Please refer to Exhibit 1 for information regarding resident-reported complaints at PACT developments. This report is otherwise focused on the OCC’s operations at Section 9 housing.

<sup>2</sup> The unique number of households served includes households that were served when work was required in multiple apartments or on an entire building line.

has amplified resident voices, increased transparency, and developed a sustainable response system centered on the resident experience.

Through its efforts, the OCC has ensured that residents receive timely responses and accurate information, that reported leak and mold conditions are addressed promptly and effectively, and that follow-ups are conducted to verify repairs have been completed properly. Additionally, the OCC, in coordination with NYCHA, has identified systemic failures, contributed to procedural changes, and supported NYCHA's broader operational reforms. By combining empathetic listening, proactive communication, and data-driven advocacy, the OCC has helped reshape how NYCHA responds to residents, fostering more accountable, resident-focused service delivery.

This report reflects on the OCC's response to NYCHA resident-reported complaints during the reporting years from September 2019 through January 31, 2025.<sup>3</sup> It outlines the OCC's role in providing residents with independent assistance, addressing resident concerns, and ensuring serious housing conditions are identified and resolved effectively. The report also highlights NYCHA's significant efforts to improve its response to complaints, including the development of the Mold Response Unit ("MRU"), the integration of OCC cases into a performance scorecard for all developments, and the expansion of communication strategies to raise awareness about the OCC among NYCHA residents and other stakeholders.

While these initiatives demonstrate a commitment to improving service delivery, persistent challenges remain. Chronic infrastructure issues, workforce constraints, and the need for improved operational oversight and cultural change continue to hinder sustained progress. Additionally, inefficiencies in scheduling procedures and gaps in resident communication exacerbate delays and missed appointments, further impacting repair efforts. The OCC's findings underscore the need for continued strategic planning and prioritization and strengthened collaboration among NYCHA, policymakers, advocacy groups and tenant groups to ensure residents receive prompt and effective responses to leak and mold conditions within a more timely manner. Addressing these challenges holistically would help drive more consistent improvements and better outcomes for residents.

The OCC remains committed to addressing resident-reported complaints promptly and effectively, ensuring NYCHA residents experience meaningful improvements in their living conditions and supporting NYCHA in its transformation efforts. As highlighted above, the OCC has successfully assisted nearly 30,000 NYCHA households. However, awareness of the OCC's services remains limited among NYCHA residents, and its impact has reached only a small fraction of the overall population. While NYCHA engaged in significant outreach efforts when the OCC initially launched, the OCC and the Ombudsperson have largely taken over outreach efforts since then, focusing on limited grass roots and targeted outreach to select NYCHA residents in areas of need. These targeted efforts have proven successful, increasing awareness in specific developments and helping identify residents in need of the OCC's assistance. However, notwithstanding these efforts, many residents remain unaware of the OCC and its services. As a result, outreach efforts are ongoing to ensure broader awareness and to connect more residents with the support they need.

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<sup>3</sup> The reporting years runs from February to January. 2019 is a partial year (September 2019 – January 2020), while 2020 through 2024 span February to January annually, ending with 2024 (February 2024 – January 2025). Please refer to Exhibit 1 for information regarding resident-reported complaints at PACT developments. This report is otherwise focused on the OCC's operations regarding NYCHA's Section 9 housing.



## **II. Role of the OCC and its Approach to Addressing Resident-Reported Complaints**

### **A. THE OCC'S ROLE**

From its inception, the OCC has served as an independent outlet for residents seeking resolution of mold and leak-related issues not adequately addressed by NYCHA. These issues remain among the most pervasive and serious challenges impacting NYCHA residents, with significant implications for health, safety, and overall quality of life. Unlike renters in private housing who may have the option to relocate if a landlord fails to address poor conditions, NYCHA residents often have no alternative housing options. As public housing is often their only option for stable housing, residents must endure these conditions until they are resolved. Mold exposure and leaks have been linked to respiratory illnesses, exacerbated asthma, and other chronic health conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, elderly residents, and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions. Failure to address these issues not only jeopardizes residents' health but also accelerates structural deterioration, leading to worsening conditions throughout NYCHA buildings. See Exhibit 2 for pictures of resident-reported complaints, showing the severity of some cases.

Since the OCC's launch, thousands of residents have reported frustrating and negative experiences with NYCHA's handling of their mold and leak-related repairs. Common grievances reported to the OCC include NYCHA's failure to adequately address reported issues, such as leaks and mold, leaving residents to endure unsafe and unhealthy living conditions for extended periods. Many residents have shared accounts of workers not showing up for scheduled appointments, not communicating updates on the status of repairs, closing work orders without doing the work or failing to resolve the underlying causes of persistent issues, such as finding and fixing the root source of a leak. Instead of implementing long-term solutions, some residents report that NYCHA has resorted to temporary and ineffective measures, such as painting over mold rather than fully remediating it. These practices not only erode residents' trust in NYCHA's ability to manage housing effectively but also perpetuate cycles of substandard living conditions that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. Residents deserve timely, transparent, and thorough responses to their concerns to ensure their homes are safe and habitable.

In recent years, NYCHA has made notable strides in addressing these longstanding issues. Efforts to improve repair processes and increased operational oversight have begun to yield results, with many residents reporting improvements in the timeliness and quality of repairs. NYCHA also reported that resident satisfaction scores have increased by 10+ points in recent years. These improvements, while still a work in progress, signal a positive direction for NYCHA and provide hope for residents seeking safe and habitable living conditions. It remains critical for NYCHA to build on this progress by delivering timely, transparent, and thorough responses to residents' concerns and ensuring that all repairs are completed effectively.

The OCC's role is to address these complaints and work with NYCHA to ensure they are adequately resolved to the resident's satisfaction.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to **Appendix A** for additional information regarding the OCC's operations, oversight, and involvement of the Ombudsperson on resident-reported complaints.

## B. THE OCC'S RESIDENT-CENTERED APPROACH

The OCC takes a resident-centered approach to resolving complaints, distinguishing itself from traditional call centers in several important ways. Unlike standard call centers, the OCC does not impose rigid call time targets, allowing agents to dedicate as much time as necessary to fully understand and address a resident's concerns. This flexibility ensures that residents feel heard and their issues are approached with the attention, care and compassion they deserve.

The OCC leverages an advanced call center platform, accessible to both OCC, Ombudsperson and NYCHA teams, to facilitate coordinated case management, real-time monitoring, and proactive escalation of unresolved complaints. This shared platform enables seamless communication between OCC and NYCHA, allowing for transparent tracking of resident feedback, work orders and repair progress. Additionally, the OCC's direct access to NYCHA's mold and leak data enables representatives to validate repair efforts, track scheduling in real time, and keep residents informed with accurate updates.

A key feature of the OCC's approach is its commitment to ongoing engagement with residents. Representatives (from the OCC and MRU) follow up to confirm repair activity, clarify unresolved issues, and answer any additional questions. This transparent and continuous communication not only keeps residents informed but also helps reduce uncertainty and frustration during the repair process. To further support resident engagement, the OCC conducts virtual inspections (e.g., video conference), gathering visual evidence to assist NYCHA in assessing current conditions and planning repairs.

The OCC is also committed to ensuring accessibility for NYCHA's diverse resident population. With bilingual representatives and access to translation services, the OCC provides multilingual support that enables residents to communicate their concerns effectively, regardless of language barriers. Residents can reach the OCC by phone or email, leave voicemails, and receive callbacks to discuss their complaints. Additionally, residents can contact MRU via text message for real-time assistance with scheduling or questions. Beyond language support, the OCC is also trained to assist residents with disabilities who may face physical, social, or emotional challenges by providing personalized guidance, seeking to understand their specific needs, and ensuring their concerns are handled with sensitivity and care. The OCC works closely with NYCHA teams and services to remove barriers, streamline communication, and facilitate access to repairs, ensuring that residents with disabilities can navigate the process effectively and seek resolution.

The resolution process at the OCC is tailored to the unique circumstances and needs of each household. For simpler issues, the OCC's role may involve scheduling a repair or providing updates on work orders. For more complex repair cases, such as those involving recurring leaks or mold caused by systemic infrastructure deficiencies, the OCC plays a more active role in coordinating efforts, escalating complaints, overseeing temporary resident relocations, and ensuring root causes are addressed. These cases often require extensive remediation, particularly in developments with aging infrastructure where capital repairs are necessary. In such instances, the OCC serves as an accountability mechanism, ensuring NYCHA takes appropriate short-term and long-term actions to improve living conditions and prevent recurring issues. In other (more limited) cases, the OCC serves as an independent intermediary to help navigate distrust between the resident and NYCHA, which may stem from challenging communication issues, safety concerns, or financial or legal matters. By fostering dialogue and building trust, the OCC enables residents to feel reassured that

repairs can be carried out effectively while ensuring they can safely remain in their apartments throughout the process while they navigate other issues with NYCHA.

A foundational element of the OCC's approach is its focus on resident satisfaction. The OCC does not consider a case resolved until the resident confirms they are satisfied. This commitment to centering the remediation process on resident feedback has been transformational for NYCHA, modeling a transparent, results-driven approach to addressing resident-reported complaints. By prioritizing the resident experience, the OCC has redefined how NYCHA addresses mold and leak-related complaints, shifting the focus toward sustainable solutions and improved service delivery.

### **C. NYCHA'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING OCC'S RESIDENT-REPORTED COMPLAINTS**

The OCC operates in close collaboration with NYCHA's Office of Mold Assessment and Remediation ("OMAR") to facilitate the effective resolution of resident-reported complaints, with OMAR playing a central role through its creation of the MRU. Actively engaged with nearly every NYCHA development, the MRU works to improve communication with residents and to ensure staff and management accountability in addressing OCC resident-reported complaints. Serving as the resident liaison, the MRU is responsible for confirming repair activity, resolving outstanding issues, and responding to resident inquiries or scheduling requests. In some situations, the MRU will support the resident with relocations or issues that extend beyond the reported mold or leak complaint. By working directly with both NYCHA and OCC staff, the MRU gathers necessary information, follows up on incomplete repairs, and reschedules missed appointments (if they arise).

While the OCC establishes a framework for monitoring progress that requires comprehensive service and accountability, the MRU helps execute these standards by actively working to improve repair management across hundreds of NYCHA developments. The MRU's work fosters a resident-centered approach that sets higher expectations for resident communication, prompt scheduling, and appropriate remediation planning. Resident Community Associates ("RCAs"), a dedicated group within MRU, facilitate coordination between residents and NYCHA teams. Their responsibilities include ensuring repair work is appropriately scheduled and completed, as well as escalating non-responsive cases to senior leadership when necessary. By ensuring that RCAs, development, and skilled trade staff document challenges and follow structured repair protocols, the MRU is not only addressing immediate service needs but also training staff to adopt long-term best practices. As these standards continue to become more integrated into daily operations, the need for repeated follow-ups and MRU intervention is expected to decrease.

To enhance efficiency and transparency, the MRU and the OCC have implemented structured workflows, data collection processes, and a systematic feedback loop to monitor progress of resident-reported complaints. The MRU's regular updates to the OCC and Ombudsperson provide visibility into ongoing challenges, such as staffing constraints, scheduling delays, workload distribution, and responsiveness delays which support continuous improvements in case management and service delivery.

Through this collaboration, NYCHA and the OCC have worked in partnership to improve responsiveness and setting clear expectations for property management teams. By continuing to refine processes, both the OCC and MRU contribute to the broader effort of improving resident living conditions across NYCHA developments and identifying systemic issues to which NYCHA can respond.

## **D. OMBUDSPERSON'S ROLE TO ADDRESS OCC'S RESIDENT-REPORTED COMPLAINTS**

Since September 20, 2019, César de Castro has served as the Ombudsperson, overseeing resident-reported complaints and issuing directives to address delays, disputes, or unresolved work orders, and ensuring timely remediation efforts. While the OCC conducts the initial response, and resolves most resident-reported complaints, the Ombudsperson intervenes when he is concerned NYCHA may not be demonstrating its best efforts. He also resolves disputes between NYCHA and residents. Mr. de Castro's extensive experience working with NYCHA residents has been instrumental in breaking down communication barriers, managing complex situations, and pursuing resolutions to meet residents' needs. NYCHA has been responsive to the Ombudsperson's requests and orders, taking prompt action to address the Ombudsperson's concerns.

Under the RCD, the Ombudsperson is empowered to investigate mold and excessive moisture complaints and mandate appropriate remedies. This includes ordering NYCHA to take specific actions, such as completing repairs within a set timeframe, prioritizing tenant transfers, hiring independent contractors to perform repairs at NYCHA's expense, or engaging the IMA to develop a remediation plan. If NYCHA is found to have acted in bad faith or failed to effectively address mold or moisture issues, the Ombudsperson may impose additional relief, including fines payable to the Court for systemic noncompliance. Orders issued by the Ombudsperson carry the same authority as those of an arbitrator.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/proposed-modified-amended-stipulation-order-settlement-nycha-20180724.pdf>

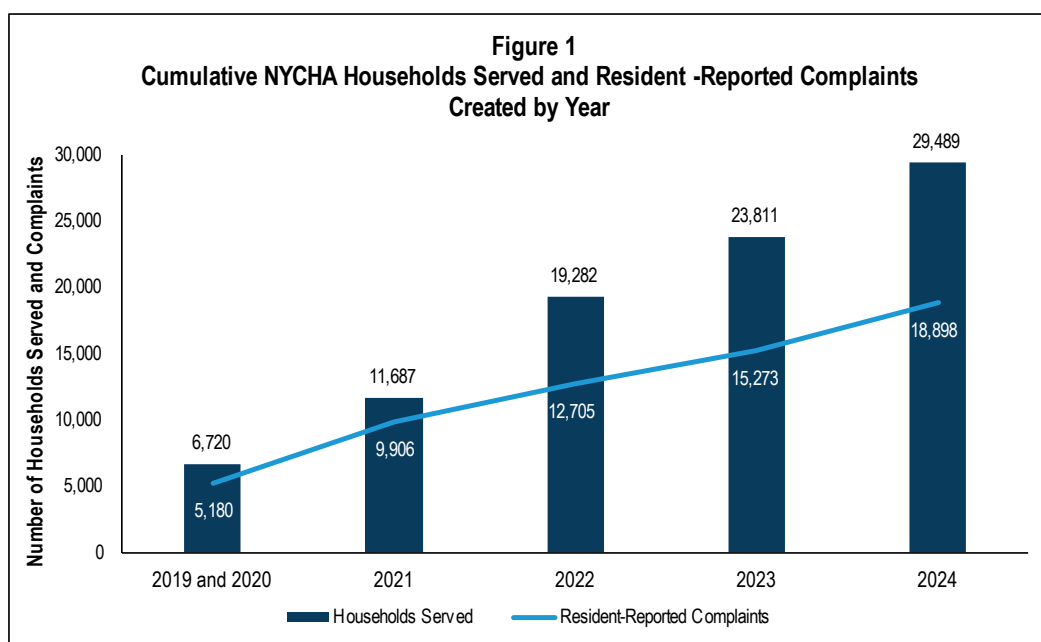
### III. OCC Resident-Reported Complaint Metrics and Impact

This section discusses OCC resident-reported complaint trends associated with NYCHA's Section 9 housing where NYCHA is the owner and operator.

#### A. COMPLAINT METRICS AND TRENDS

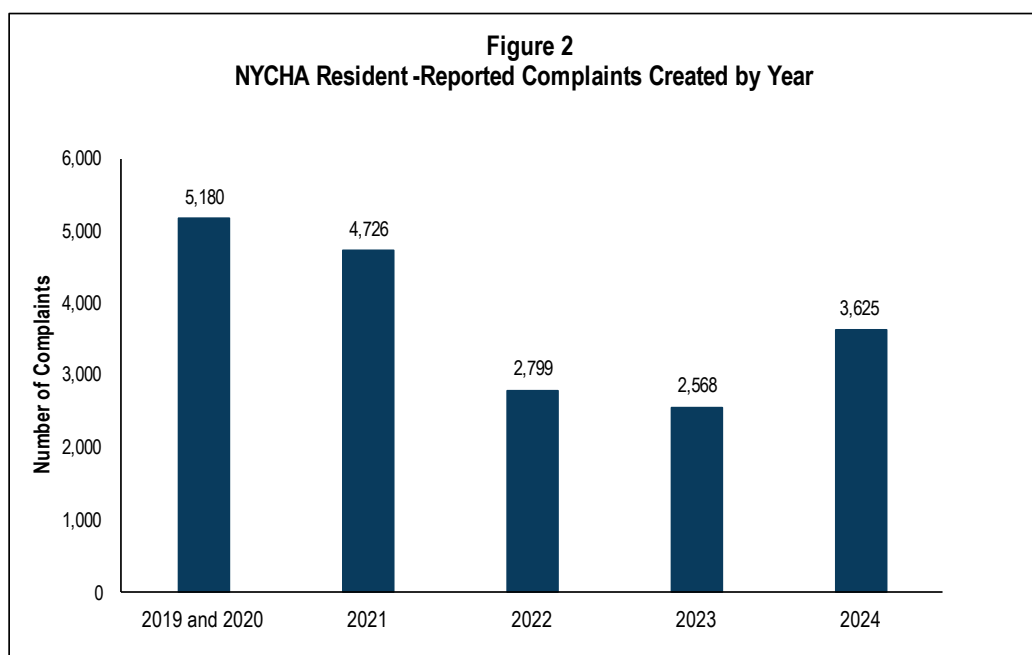
##### 1. Volume of NYCHA Resident-Reported Complaints Since Launch

Since its launch in November 2019, the OCC has served nearly 30,000 NYCHA households, processing nearly 19,000 resident-reported complaints involving more than 26,000 unique apartments (**Figure 1**).<sup>6</sup>



Between 2019 and 2023, the annual volume of complaints steadily declined, reflecting NYCHA's ongoing improvements in complaint resolution (**Figure 2** below). Between the 2020 and 2023 reporting years, resident-reported complaints decreased by approximately 50%, a trend that initially suggested improved responsiveness but also coincided with a decline in OCC awareness efforts. However, in the 2024 reporting year, complaint volume increased by approximately 41%, reversing the previous decline. This is the largest year-over-year percent increase in resident-reported complaints since the inception of the OCC.

<sup>6</sup> The unique number of households served includes households that were served when work was required in multiple units or on a whole building line. One resident-reported complaint may serve multiple units, if they are impacted or involved in the repair process.



While the number of resident-reported complaints to the OCC has declined over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, monthly complaint volumes have fluctuated, reflecting a combination of outreach efforts, unresolved repair backlogs, and seasonal factors. On average, 300 resident-reported complaints are filed monthly. The highest volume occurred in July 2020, exceeding 1,246 resident-reported complaints, coinciding with a portfolio-wide email campaign sent across developments to all residents. More recently, near the end of the 2023 reporting year and early in the 2024 reporting year, resident-reported complaints dropped below 300 per month, potentially due to a pause in targeted outreach and decreased OCC awareness.

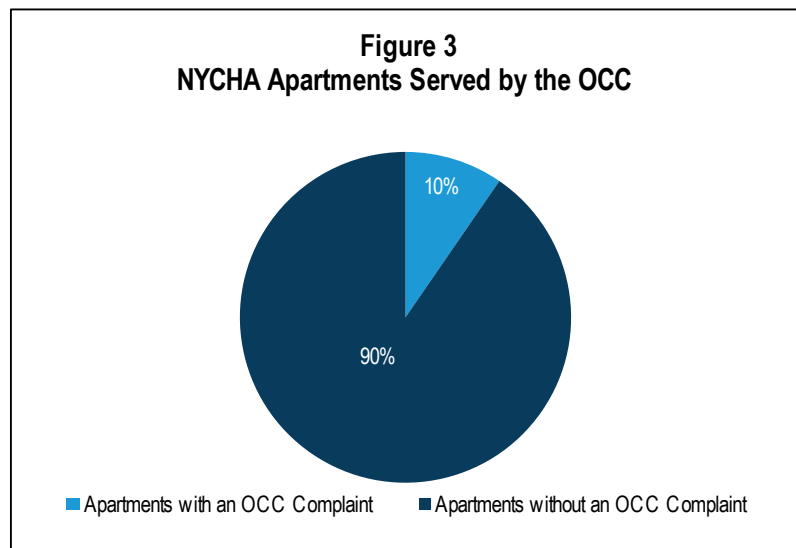
Several factors have contributed to the increase of resident-reported complaints in 2024. Targeted outreach efforts, including the Work Order (“WO”) Verification Project, played a significant role whereby the OCC targeted outreach to nearly 10,000 apartments with aging work orders over 200 days old.<sup>7</sup> Many residents reported unresolved work orders dating back as far as 2020. In some cases, this was due to residents being unaware that their work orders were still open, while in others, delays stemmed from scheduling backlogs or the absence of assigned scheduling dates.

Beyond long-standing structural repair challenges, scheduling delays and resident communication concerns, seasonal factors also contribute to fluctuations in complaint volume. For example, during the spring and summer months, there is often an increase in complaints related to leaks and mold growth related to elevated humidity. Conversely, in winter, radiator and heating-related leaks frequently cause increases in resident-reported complaints.

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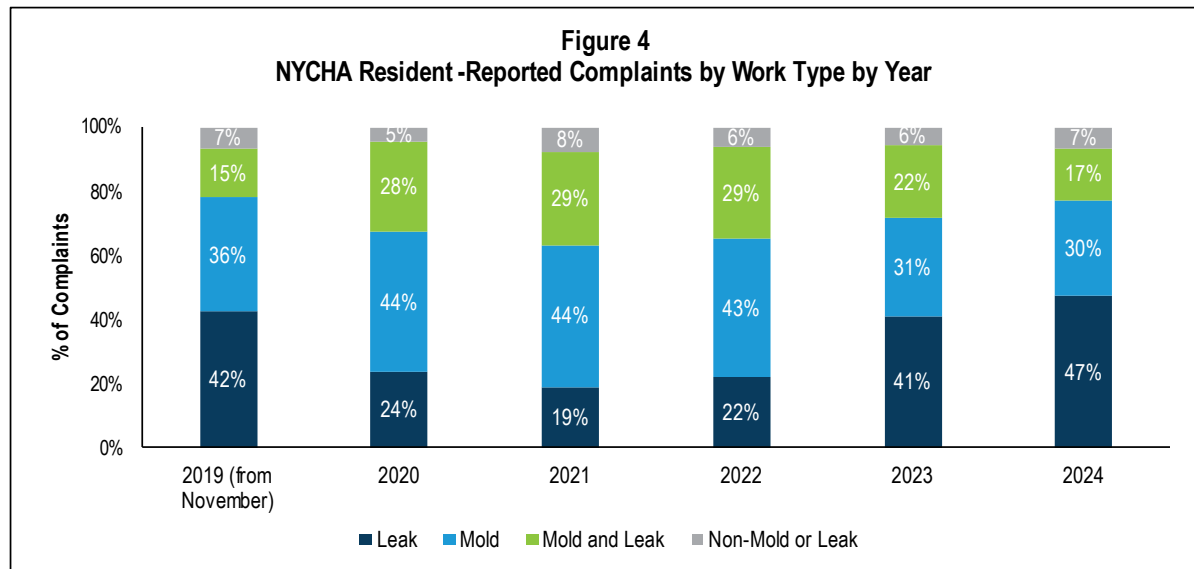
<sup>7</sup> In July 2024, the OCC and NYCHA launched the WO Verification project, which focuses on identifying aging mold and leak work orders that may not require work to be performed. By utilizing email and phone outreach channels, the OCC will reach out to NYCHA residents to verify if the work is still needed. If a resident confirms that the work is still required, the OCC will direct the resident to contact the Neighborhood Planner to schedule repairs or open a complaint if the resident has a concern; if a resident confirms that work is no longer needed and/or has been previously completed, NYCHA will administratively close the work order.

Despite the recent increase in complaints, the OCC has only reached approximately 10% of NYCHA's current portfolio (**Figure 3**).



## 2. Resident-Reported Complaints by Issue Type

Since the inception of the OCC, 39% of resident-reported complaints involved mold, 29% involved a leak, 25% involved both a mold and leak condition, and 6% were for issues other than mold or leak conditions. While complaints involving mold were the largest portion of resident-reported complaints in 2022, leak-related complaints became the most frequent issue in the 2023 and 2024 reporting years. (**Figure 4** below). This shift in complaint type can be attributed (in part) to NYCHA initiatives such as the Mold Busters standard procedure, monthly roof fan inspections, and various initiatives deployed by OMAR including the Clean Vent Initiative, roof fan replacements, Operation Mold Cleanup, and resident education materials from the new Mold campaign.





The declining rate of mold-related resident-reported complaints may also be correlated to the 57% decline of mold work orders created between the 2021 quarterly peak (7,854) and the end of the 2024 reporting period (3,352) demonstrating that NYCHA's initiatives discussed above are reducing the rate of mold recurrence.

### **3. Resident-Reported Complaints by Location**

Over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, resident-reported complaints to the OCC were created across more than 270 developments, with a range of 1 to 501 complaints per development. Resident-reported complaints were opened in each borough, with Manhattan (31%) and Brooklyn (28%) accounting for the highest proportion of resident-reported complaints, followed by the Bronx (24%) and Queens-Staten Island (14%).

The distribution of resident-reported complaints across boroughs remained relatively consistent over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, with approximately 20% of resident-reported complaints originating from just 10 developments. In the 2023 and 2024 reporting years, the developments with the highest number of resident-reported complaints were Jefferson (501), Baruch (372), Mitchel (345), Wagner (342), Patterson (332), and Red Hook West (299). When normalizing complaints by development size (complaints per 100 residents), the ranking changes, highlighting developments where a higher proportion of residents are reporting concerns, including 1471 Watson Avenue, WSUR (Brownstones), Metro North Plaza, Teller Ave East, and Jefferson (also included in the list above).

The OCC received the most complaints at Jefferson (located in Manhattan with nearly 1,500 apartments and 3,000 residents) due to persistent staffing challenges and poor building conditions in need of capital repairs related to plumbing. Over 50% of resident-reported complaints involved leaks, with many stemming from recurring or unresolved issues. These ongoing problems require significant plumbing repairs, numerous re-inspections, and follow-up work to fully resolve. While capital repairs appear to be urgently needed to address these systemic issues, the OCC is unaware of any active or planned capital plumbing projects to address them, leading to many residents seeking the OCC's assistance.<sup>8</sup>

Shifts in resident-reported complaints across specific developments often reflect the influence of targeted intervention programs, ongoing operational challenges, and fluctuations in responsiveness from NYCHA. For example, Brownsville experienced a significant decline (80%) in resident-reported complaints, decreasing from 98 in the 2021 reporting year to just 20 in the 2024 reporting year. This reduction is attributed in part to NYCHA's Enhanced Oversight Program ("EOP") which provided additional resources such as temporary staffing support to address the backlog of unresolved work orders and prioritization of OCC related repairs.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://capitaltracker.nycha.info/developments/64>.

<sup>9</sup> EOP is a three-to-six-month long program within NYCHA led by OMAR to improve mold and leak compliance at the consolidation level. The EOP establishes overall performance milestones consistent with Baez court ordered requirements and identifies site-specific roadblocks hindering performance (i.e., staffing shortages, access issues, scheduling disruptions, procurement delays, and/or need for additional training). The EOP also provides coaching/resources to help sites overcome identified roadblocks.

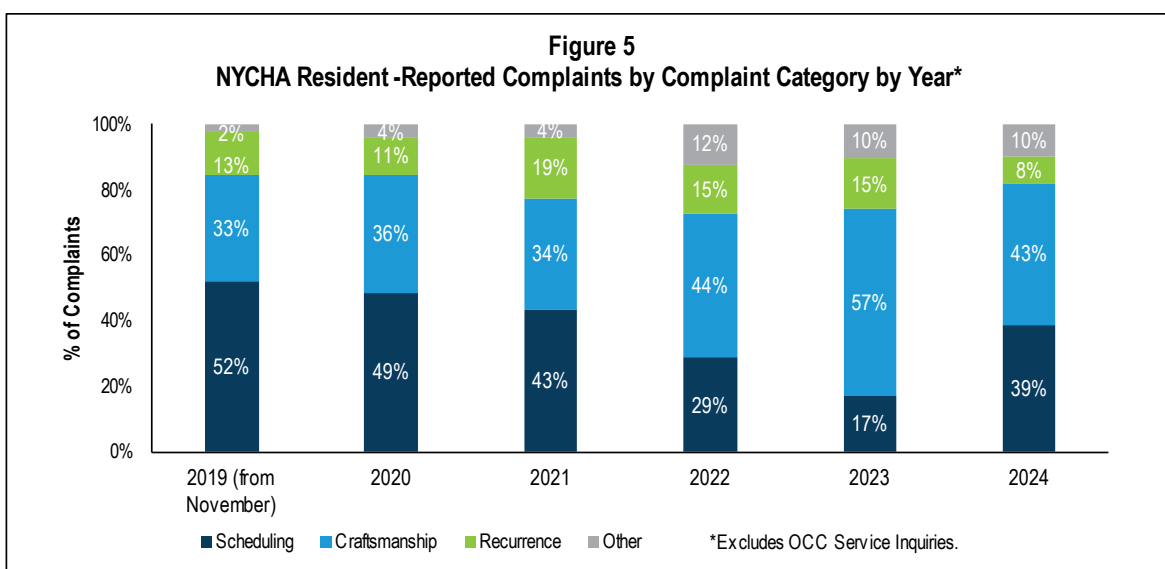
Conversely, Sotomayor Houses has seen a steady increase in complaints (73%) from 30 in the 2023 reporting year to 52 in 2024. These developments typically experience significant operational issues which contributed to ongoing service disruptions and increase in resident-reported complaints. These developments also tend to have notable responsiveness delays, including (but not limited to) Melrose, Castle Hill, Marble Hill, Sound View, Throggs Neck, Red Hook West, Baruch, Saint Nicholas, Bronx River, Queensbridge South, and East River. Developments located in the Bronx accounted for nearly 45% of responsiveness delays among resident-reported complaints in the 2024 reporting period and had the longest days to resolve, compared to the other boroughs.

Factors contributing to these delays include open management positions (e.g., superintendent, assistant superintendent, property manager), staffing shortages such as maintenance workers or skilled trade (e.g., carpenters, plumbers, painters), and vendor delays, which have led to missed appointments, scheduling difficulties, and slow response times to OCC requests.

To enhance response times and minimize resident-reported complaints, the OCC and NYCHA have implemented several strategies, including MRU hosting regular feedback sessions with developments and deploying RCA staff onsite to directly engage with residents and staff to improve responsiveness. These initiatives are designed to promote accountability, strengthen commitment, and deliver more timely and effective repair services. With MRU's continued support and oversight, the OCC has seen operational improvements across these developments.

#### 4. Resident-Reported Complaints by Complaint Category

**Figure 5** shows the distribution of resident-reported complaints made to the OCC over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years by the initial complaint category. While the distribution reflects the residents' initial complaints to the OCC, the OCC found that the residents' complaint categories can evolve over time (e.g., complaint may start out as a scheduling complaint but there could be subsequent instances of recurrence or missed appointments, etc.). Since the inception of the OCC, 41% of resident-reported complaints have been for craftsmanship, 38% for scheduling, 14% for recurrence, and 7% for OCC service inquiries.



Craftsmanship has consistently been a leading category of resident-reported complaints from the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, ranging between 33% and 57% of resident-reported complaints annually. While Craftsmanship complaints may also stem from missing appointments, insufficient work quality, or other deficiencies, 90% involved instances where NYCHA initiated repair work but failed to complete it. In many cases incomplete repairs resulted in exposed holes in walls, missing fixtures, pest infiltration within the apartments or inoperable sinks, bathtubs, cabinets, and toilets, further exacerbating the mold and leak-related issues of affected residents.

Scheduling-related resident-reported complaints accounted for 38% of complaints over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, resulting in it being the second largest resident-reported complaint category. In the 2022 reporting year, scheduling-related complaints declined by 14 percentage points, which was attributed (in part) to NYCHA's improvements with scheduling work orders through its Work Order Reform ("WOR") program which began a phased implementation in 2022.<sup>10</sup> Through this program, a Neighborhood Planner contacts residents to schedule all remaining work orders in a single interaction, with the option for residents to reschedule repairs as needed. The OCC has found that scheduling complaints persist (even following implementation of the Neighborhood Planner) due to missed appointments where NYCHA may be understaffed and not always able to service all appointments scheduled for a day or the resident is unaware or unavailable for the scheduled appointment. Missed appointments played a substantial role in exacerbating repair delays, further prolonging the resolution process for residents facing mold and leak-related issues and increasing resident frustrations and distrust. Many of these residents have already experienced long waits for repairs and made personal accommodations, such as taking time off from work, only to experience further frustration and sometimes loss of wages due to scheduling inefficiencies. The OCC has also identified some instances where NYCHA arrives for a scheduled appointment, only to find that the resident is not home. Implementing convenient options for residents to easily reschedule appointments could help address this issue and improve coordination.<sup>11</sup> Despite the OCC's oversight, nearly 25% of resolved resident-reported complaints were delayed by at least one missed appointment, prolonging the remediation process and requiring additional efforts from the MRU to investigate the cause of the missed appointment and promptly coordinate a rescheduled date. The rise in scheduling-related complaints during the 2024 reporting year was primarily attributed to WO Verification efforts and delays in scheduling, with the earliest available dates often ranging from 6 to 9 months. NYCHA has indicated that skilled trade appointments typically take approximately 400 days to complete. However, through the OCC's interventions, the MRU has been able to significantly reduce this timeline, causing a rise in residents seeking assistance.

Recurrence related resident-reported complaints, where the resident indicates a previously repaired issue has returned, ranged from a 19% peak in 2021 to a low of 8% in 2024. The decline in recurrence rates is a positive indicator that NYCHA has improved the quality of its repairs and effectively increased operational oversight through the Mold and Leak Scorecard. In the 2024 reporting year, the developments with the highest number of resident-reported complaints were Red Hook West, Pomonok, Red Hook East, Kings Tower, and Wilson.

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<sup>10</sup> [NYCHA's Work Order Reform Continues Making Strides After Citywide Rollout; Nov 2022.](#)

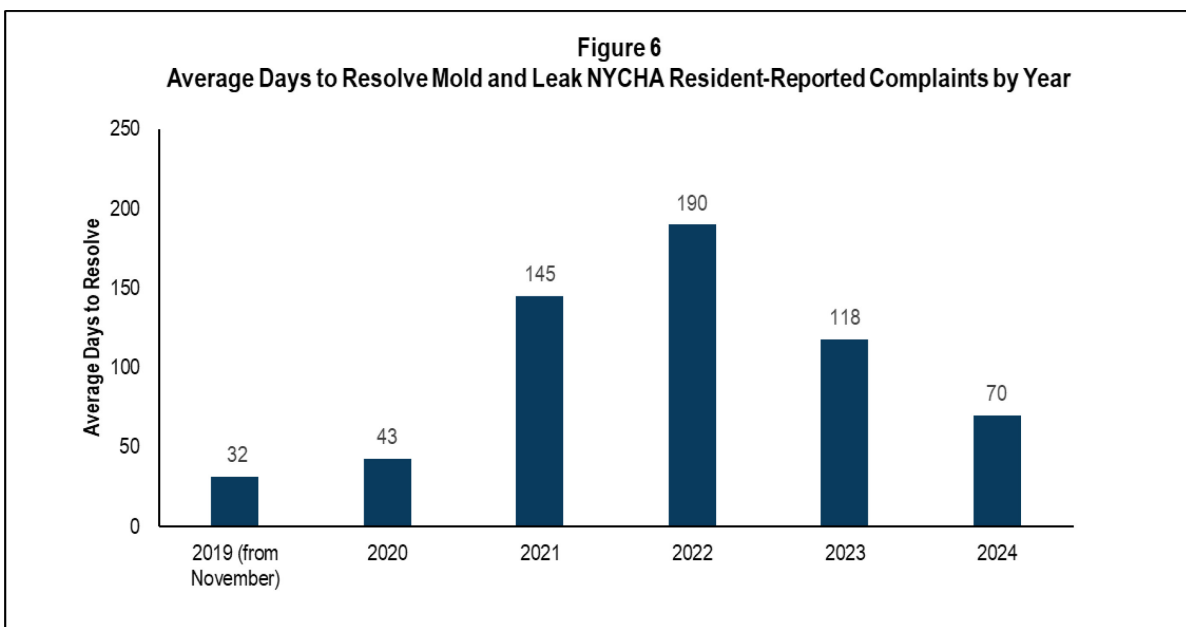
<sup>11</sup> Refer to the OCC periodic reports for the OCC's recommendations for resident communication strategies and scheduling best practices (e.g., OCC Q5 Quarterly Report, pp.26 - 28) - [www.ombnyc.com](http://www.ombnyc.com).

Additionally, approximately 10% of residents who have submitted a complaint to the OCC have filed more than one. This means multiple complaints have been created for the same apartment, often related to new or recurring mold and leak issues within the apartment over the 2019 to 2024 period.

Between the 2019 and 2024 reporting years, the OCC also received inquiries where residents were seeking information or clarification about the OCC's role in addressing mold and leak-related issues. Many of these inquiries occur when residents have questions about how the OCC can assist them or how they can report a mold or a leak-related condition to NYCHA. Residents must first report mold or leak-related issues to NYCHA, as the OCC can only intervene after NYCHA has been given the opportunity to address the issue. In these situations, the residents can contact the OCC in the future, as needed.

## 5. Average Days to Resolve NYCHA Resident-Reported Complaints

Between 2019 and 2024, the average days to resolve resident-reported complaints fluctuated, reflecting both operational challenges and process improvements (**Figure 6** below). The average resolution times in the 2021 and 2022 reporting years increased sharply to 190 days largely due to delays from NYCHA's COVID-19 work order guidance and staffing constraints. Many complaints were placed on hold for weeks or months, and when work orders resumed, additional repairs were often required due to prolonged delays, including recurring mold growth. However, resolution times improved significantly, declining to 118 days in the 2023 reporting year and further declining to 70 days in the 2024 reporting year, marking a 63% reduction from the 2022 reporting year's peak. In the 2024 reporting year, residents with mold related complaints were resolved in 52 days on average, compared to 115 days for both mold and leak-related issues.



Several factors contributed to the significant decline in resolution times between the 2022 and 2024 reporting years. NYCHA implemented the WOR program which included hiring additional skilled tradespersons, such as plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and roofers, and assigning them to

specific sites to address labor shortages and expedite repairs.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, the restructuring of the MRU and the introduction of enhanced OCC escalation and oversight procedures (discussed in Appendix A) allowed urgent and unresolved cases to be prioritized, helping to prevent excessive delays. The decline in recurrence complaints also played a role, with reports of previously repaired issues dropping by 63% in the same reporting period, which takes the OCC over 100 days (on average) to resolve compared to 35 days for scheduling related complaints, which saw an increase in 2024.<sup>13</sup>

The progress in reducing resolution times over the 2022 to 2024 reporting years highlights NYCHA's commitment to completing necessary repairs and adhering to the OCC standard procedures, including promptly responding to escalations made by the OCC, expediting scheduling dates and integrating additional MRU staff training. Despite these improvements, the extent of NYCHA's work order backlog and persistent scheduling delays continue to pose challenges, particularly for cases involving complex repairs that require coordination with residents and multiple repair appointments. Continued efforts to address these challenges and optimize scheduling will be critical in sustaining these improvements and further reducing the time required to resolve resident-reported complaints.

## **6. Resident-Reported Complaints with Severe Conditions and Complex Repairs**

Complex repair cases, involving inadequate prior repairs, multi-apartment access (regarding complex piping leaks), exterior building work (e.g., roofs and façades), or extensive reconstruction requiring vendor work or resident relocation, have consistently accounted for 30–40% of OCC complaints from the 2019 to 2024 reporting years.

Among the complaints received by the OCC, over 5,800 have been classified as high or urgent priority, indicating severe conditions requiring escalated attention.<sup>14</sup> Of this population, over 220 residents had to be relocated to have their mold or leak-related complaint addressed. Additionally, over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, over 30% of residents reported experiencing respiratory health concerns that may have been caused by or exasperated by their current living conditions. See Exhibit 2 for pictures of resident-reported complaints, showing the severity of some cases.

Due to the severity of some of the resident-reported complaints, the OCC frequently requests NYCHA's Compliance and Quality Assurance departments conduct investigations into improper repairs, perform re-inspections, engage with OMAR to utilize third-party vendor contracts to expedite complex repairs, and request independent third-party inspections by the court-appointed

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<sup>12</sup> [NYCHA's Work Order Reform Continues Making Strides After Citywide Rollout; November 2022.](#)

<sup>13</sup> The average time to resolve resident complaints does not reflect NYCHA's repair timeline due to OCC processes. The OCC may keep complaints pending during intake and resident satisfaction confirmation, which can take multiple attempts over a week or more. MRU also keeps cases open until staff provide necessary information and residents confirm satisfaction. Additionally, some cases remain open until root cause repairs are verified and related work orders are closed in NYCHA's system.

<sup>14</sup> A resident reported complaint is considered high-priority if there is more than 25 sq. ft. of mold growth, an active leak, inoperable fixtures (missing/broken sink, cabinets, toilet etc.) or there is a reported health concern (child with asthma, senior with COPD, pregnancy, etc.). A resident-reported complaint is considered urgent-priority if there is mold growth in a significant area of the apartment (more than 100 sq. ft. or in more than three rooms) or if there is a leak causing flooding, water near an electrical outlet, possible ceiling collapse or water containing sewage.

IMA. These collaborative efforts are crucial in ensuring severe conditions are adequately addressed and residents receive the necessary repairs to restore safe living conditions.

A considerable challenge the OCC has encountered over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years is the repeated need for intervention in cases requiring capital repairs (e.g., Jefferson). Many residents have sought assistance multiple times over several years, particularly in developments where aging infrastructure and systemic deficiencies demand extensive remediation. This highlights the need for NYCHA to establish a more robust system for identifying and addressing capital repair needs, as these deficiencies often contribute to recurring mold and leak complaints. For some cases, the resident needs to be educated on the likelihood of recurrence, discuss preventive plans that the development can take to monitor the conditions (e.g., monthly inspections or routine short-term repairs) while awaiting capital repairs (e.g., scheduled roof replacements, façade repairs, or plumbing upgrades).

The OCC's role in monitoring these conditions and advocating for appropriate interventions remains crucial to mitigating health hazards and ensuring safer living environments for residents

## **7. Assisting Residents with Complex or Vulnerable Situations**

Some of the most intricate OCC resident-reported complaints involve residents faced with complex needs that NYCHA has not been able to overcome. The MRU (alongside other internal and external groups such as Family Services, Legal, development staff, police, etc.) has demonstrated a commitment to serving these residents and has worked to address cases involving mental health challenges, hoarding conditions, squatters and other barriers preventing repair access. Common issues include:

- Mental health challenges, hoarding conditions, or physical disabilities which complicate repair access.
- Improper household conditions, including unauthorized occupants (e.g., squatters) or unauthorized activities.
- Legal disputes or housing-related conflicts which impact repair coordination and resolution timelines.

Over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, the OCC has served over 2,250 resident-reported complaints (or 12%) involving these obstacles. In such cases, the OCC and NYCHA have worked together to provide necessary accommodations and oversight, ensuring barriers are addressed, and repairs are completed. While these cases can be demanding and can take several months to resolve, it remains crucial to support residents in achieving safe and habitable living conditions.

## **B. OCC IMPACT VIA RESIDENT EXPERIENCES**

To highlight residents' experiences, below are five case summaries that showcase specific issues and the resulting outcomes. Each case study details the initial condition, steps taken to resolve the issue, the timeline, and the final outcome, supported by before-and-after photos and resident testimonials.



### Case Study 1: Mold and Leak-Related Craftmanship Complaint in Bathroom

A resident reported unresolved mold and water damage in their bathroom and hallway caused by a prior leak. Issues included mold on the bathroom ceiling and walls, a non-functioning exhaust fan, peeling paint, and a hole in the wall covered with duct tape for over two years. The hallway also showed water damage from the leak. Although the leak had been fixed months earlier, the resulting damage and mold remained unaddressed, and the development was largely unresponsive.

The OCC conducted a virtual inspection, documenting mold, mildew, peeling paint, and structural damage. The case was assigned to the MRU with a request for expedited remediation, including cleaning, repainting, plastering, caulking, exhaust fan repair, and addressing the underlying cause of the damage.

Within a few weeks, all repairs were completed through the OCC's coordination. A follow-up virtual inspection verified the bathroom ceiling and walls were mold-free and repainted, the exhaust fan was functional, and the hallway was re-plastered. Additionally, the toilet, improperly reinstalled during earlier work, was repaired. The resident expressed satisfaction, stating, "I'm very satisfied with the repairs performed."



Case Study 1: Before (left) and After (right)



### Case Study 2: Severe Mold and Leak-Related Scheduling Complaint in Unit

A resident reported extensive mold growth and water damage throughout their apartment, affecting the bathroom, two bedrooms, and the kitchen. The issues included 35 square feet of mold in bedroom 1, 30 square feet in bedroom 2, and 25 square feet in the bathroom, all resulting from a prior leak. Additional problems included peeling paint, damaged ceilings, and a hole in the wall from earlier plumbing repairs. Despite the severity of the conditions, delays in addressing the issue (lack of communication on next steps and scheduling) led the resident to contact the OCC for assistance after months of NYCHA's inaction.

The OCC immediately escalated the case, citing health and safety concerns, and coordinated with the MRU to expedite repairs. Through persistent follow-up and coordination with multiple departments, the resident's apartment was restored. The OCC monitored work orders for mold remediation, plastering, and painting, while maintaining communication with the resident. This was a complex remediation plan, including over ten work orders and 30+ days of repairs by various workers (Maintenance, Painter, Plumber, Plaster, Carpenter, etc.). The resident confirmed their satisfaction, stating all issues were resolved, and provided photos in the bathroom showing clean walls, fresh paint, and restored surfaces.



Case Study 2: Before (left) and After (right)

### Case Study 3: Mold and Leak-Related Recurrence Complaint in Bathroom

A resident's adult child contacted the OCC to report persistent mold and leak-related issues in their parent's bathroom and foyer. The family described conditions including mold on the bathroom ceiling and walls, a recurring leak behind the toilet, and water-damaged walls in the foyer (from the connecting bathroom wall). The resident, a senior, had experienced these issues for over two years, with foul odors and dampness exacerbating the situation during hot and humid weather. Despite prior work performed by NYCHA, the family reported little progress had been made to prevent the recurrence, prompting the outreach to the OCC.

Through the OCC's support, several work orders were expedited, including plumbing, sheetrock, and plastering within a few weeks timeframe. Painting work was scheduled for three months later, the earliest available date. The resident's daughter confirmed satisfaction with the completed repairs, stating she was relieved the structural issues had been addressed. While painting remained pending, the resident's daughter agreed to close the case, noting she would follow up if painters did not arrive as scheduled. The OCC's coordination and follow-through ensured the resident's living conditions improved and was able to coordinate directly with NYCHA for the follow-up repairs. Upon a review of the resident's data, there was no reported recurrence after these repairs were completed.



Case Study 3: Before (left) and After (right)

### Case Study 4: Leak-Related Recurrence Complaint in Kitchen

A resident reported a recurring kitchen leak which required constant cleaning and caused a significant inconvenience. The resident, who suffers from asthma, contacted the OCC after being informed of its services through 3-1-1. She reported a persistent leak in the kitchen and expressed frustration with NYCHA's slow response to address the issue. The leak required the removal of kitchen cabinets, and there was no gas in the kitchen due to other ongoing work. The resident also indicated that previous water damage had led to mold and replacement of kitchen cabinets. The OCC escalated the case to high priority due to the resident's reported health issues and the active and on-going leak. MRU identified the root cause as a hole in the waste line stack pipe, which was covered in presumed asbestos. Abatement was completed promptly, followed by pipe repairs, plastering, and cabinet installation a few weeks later.

The resident confirmed her satisfaction with the completed repairs, stating she appreciated the coordinated efforts of NYCHA and the OCC and the clear communication throughout the process. She also shared after-photos of the restored kitchen, with plans to request painting at a later date.



Case Study 4: Before (left) and After (right)

### Case Study 5: Leak-Related Craftmanship Complaint in Bathroom for Senior Resident

A senior (Spanish speaking) resident reported the absence of a bathroom sink and tub enclosure, stating her wall was covered with plastic and repairs had been delayed for over a month. The OCC immediately escalated the issue to high priority due to the resident's age and the lack of essential bathroom fixtures. Within one day, NYCHA installed the tub enclosure. Over the following weeks, the OCC continued to monitor the case for additional repairs, including addressing a leak from the apartment above, installing a new bathroom sink and vanity, installing grab bars in the shower and other cosmetic repairs due to the leak. By the end of the month, plumbers repaired the waste and overflow issues which affected the whole building line. During a follow-up, the resident confirmed her satisfaction, stating all repairs had been completed to her expectations. She also shared photos of the finished bathroom to document the improvement.



Case Study 5: Before (left) and After (right)



## C. POSITIVE NYCHA RESIDENT-REPORTED FEEDBACK

NYCHA residents continue to express appreciation for the OCC's role (including efforts from NYCHA) in resolving mold and leak-related issues. In the 2023 and 2024 reporting years, resident feedback included:

- *"Thank you so much. It has been very difficult dealing with the repairs in my bathroom. It caused me a lot of stress and anxiety. With the help of the OCC, all the repairs were done, and the bathroom is beautiful. I have never received such great assistance as I have with the OCC."*
- *"All of this was done because of the OCC; those people are AMAZING. It's AMAZING what they can do for NYCHA. Everyone needs to be made aware of the OCC."*
- *"I really appreciate you from the bottom of my heart for making sure my bathroom was fixed after waiting for over 2 years. Now I feel like a human being again every time I go inside the bathroom. It looks nice. Thanks again. Hope your help reaches everyone's home that really need it. It makes a big difference!"*
- *"NYCHA did a fabulous job and great follow-ups from the MRU RCA."*
- *"I want to thank the OCC so much for their hard work on my complaints. I really appreciate it. It's been almost three years since we needed the work done. Thanks."*
- *"I am beyond grateful for all the hard work. Without the OCC, I would feel stuck. The OCC has been so amazing – I want the best the world has to offer you guys. I even wish I could write a formal review somewhere saying how much you helped me."*
- *"Thank you for all the help. Especially to the MRU RCA who was so helpful through all of this."*
- *"Thank God for the OCC. Because of them everything has been fixed."*

## D. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

The OCC has built strategic partnerships with stakeholders, such as legal aid organizations, elected officials, tenant associations, and community organizations to better serve NYCHA residents. Recognizing many residents first seek assistance from these organizations when facing issues with

NYCHA, the OCC has actively engaged these stakeholders to expand awareness, facilitate a referral process, and collaborate on complex cases. Over the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, the Ombudsperson and OCC participated in over 25 meetings (both virtually and in-person) with various stakeholders throughout the five boroughs (Figure 7 and 8 below). While some stakeholders were familiar with the OCC, the vast majority were not highlighting the need for continued outreach and relationship-building efforts.

Elected officials and news outlets have also recognized the impact of the OCC in holding NYCHA accountable and improving conditions for residents. Congressman Ritchie Torres publicly described the OCC as "a powerful tool to hold NYCHA accountable," emphasizing its role in systemic oversight. Additionally, 15 New York State Assembly members issued a joint statement acknowledging the OCC's contribution to restoring faith in NYCHA's ability to address long-standing repair issues.

The involvement of plaintiff organizations in the *Baez* case has also been instrumental in shaping the OCC's approach to advocacy and systemic change. In collaboration with Metro IAF, Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service, East Brooklyn Congregations, Manhattan Together, and South Bronx Churches, the OCC participated in a virtual awareness summit (in 2020) attended by nearly 200 stakeholders, including tenant leaders, elected officials, and community-based organizers. This event not only increased awareness of the OCC's services but also provided a platform for residents to share their experiences and highlight areas requiring further improvement. Over time, the OCC has made modifications to resident engagement based on feedback received from the plaintiff organizations and stakeholders to ensure the process is efficient and effective for residents.

**Figure 7 – Resident Outreach Event in Manhattan, NY – October 2024**



The quotes below highlight the OCC's impact on supporting NYCHA and stakeholders in their efforts to better serve NYCHA residents:

- NYCHA's Executive Vice President of Property Management Operations:**<sup>15</sup> "[The OCC has] been instrumental in ensuring that urgent mold cases are addressed, thereby improving our performance. It's a standard we [NYCHA] are striving to achieve, and it's driving the change needed to tackle mold and leak compliance effectively. Lessons learned from the OCC are being heeded by other teams within the agency, including those dealing with lead and pest issues... The OCC excels in ensuring that resident satisfaction is thoroughly understood. We are learning from our collaboration with the OCC, which will enhance our overall operations in various areas. We are also working with the OCC to expand its outreach initiatives, such as proactive callouts and identifying leak clusters. These efforts are being expanded because they drive us to better performance."
- NYCHA Executive:** "The OCC has helped set a new standard for responsiveness and transparency, ensuring that mold and leak issues are addressed efficiently."
- New York State Assembly Members:** Issued a joint statement stating "Many NYCHA residents have given up hope of ever having needed repairs addressed. However, this experience [working with the OCC and Ombudsperson] shows it is possible to improve the quality of life in Public Housing."
- Leader of Monte Sion Christian Church:** "For nearly three decades, I've been working with NYCHA tenants from my church and community, and I've never witnessed anything more impactful than the OCC in improving the quality of life in public housing."
- NYLAG:** "It's impressing how quickly the OCC responds to tenants' concerns when we make a referral. Tenants usually come to us having lost hope that their mold issues will be address, so it's reassuring to know that when we make an OCC referral, things will be different. It helps us maintain trust with the tenants we work with."
- Director of LSA Family Health Services:** "The OCC have been invaluable partners for my organization. We know that if we encourage a NYCHA tenant to call the OCC, it will work with NYCHA to ensure the problem is fixed. Thanks to our collaboration, the kind of mold that could have given thousands of kids in our community and beyond, asthma, has really been fixed. We know there is much more to do, and we're excited to continue to work together."
- Tenant Leader in Riis Houses:** "The OCC helped me to get NYCHA to finally fix my apartment and I've been very happy to send many of my neighbors to them for help as well. I've seen people who suffered for months or years get relief in days or weeks. I'm proud of the work we've done together and excited to continue."

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<sup>15</sup> At a February 2023 New York City Council hearing for the Committee on Public Housing, Daniel Greene (NYCHA's Executive Vice President of Property Management Operations), emphasized the OCC's essential oversight and resident advocacy roles. He highlighted the OCC's expanded influence beyond leak and mold issues, influencing broader compliance and operational improvements.



- **Leader of Manhattan Together:** “Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our advocates, our attorneys, the independents (OCC, Ombudsperson, and IMA), allies and some productive people inside NYCHA, tens of thousands of families living in public housing have seen real progress. The work we are doing has had a real impact.”

**Figure 8**  
**External Stakeholders Who Have Supported or Referred Residents**  
**for Assistance to the OCC**

Legal Aid Society	Senator Brian Kavanaugh’s Office	Congressman Ritchie Torres’ Office	Our Lady of Sorrows Church	Mobilization for Justice
Bronx Defenders	Senator Jamaal T Bailey’s Office	Congressman Dan Goldman’s Office	LSA Family Health Services	Just Fix
NYLAG	Office of Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams	Congressman Hakeem Jefferies’ Office	Manhattan Together	Fountain House
Queens Legal Services	Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez	Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal	Lenox Hill Neighborhood House	Women of New York
Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A	Grand St. Settlement	Assemblymember Harvey Epstein	Lincoln Hospital	We Act 4 Change
Legal Services NYC	Monica Morales, Pix11 News	Assemblymember Grace Lee	Red Hook and Harlem Community Justice Centers	Community Voices Heard

By building strong partnerships with stakeholders, the OCC has expanded its role beyond addressing direct resident-reported complaints. These collaborations have improved accountability mechanisms and driven systemic enhancements in NYCHA’s response to mold and leak-related issues, helping to mediate and prevent some lawsuits and media-reported cases against NYCHA.

#### **IV. Progress, Challenges and Continued Opportunities for Change**

This section highlights the progress made, challenges faced, and continued opportunities for change in improving NYCHA’s processes and responses to resident concerns. It highlights the impact of collaborative efforts, identifies areas requiring further attention, and outlines pathways to drive meaningful and sustainable improvements within NYCHA’s operational and cultural transformation.

## A. KEY AREAS OF NYCHA'S PROGRESS

Between 2019 and 2024, the OCC observed notable improvements in NYCHA's approach to mold and leak-related remediation, demonstrating a commitment to addressing systemic challenges and enhancing living conditions for residents. Significant advancements were made in areas such as ventilation upgrades, complex repairs, resident outreach, data-driven performance monitoring, backlog reduction, staff training, and cultural accountability. Additional information regarding areas of progress is referenced in NYCHA's *2023 Report on Mold and Leak Response Efforts: Progress, Challenges and Next Steps* which was written in coordination with the court-appointed IDA and IMA.<sup>16</sup>

NYCHA has taken steps to improve ventilation systems via infrastructure investments to improve airflow and ventilation of its buildings (which have mechanical exhaust ventilation), to prevent mold growth. Additionally, OMAR has prioritized more complex repairs, addressing apartments with extensive mold problems (exceeding 100 square feet) and resolving underlying issues such as building line plumbing replacements. These efforts reflect a focus on long-term solutions rather than temporary fixes.

NYCHA has leveraged data analysis to drive performance improvements in mold and leak-related remediation. The introduction of a Mold and Leak Scorecard, which evaluates repairs based on 11 key metrics tied to Baez compliance requirements, has allowed NYCHA to monitor progress and identify areas for further improvement. Additionally, efforts to reduce the backlog of priority mold and leak work orders including inspections, cleaning, and resident painting have resulted in more timely responses to critical repair needs.

As a result of regular data analysis, the Scorecard program, and other OMAR led initiatives, NYCHA has begun to foster a culture of accountability, emphasizing adherence to best practices and compliance standards. This cultural shift demonstrates NYCHA's commitment to improving the quality and effectiveness of mold and leak-related remediation, ultimately reducing recurrence rates and complaints reported to the OCC. The following examples demonstrate this accountability:

- Median days to inspect mold has improved from 26 days to 4 days since the launch of the Scorecard in May 2022;
- Operation Dry Out ("ODO"), which targets 200+ day plumbing and tub enclosure work orders, effectively closed 65% of its ~18,000 target work orders through January 31, 2025;
- The Enhanced Oversight Program ("EOP"), which focuses on improving the performance of low-performing consolidations (groups of developments managed collectively), recently achieved notable progress with the Howard consolidation. Once ranked the lowest-performing consolidation within NYCHA, Howard now outperforms 46 other consolidations; and
- Operation Mold Cleaning ("OMC"), which aims to reduce the backlog of open mold removal work orders and outstanding mold-resistant paint work orders, has reduced open mold cleaning work orders by 70% from 7,997 targeted work orders to 2,431 open work orders in the last 3 years.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NYCHA-Report-on-Mold-and-Leak-Response-Efforts-2023.pdf>

A significant investment in staff training has further supported NYCHA's progress. Nearly 5,000 staff members have been trained in the Mold Buster standard procedure, with courses covering remediation, building science, and mold inspection. The court-appointed IMA has also performed hundreds of Mold inspections and offered in-person training to NYCHA staff involved in mold and leak-related remediation.

Resident outreach has also played a key role in NYCHA's improvement efforts. OMAR launched a mold awareness campaign to educate residents on ways to minimize mold occurrences. This campaign included the distribution of targeted materials such as short videos and window clings, particularly to locations without mechanical ventilation, fostering better communication and prevention strategies, and prompting residents to report mold.

Collectively, these efforts reflect measurable progress in NYCHA's ability to improve living conditions for its residents, while driving operational and cultural transformation to ensure sustainable change.

## B. KEY AREAS FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

The following areas highlight ongoing challenges and opportunities for improvement within NYCHA, shaped by resident feedback through complaints received by the OCC and data insights gathered by the IDA.

- **Additional Funding to Address NYCHA's Open Work Order Backlog:** While NYCHA has generally been able to meet newly reported mold and leak-related repair requests, its significant backlog remains a persistent challenge requiring additional funding to resolve. As of the latest reporting period, NYCHA had over 56,700 open parent work orders, with more than 53,600 exceeding the court-mandated 15-day remediation timeframe, averaging 467 days open.<sup>17</sup> In the 2024 reporting year, the number of open individual mold and leak-related work orders has exceeded 71,000 each month. Limited staffing, constrained overtime budgets, and insufficient vendor capacity have hindered NYCHA's ability to reduce this backlog with its current resources. Dedicated funding for additional personnel, expanded vendor capacity, and operational technology enhancements would enable NYCHA to meet the demand for overdue repairs while maintaining timely responses to new requests. Without such funding to address the backlog, extensive scheduling delays are likely to persist.
- **Enhanced Technology for Scheduling and Resident Communication:** A key opportunity for improvement lies in adopting scheduling systems that prioritize repairs based on severity, the duration of pending issues, and available resources. Integrating these systems with enhanced resident communication platforms offering features such as mobile notifications, tools for confirming access dates, rescheduling options, and tracking missed appointments can streamline operations, better manage resident expectations, and improve productivity and repair timelines. Without these enhancements, high rates of missed appointments by

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<sup>17</sup> Of the 56,700 open work orders, 23% are related to mold repairs, while the remaining 77% involve leak-related repairs. Among these, 51% had partial work completed but not all necessary repairs and less than 1,000 required mold cleaning. Over the past year, an average of 10% of work orders under *Baez* were closed without work being done, suggesting that approximately ~5,000 of the currently open work orders may not require further action.

both NYCHA and residents are likely to continue. For example, at the end of the reporting period over 10% of open mold and leak work orders had a scheduled date in the past indicating that the appointment was missed and not yet rescheduled.

- **Staffing:** Staffing shortages have consistently impacted repair timelines and service quality. While increased hiring efforts and training programs have helped address some gaps in the current demand, NYCHA must continue to develop strategies to retain additional staff, particularly plaster, carpenter, painting and plumbing trades to address its backlog (discussed above). For example, at the end of the reporting period there were over 13,000 open carpenter work orders. Over the six-month period, NYCHA was creating more carpenter work orders on average (1,348) than it was resolving (1,236) per month. Without additional staffing or overtime for certain trades, extensive scheduling delays are likely to persist.
- **Real-Time Physical Need Assessments of Apartment and Building Conditions:** NYCHA could develop analytical tools and standard procedure enhancements that would create a real-time assessment of the physical conditions (and deterioration) of NYCHA buildings, particularly related to factors contributing to mold and leak occurrence. Such tools (combined with physical inspection processes through remediation activities already required) would provide NYCHA with a robust understanding of the degree of severity for internal plumbing and other building elements that could contribute to recurring mold and leak conditions. With this understanding, NYCHA could prioritize capital repair strategies to the most at-risk buildings. This would also help to inform the selection of EOP sites and other guidance for property management. In addition, such information could be used to advocate for capital funding through the development of a real-time Physical Needs Assessment based on individual building data and observations from each building across the portfolio. Integrating real-time data into work order prioritization will improve repair efficiency for urgent issues and inform prioritization plans for capital repairs.
- **Leak Standard Procedure:** The implementation of NYCHA's Leak Standard Procedure will mark a critical step in addressing persistent challenges related to complex leaks and their impact on residents. Historically, leak-related complaints have often remained unresolved due to insufficient investigations into root causes, resulting in recurrence and significant delays in remediation. In some cases, residents have been left with water damage caused by leaks originating from apartments above. Between the 2019 and 2024 reporting years, the OCC requested for over 2,050 complex leak inspections and more than 1,500 re-inspections. The Leak Standard Procedure aims to improve root cause identification, streamline coordinated remediation plans for leaks affecting multiple residents, and reduce recurring or unresolved issues. Additionally, staff training will be provided as part of the rollout to ensure effective implementation and adherence of the standard procedure.
- **Capital Funding:** NYCHA's aging infrastructure presents ongoing challenges that require substantial capital investment. For example, many leak-related complaints stem from deteriorating plumbing systems that require extensive repairs beyond standard work orders. Identifying and addressing capital needs through long-term infrastructure investments will be essential in reducing the number of mold and leak-related repairs required by residents.

## C. FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

The challenges and opportunities highlighted within the section above fall within four key pillars: creation and expansion of standard procedures, training, compliance, and performance management. This framework is critical to ensuring long-term sustainable improvements in resident living conditions and the efficiency of NYCHA's operational processes.

- **Creation and Expansion of Standard Procedures:** One key area requiring ongoing focus is the development and implementation of standardized procedures. While NYCHA has formalized a mold standard procedure through the successful Mold Busters program—which has reduced both mold recurrence and the number of mold-related work orders—significant gaps remain in protocols for leaks (as discussed above), vendor oversight, resident communication, and scheduling. Establishing standardized procedures in these areas could yield similar benefits as the mold standard procedure and also enable Compliance to hold staff accountable for adherence to these protocols. Implementing enhanced standard procedures for scheduling repairs and communicating with residents would streamline operations, improve response times, increase resident satisfaction, and provide a clear framework for accountability.
- **Training:** Training remains another key area for improvement, particularly in complex repairs, leak remediation, and resident communication. While NYCHA has expanded training programs for mold inspection and remediation, leak identification and resolution protocols require additional focus. OCC complaints highlight that misdiagnosed leaks and incomplete repairs often result in repeat work orders and prolonged issues, particularly in buildings with troubled plumbing lines that require significant upgrades. Standardized procedures for leak resolution, combined with targeted plumbing upgrades in these problematic buildings, could help address the root causes of recurring issues. Implementing these measures would not only reduce the volume of repeat work orders but also improve repair quality and minimize disruptions for residents. Additional training on resident de-escalation techniques and communication strategies would improve interactions with residents who experience long-standing repair delays or complex situations. Beyond technical training, specialized training in complex repair cases, emergency relocations, and resident communication strategies is essential for residents to receive clear, empathetic, and effective support.
  - To be effective, training should be comprehension-based, ensuring staff not only attend sessions but fully understand and apply the material. A hybrid training model that includes classroom or web-based instruction alongside structured field training will help prepare staff for real-world scenarios. Additionally, reinforcing compliance awareness for staff is important and helpful in maintaining accountability and improving overall service quality.
- **Compliance:** Ensuring adherence to operational mandates remains an ongoing challenge. The OCC's oversight has identified gaps in compliance, including vendor management and adherence to the Mold Busters standard procedure. Once new standard procedures are developed (such as Leak), Compliance will be better equipped to implement them effectively. Enhanced auditing mechanisms and performance reviews will further support efforts to address gaps in staff accountability and service quality.

- **Performance Management:** NYCHA has made major strides in performance management, particularly in repair tracking and oversight by management. Investments in real-time tracking systems, the Mold and Leak Scorecard, and the Neighborhood Model have led to more efficient work order processing and better transparency for residents. Continuing to refine performance tracking tools and further integrating OCC complaint data into NYCHA's monitoring systems would help identify patterns and prevent repeated service failures.

Enhancing the framework referenced above through improved standard procedures, training, compliance measures, and performance management will be essential in ensuring sustainable improvements. By prioritizing capital investments, staffing solutions, real-time apartment assessments, enhanced technology, and vendor oversight, NYCHA can continue making measurable progress in improving housing conditions for residents.

## V. Spreading Awareness of the OCC

As NYCHA continues to make progress on mold and leak-related initiatives, it is crucial to ensure residents are fully informed about the services the OCC offers. An observational study conducted by the OCC in 2022 revealed a significant gap in resident awareness regarding available services from the OCC, particularly related to leak conditions. 96% of residents surveyed had no awareness of the OCC. Resident engagement during the 2023 and 2024 reporting years suggests that this observation remains valid.

Residents often lack awareness of OCC services, with infrequent reminders leading them to overlook these resources until a mold or leak issue arises.

The OCC has also found residents are often confused about whether the OCC is a part of NYCHA, which can lead to possible skepticism and decreased engagement due to doubts about potential positive outcomes in light of their past experiences engaging with NYCHA directly. The OCC's independence is a key aspect of its communication with residents, fostering opportunities for open dialogue and trust-building. It is crucial for NYCHA to emphasize the OCC's independence to residents and affirm NYCHA's commitment to resolving all resident-reported complaints to the OCC.

The OCC has recommended using multiple communication channels, with frequent distribution, to ensure NYCHA residents are aware of the OCC services available to them.

### A. MULTI-CHANNEL OUTREACH STRATEGY

The OCC has employed a comprehensive, multi-channel outreach approach to inform residents about available services. Key components of this strategy include:

- **Direct Resident Engagement and Targeted Outreach:** Since July 2022, phone calls and emails have been utilized to reach residents directly through targeted outreach, particularly residents with previously reported issues, have aging open work orders without future scheduling dates, or there are data indicators a leak issue was not properly repaired. Through these efforts, nearly 3,500 resident-reported complaints have been processed.



- **Community Partnerships and Referrals:** Collaboration with tenant associations, legal service organizations, elected officials, and advocacy groups has expanded awareness and provided additional support for residents seeking resolution to mold and leak-related issues. Referrals account for over 20% of resident-reported complaints in the 2023 and 2024 reporting years, originating from sources such as the HUD Monitor, 3-1-1, tenant organizers, legal service providers, elected officials, news outlet and press coverage, schools, healthcare workers, housing court, and NYCHA's compliance department. For example, Monica Morales (from Pix11 News) has occasionally referred residents to the OCC instead of featuring their stories on the news, while NYLAG, a legal service provider, has sometimes directed residents to the OCC rather than guiding them to housing court.
- **Digital and Print Communications:** Flyers, social media updates, and website resources have ensured that residents can access information through multiple platforms. In 2024, the OCC introduced an enhanced digital flyer campaign to streamline information distribution and increase engagement.
  - The OCC recommends that NYCHA consider distributing the printed OCC flyer to all NYCHA households (e.g., included with a rent mailer) in 2025 since it has not been distributed *via* mail since the initial launch.
- **In-Person Outreach:** OCC and MRU representatives have participated in NYCHA tenant association meetings, community meetings, and housing fairs (e.g. Family Days) to engage residents and provide information on-site.

## B. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN OUTREACH

Between the 2019 to 2024 reporting years, OCC outreach efforts have evolved to align with changing resident needs and technological advancements. The integration of digital tools has allowed for more efficient communication, while community partnerships have strengthened trust and accessibility. Specific campaigns, such as the targeted leak cluster email initiative and the WO Verification project, have demonstrated the impact of proactive outreach in identifying residents in need of assistance. Moving forward, maintaining regular, multi-channel outreach will remain a priority to ensure all NYCHA residents are informed about OCC services and their right to seek help.

## VI. Looking Ahead

As the OCC continues to support NYCHA residents in addressing mold, excessive moisture, and leak-related concerns, the long-term objective is to reduce the need for direct OCC intervention by strengthening NYCHA's internal processes. By improving the effectiveness of referrals to NYCHA Neighborhood Planners, the MRU and Compliance, resident questions and concerns could be addressed earlier and more efficiently, minimizing the need for the OCC's intervention.

Moving forward, priorities include reinforcing collaboration between NYCHA management, MRU, and field staff to address resident-reported complaints at the development level whenever possible. Increasing transparency in repair tracking, strengthening resident communication, and improving



the resident's experiences with repairs (limiting missed appointments and scheduling delays) will help NYCHA resolve issues before OCC involvement is needed. Additionally, allocating sufficient resources toward resolving aging work orders in the backlog and verifying work is needed will create a more sustainable long-term approach, allowing greater focus on the timely completion of new repair requests.

The OCC remains committed to working with all stakeholders to build a more responsive and resident-focused repair process, ultimately working toward a future where NYCHA's internal processes operate in a way that allows residents to receive timely and reliable repairs without external oversight.

## Exhibit 1 – Resident-Reported Complaint Metrics at PACT Developments

This exhibit discusses PACT OCC metrics associated with PACT Section 8 housing where NYCHA leases the land and buildings to development partners (PACT Partners) responsible for renovations, comprehensive repairs, and property management. PACT Partners serve as the operator and on-site property manager.

As of the end of the 2024 reporting year, NYCHA's PACT portfolio consisted of 24,584 units of housing across 21 PACT Projects in all five boroughs. Since extending its services to PACT residents in December 2021 and formally launching in May 2022, the PACT OCC engages directly with each PACT Partner, in coordination with NYCHA, to resolve resident-reported complaints. NYCHA's Real Estate Development & Disposition (REDD) and Compliance departments are copied on all correspondence for awareness and monitoring.

The OCC's engagement with PACT property managers has resulted in improvements to resident-reported complaint tracking and response times, while also identifying concerns, recurring repair issues, and instances of premature work order closures. PACT Partners are generally highly responsive to the OCC, with the overall volume of newly reported complaints per PACT project remaining low, averaging just 9 per month across all PACT Partners. These complaints are typically addressed promptly and resolved to the satisfaction of the residents. To date, the Ombudsperson has not had to intervene in any PACT OCC resident-reported complaints.

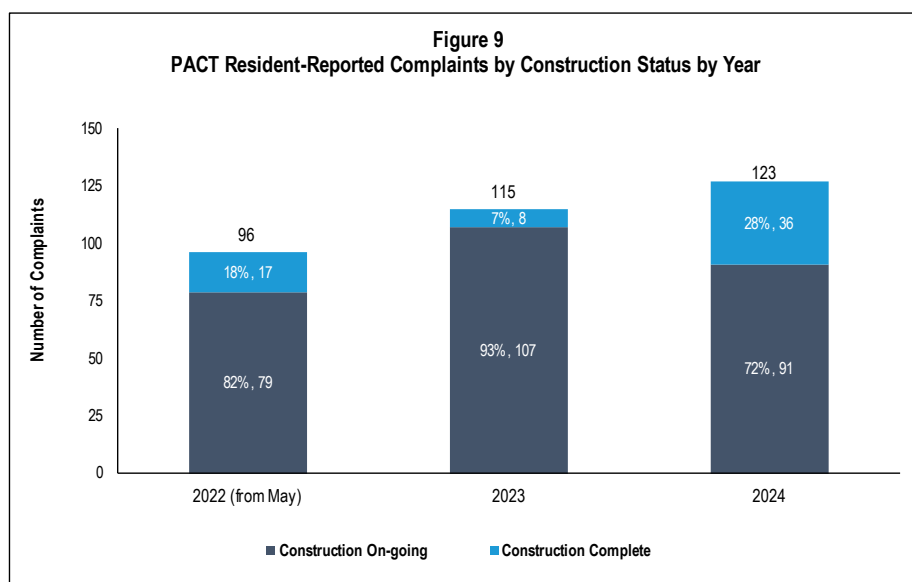
### A. PACT RESIDENT-REPORTED COMPLAINTS CREATED

There has been an on-going need for the OCC's assistance, with a total of 338 resident-reported complaints created since launch. Over the 2022 to 2024 reporting years, the number of PACT resident-reported complaints has increased as the number of NYCHA developments under PACT management has increased.<sup>18</sup> In the 2023 and 2024 reporting years, the PACT OCC received 235 resident-reported complaints, 183 of which (78%) were related to leaks and mold, while the remaining 22% consisted of PACT OCC service inquiries.

Over the 2022 to 2024 reporting years, the majority of PACT OCC resident-reported complaints originated from PACT developments where construction was still ongoing (**Figure 9** below). Ongoing construction, often involving comprehensive repairs, can heighten the need for assistance, leading to a higher volume of resident-reported complaints.

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<sup>18</sup> In 2023, three NYCHA consolidations transitioned to PACT, adding 3,587 apartments: Edenwald Houses in June, Union Avenue Consolidated in September, and Reid Park Rock in December. In 2024, five consolidations added 3,875 apartments: Sack Wern and West Brighton in June, Boston Road, Boston Secor, and Middleton & Frederick Samuel in September, and Manhattanville in December.



Notably, the two developments that completed construction in 2023, Highbridge Franklin and Twin Parks West, reported no resident-reported complaints in either the 2023 or 2024 reporting years. Additionally, four other PACT Projects reported an average of less than five OCC cases per year, demonstrating the effectiveness of PACT Property Managers to timely respond to resident complaints. Additionally, the majority of resident-reported complaints from PACT Projects that transitioned in 2023 were made within the first six months after transition, after which the volume of resident-reported complaint declined.<sup>19</sup>

Boulevard Together (with nearly 1,700 units where construction is on-going) continued to be the location with the most PACT OCC resident-reported complaints in 2023, accounting for approximately 41% of all PACT OCC resident-reported complaints created,<sup>20</sup> a five percentage-point decrease from the 2022 reporting year. Boulevard Together saw improvement in 2024, where there was a 33% decline in resident-reported complaints. Despite this decline, it continues to be the location with the highest volume of PACT OCC resident-reported complaints.<sup>21</sup>

In the 2024 reporting year, there was a noticeable increase in PACT OCC resident-reported complaints from Hope Gardens, Betances, and Ocean Bay, all managed by one property management company.<sup>22</sup> The OCC found several instances where this team did not properly communicate remediation plans with the OCC and failed to provide the root cause of the issue. In September 2024, NYCHA REDD successfully met with this team to discuss performance

<sup>19</sup> Audubon, Edenwald, Sack Wern and Reid Park Rock all transitioned in 2023 and between 53% and 71% of resident-reported complaints from each PACT Project were created within six months after transition to PACT.

<sup>20</sup> This excludes resident-reported complaints that were unresolved prior to its development's transition to PACT in Edenwald Houses (9), Union Avenue Consolidated (2), and Reid Park Rock (24).

<sup>21</sup> Boulevard Together converted to PACT in December 2021, and as of the end of the 2024 reporting year construction was still on-going.

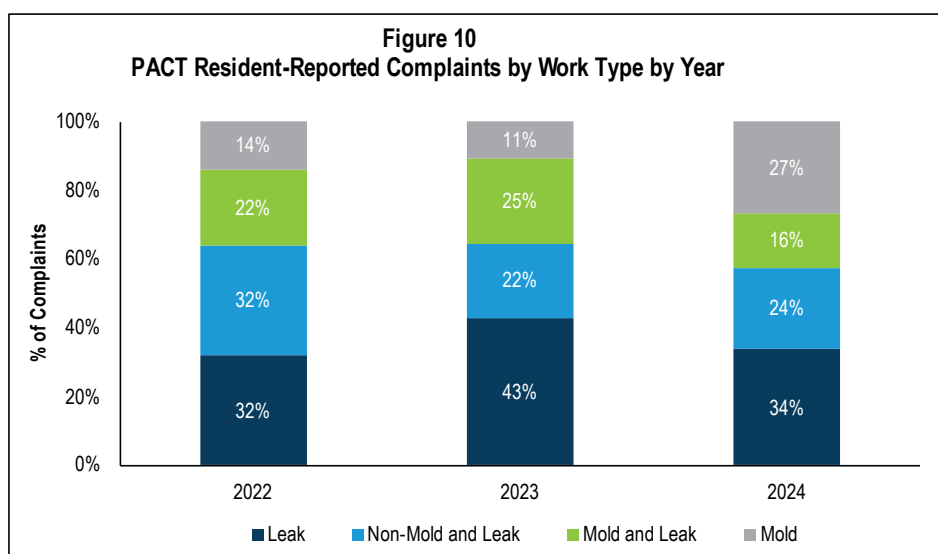
<sup>22</sup> Although the increases were noticeable, they were not significant given the overall small number of resident-reported PACT OCC complaints, with the largest increase being from just 1 to 10 complaints.

improvement and in the final three months of the 2024 reporting year, there was only one resident-reported complaint at Hope Gardens and none at either Betances or Ocean Bay.

The enhanced oversight of the OCC and NYCHA REDD played an important role in addressing residents' concerns and preventing issues from escalating further.

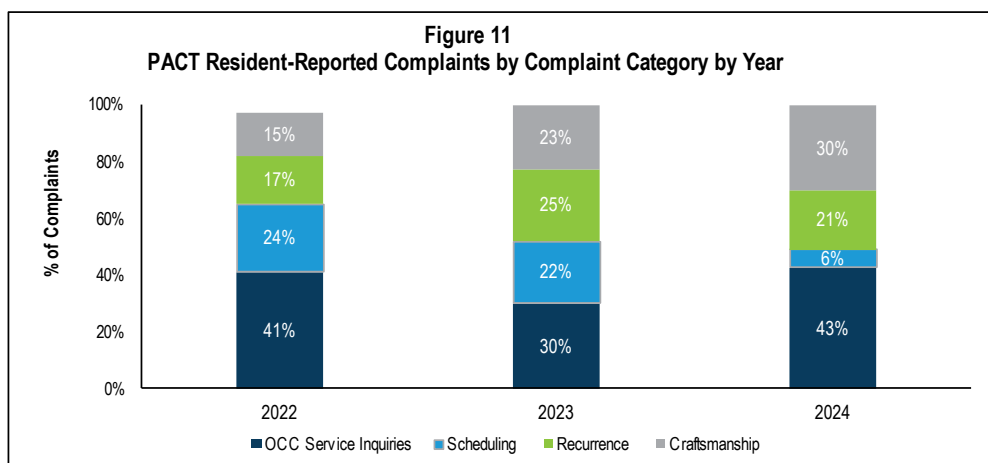
## B. RESIDENT-REPORTED COMPLAINTS BY WORK TYPE

The distribution of PACT OCC resident-reported complaints by work type has slightly fluctuated over the last three years (**Figure 10**). Leak-related issues remained the most frequent resident-reported complaint each year. Non-leak and mold resident-reported complaints decreased in 2023 but began rising again in mid-2024, driven by PACT project transitions and an increase in complaints from one property management company regarding issues outside the OCC's scope, such as heat outages, management concerns, and pests. The increase of Mold-related resident-reported complaints was concentrated at two PACT Partners where the PACT IMA was actively involved in conducting quality assurance inspections.



## C. RESIDENT-REPORTED COMPLAINTS BY COMPLAINT CATEGORY

**Figure 11** (below) shows the initial complaint category for resident-reported complaints. The distribution of complaint category reflects the residents' initial resident-reported complaint and may evolve over time (e.g., resident-reported complaint may start out as a scheduling resident-reported complaint but there could be components of recurrence or missed appointments, etc.).



The difference in the distribution of resident-reported complaints categories in the OCC between PACT and NYCHA residents is attributable to several factors. In PACT developments, the use of vendors brings in specialized professionals who are adept in their respective fields and have more efficient and effective scheduling processes. This often results in more kept appointments and timely work, as reflected in the OCC metrics with only 6% of 2024 PACT OCC resident-reported complaints regarding scheduling concerns. Additionally, PACT developments may benefit from more engaged and responsive on-site property management teams, which improves resident communication and satisfaction. As mentioned above, the large percent of resident-reported complaints that are service inquiries are due in large part to residents of recently transitioned to PACT and interested in learning about what services are available to them.

#### **D. AVERAGE DAYS TO RESOLVE RESIDENT-REPORTED COMPLAINTS**

Between the 2022 and 2024 reporting periods, the average time to resolve resident-reported complaints ranged from 12 to 41 days.<sup>23</sup> In the 2024 reporting period, the average resolution time for leak-related issues was 28 days, mold-related issues averaged 32 days, while combined leak and mold issues took an average of 41 days to resolve. Despite the year-over-year increases in average days to resolve, the average days to resolve PACT remains significantly less compared to NYCHA resident-reported complaints. As mentioned above, PACT Partners' onsite maintenance staff and use of third-party vendors has facilitated the timely resolution of the majority of resident-reported complaints.

For the majority of resident-reported complaints, scheduled dates for repairs were consistently provided promptly, tailored to align with the resident's availability, and often accommodated requests for evening or weekend appointments when requested.

<sup>23</sup> The OCC establishes a baseline resolution time of at least 7 days for resident-reported complaints. While some complaints may be resolved more quickly, expedited resolution is generally pursued only for high-priority cases involving severe conditions. Therefore, the 7-day timeframe should be regarded as the standard benchmark for resolving these complaints.

## E. INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE OCC

The OCC relies on a partnership with NYCHA and PACT Partners to ensure that PACT residents are aware of the OCC and understand how to submit a resident-reported complaint. However, resident surveys indicate that a significant portion of PACT residents remain unaware of the OCC.

NYCHA tracks and evaluates each PACT Partner's outreach efforts to promote OCC awareness and provides recommendations based on its findings. NYCHA's REDD team confirmed that each partner complied with outreach requirements and continued these efforts annually. While some partners actively work to spread awareness (e.g., including OCC flyers in rent mailers, posting flyers on project websites, and mentioning the OCC in monthly resident emails) others limit their efforts to the minimum required standard, such as posting a flyer in the building lobby. PACT Partners are encouraged to maintain ongoing communication about the OCC through various channels, including partner webpages, email notifications, monthly rent notices, social media posts, mold and leak inspections, repair visits, and resident meetings.

## F. PACT OCC IMPACT

While demand for the OCC's services at PACT developments remains relatively low, its impact and effectiveness have been considerable, ensuring residents with unresolved mold or leak-related issues receive the necessary assistance. The lower demand for OCC services among PACT residents, compared to NYCHA residents, can be attributed to several factors. Many PACT developments have completed construction, making them less prone to complex mold and leak issues, thereby reducing the need for OCC intervention because less repairs are needed. Additionally, these developments benefit from new on-site property managers who implement specialized organizational processes and scheduling tools, as well as dedicated on-site maintenance and resident engagement staff who can quickly address resident concerns. They also have access to resources that enable the use of third-party vendors for efficient handling of complex repairs.

Despite these improvements, concerns have been raised regarding private management companies assuming control of public housing developments serving low-income communities.<sup>24</sup> Some tenants, advocates, and legal aid providers have expressed concerns about repair timelines, the long process of completing capital improvements, and NYCHA's process for selecting developments for conversion. When such concerns arise, the OCC has been effective in addressing them, ensuring residents receive the assistance they need while preventing these issues from escalating further.

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<sup>24</sup> Turner, Tatyana. "Council Oversight Hearing Probes NYCHA's 'PACT' Plan." CityLimits.org. April 29, 2024.



## Exhibit 2 – Resident-Reported Complaint Examples

### A. BEFORE AND AFTER NYCHA RESIDENT EXAMPLES



**Before and After NYCHA Resident Examples (cont.)**





## B. EXAMPLE PHOTOS OF NYCHA RESIDENT-REPORTED CONDITIONS DURING INTAKE – BY BOROUGH

### Bronx NYCHA Residents





**Brooklyn NYCHA Residents**



**Manhattan NYCHA Residents**





**Queens-Staten Island NYCHA Residents**





## Appendix A - OCC Operation Overview

The OCC has been created to receive complaints from residents who have already contacted the NYCHA (such as the 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). The OCC will determine a priority of Urgent, High, or Normal based on the severity and health hazards of the reported conditions.
- 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.
- Perform strategic data collection and recommend operational enhancements.

Common reasons for residents to contact the OCC include:

- A resident scheduled a mold or leak-related inspection or repair 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-related 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-related 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-related 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-related repair but the problem came back again even though NYCHA tried to repair it (Recurrence complaint).

The OCC interacts with NYCHA's Office of Mold Assessment and Remediation ("OMAR") department. OMAR developed a specialized task force, the 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-related work order for more than 7 or 15 days (depending on the repair) prior to contacting the OCC, a NYCHA Resident

Community Associate (“RCA”) may be assigned to the resident to ensure proper levels of communication and case management, if needed.<sup>25</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;
- NYCHA to confirm the resident has the appropriate remediation plan and work orders to remediate the resident’s concern;
- NYCHA to reach out to the resident to discuss the results of the Mold Busters initial inspection and/or associated remediation plan;
- NYCHA to expedite scheduling of work orders, when possible, or when there is a health or safety issue; or
- Referral of the complaint to NYCHA’s Compliance or EH&S departments depending on the circumstances.

The OCC monitors the complaint activity to ensure that NYCHA is communicating with the resident and scheduling the necessary inspection(s) and repair work.

- Initial Engagement - 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.
- On-Going Data Monitoring - The OCC developed an automated ticketing monitoring system 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 and the Ombudsperson. 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 resident-reported complaints flagged per category. Each tab after the summary provides information regarding the total number of cases, 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 cases flagged for increased oversight

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<sup>25</sup> The RCA position was created by NYCHA’s MRU department 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.

and management are very minimal and if there are cases flagged in this report they are promptly reviewed and addressed.

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.
- Escalations - If the OCC does not receive an update of progress made or receives a follow-up call from a resident regarding a lack of responsiveness, the OCC can “escalate” the complaint by informing NYCHA (the RCA assigned to the complaint, the RCA supervisor, and/or MRU). The OCC can 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 is typically triggered by lack of responsiveness to the resident, lack of scheduling or progress by the development, or severe conditions. 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.

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. 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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