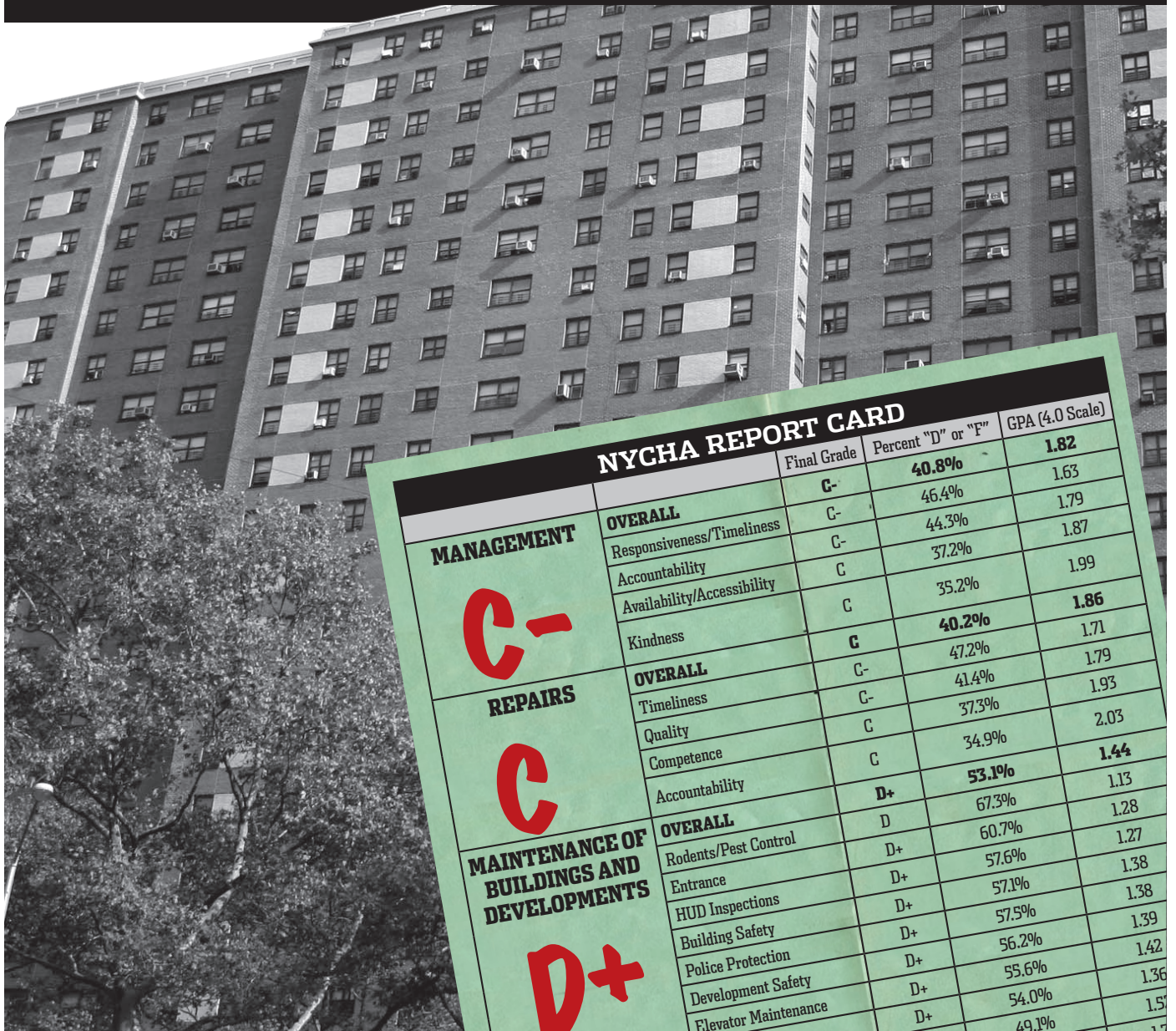


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A REPORT CARD FOR THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY (NYCHA)

Residents' Evaluation of NYCHA and Recommendations for Improvement - AUGUST 2011



NYCHA REPORT CARD				
	Final Grade	Percent "D" or "F"	GPA (4.0 Scale)	
MANAGEMENT C-	OVERALL	C-	40.8%	1.82
	Responsiveness/Timeliness	C-	46.4%	1.63
	Accountability	C-	44.3%	1.79
	Availability/Accessibility	C	37.2%	1.87
	Kindness	C	35.2%	1.99
REPAIRS C	OVERALL	C	40.2%	1.86
	Timeliness	C-	47.2%	1.71
	Quality	C-	41.4%	1.79
	Competence	C	37.3%	1.93
	Accountability	C	34.9%	2.03
MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS D+	OVERALL	D+	53.1%	1.44
	Rodents/Pest Control	D	67.3%	1.13
	Entrance	D+	60.7%	1.28
	HUD Inspections	D+	57.6%	1.27
	Building Safety	D+	57.1%	1.38
	Police Protection	D+	57.1%	1.38
	Development Safety	D+	57.5%	1.39
	Elevator Maintenance	D+	56.2%	1.39
	D+	55.6%	1.42	
	D+	54.0%	1.42	
	D+	49.1%	1.51	



NYCHA REPORT CARD: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From May 2010 through April 2011, members of five community organizations, CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, Community Voices Heard (CVH), Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE), Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES), and Mothers on the Move (MOM), with support from the Community Development Project (CDP) of the Urban Justice Center, collected 1,446 report cards that asked public housing residents to “grade” the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Residents graded NYCHA—using a traditional letter grading scale—on management, the centralized calling center, repairs, and maintenance of buildings and developments. Public housing residents were involved in every stage of the research and participated in the development of report card questions, research findings, and policy recommendations. NYCHA received failing grades in 10 of the 26 categories.

Report Card Research By the Numbers	
Report Cards Collected	1,446
Number of Developments Surveyed	71 (21% of all developments)
Average Percent of Households Surveyed in Targeted Developments	4.6%



Respondent Demographics Compared to Demographics of all NYCHA Residents			
		Percentage of Report Card Sample	Percentage of NYCHA Residents
Race/ Ethnicity	African-American/Black	41%	48%
	Asian	8%	3%
	Latino/Hispanic	46%	43%
	White/Other	5%	6%
Gender	Male	28%	23%
	Female	72%	77%

GRADES, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW TO READ THE REPORT CARD
Pass/Fail: Pass = A, B, or C, Fail= D or F.
Final Grade: Final letter grade, based on GPA calculations.
Percent “D” or “F”: Percent of respondents that gave NYCHA a “D” or “F” for a given category.
GPA: Grade Point Average, calculated using the traditional grading system (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0).
Overall: The calculated average of all the grades for a given category.

1. REPAIRS

NYCHA fails to provide timely, quality repairs in residents' apartments. Residents gave NYCHA poor grades for the repair system, highlighting problems with the timeliness and quality of repairs.


		Final Grade	Percent "D" or "F"	GPA (4.0 scale)
CENTRALIZED CALLING NUMBER 	OVERALL	C	33.9%	2.13
	Timeliness	D+	55.9%	1.42
	Competence	C	36.3%	2.04
	Accountability	C+	30.9%	2.19
	311	C+	31.0%	2.22
	Kindness	C+	26.8%	2.28
	Language Access	B	22.7%	2.64
REPAIRS 	OVERALL	C	40.2%	1.86
	Timeliness	C-	47.2%	1.71
	Quality	C-	41.4%	1.79
	Competence	C	37.3%	1.94
	Accountability	C	34.9%	2.02

To address residents' concerns about the timeliness and quality of repairs, NYCHA should:

- Advocate for Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to increase funding for repairs and maintenance to address the \$6 billion backlog of repair needs.
- Hire enough staff to have at least one maintenance worker per 100 units of housing.
- Hire an outside consultant to complete a comprehensive annual audit of the Centralized Calling Center (CCC) System to identify and address structural issues that impact the timeliness of repairs.
- Create and distribute materials in residents' primary language explaining how to call the CCC and how to follow up to ensure repairs are completed.
- Train CCC operators annually in basic repair techniques to ensure they are able to aid residents in determining the type of repair needed.
- Allocate money for the expansion of the pilot repair program at Rutgers Houses that consolidates and combines repair jobs.

2. MAINTENANCE

NYCHA fails to properly maintain public spaces. In particular, residents reported broken elevators, broken intercoms, unclean public spaces, and massive pest infestations.

		Final Grade	Percent "D" or "F"	GPA (4.0 scale)
MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS 	OVERALL	D+	57.1%	1.39
	Rodents/Pest Control	D	67.3%	1.13
	Entrance	D+	60.7%	1.28
	Elevator Maintenance	D+	55.6%	1.42
	Cleanliness	C-	44.9%	1.73


➤ **44% of report card respondents reported that their elevators break on a weekly basis.**

To address the concerns of residents and maintain and improve public spaces, NYCHA should:

- Increase grounds and maintenance staff and renovate common areas to create functional, efficient, and versatile spaces.
- Canvass every building annually to identify the extent of pest infestations and provide funds for extermination and prevention measures.
- Work with HUD to finalize and expand NYCHA’s participation in the Energy Performance Contracting Program. This program will retrofit all NYCHA buildings using green energy techniques; reduce NYCHA’s carbon footprint, utility bills, and repair and maintenance costs; and, most importantly, improve and invest in the current housing stock.

3. CRIMINALIZATION

NYCHA, in its collaboration with the NYPD, criminalizes instead of protecting public housing residents. Residents reported that they had been unjustly stopped in their developments and gave NYCHA and NYPD low grades for building and development safety.

		Final Grade	Percent "D" or "F"	GPA (4.0 scale)
	OVERALL	D+	56.9%	1.38
	Building Safety	D+	57.1%	1.38
	Police Protection	D+	57.5%	1.38
	Development Safety	D+	56.2%	1.39

➤ **One in three report card respondents or one of their family members have been stopped by police in their own building or development.**

To end the criminalization of residents and refocus on resident safety, NYCHA should:

- Immediately stop paying NYPD for police services, which in 2010 totaled \$73 million.
- Use funds saved by ceasing payments to NYPD to develop a pilot community policing program, including training for police officers on community policing practices and interacting with residents. Community policing programs have been proven to increase community safety through problem-solving and prevention, community engagement, organizational development, and community partnerships.⁴
- Direct police services to end vertical sweeps that unnecessarily target and harass residents in their own buildings.

4. JOBS

NYCHA fails to implement critical jobs programs, like the Section 3 program and the Resident Employment Program, despite the high need for employment opportunities.

- **22.1% of report card respondents lost their job in the past year;**
- **74.3% have NOT heard of job opportunities at NYCHA;**
- **30.5% are skilled in construction and interested in working for NYCHA and/or its contractors.**


To address the need for employment opportunities, NYCHA should:

- Require contractors to hire public housing residents for 30% of total hours worked on all capital projects (rather than 30% of new hires), per the Earnings and Livings Opportunities Act introduced by U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez.

- Allocate \$5 million to develop and implement a pilot green jobs training program, which would offer specialized training for residents to learn how to retrofit existing public housing buildings and property. This would help NYCHA meet its Section 3 and Resident Employment Program requirements.
- Establish a Transitional Jobs Program, congruent with the standards of the New York State program by the same name, to provide training and work experience for public housing residents with the intent of moving them to unsubsidized jobs. This could be financed in several ways: through a partnership with the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA); using a Community Development Block Grant; through Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) funds; through national grants put out by the U.S. Department of Labor; or with other HRA or OTDA funds.
- Create a Workforce Development Center to provide a central place for public housing residents to receive job training and career and work placement services, particularly Section 3 opportunities. A center built by the Philadelphia Housing Authority could serve as a model for this program.

5. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The lack of accountability measures makes it difficult for residents to hold NYCHA staff accountable for mismanagement. Residents reported unresponsive managers, coupled with a lack of accountability and insufficient oversight by HUD.

 MANAGEMENT		Final Grade	Percent "D" or "F"	GPA (4.0 scale)
	OVERALL		C-	40.8%
Responsiveness/Timeliness		C-	46.4%	1.63
Accountability		C-	44.3%	1.79
Availability/Accessibility		C	37.2%	1.87
Kindness		C	35.2%	1.99

➤ 39.7% of report card respondents have had NYCHA lose their paperwork (Of those, 30.3% have faced eviction).

To increase management accountability, transparency, and availability, NYCHA should:

- Improve access to management staff by:
 - Creating open/walk-in hours at management offices during evenings and weekends when residents are more likely to be home.
 - Hiring enough management staff to ensure there is at least one staff person for every 200 units.
 - Requiring management to proactively check-in with residents individually once a year.
 - Increasing management involvement with Residents Associations, with the consent of residents.
 - Train all management staff yearly in customer relations and proper housing management.
- Improve language access in all written communications, making forms, letters and policies available in residents’ primary languages. In particular, NYCHA should:
 - Ensure that at least one staff member in each development is fluent in the two most common languages spoken by residents in that development.
 - Expand access to language-line to provide services in all languages, and provide sufficient oversight and quality control to ensure Centralized Calling Center operators actually use language line.
- Hold quarterly public hearings, outside of the Annual Plan process, wherein residents can express their general concerns about NYCHA operations and provide suggestions for enhanced NYCHA performance.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Community Organizations:

CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities works to build grassroots community power across diverse poor and working-class Asian immigrant and refugee communities in NYC.
www.caaav.org



Community Voices Heard (CVH) organizes low-income people of color in New York City, Yonkers and the Mid-Hudson Valley. CVH focuses on welfare reform, workforce development, job creation, public and affordable housing, and community governance.
www.cvhaction.org



Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE) is a Brooklyn-based, member-led organization made up almost exclusively of women of color. FUREE organizes low-income families to build power and enact systemic change to promote racial, economic, and gender equality.
www.furee.org



Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) is a neighborhood housing and preservation organization that has served the Lower East Side of Manhattan since 1977 and is dedicated to tenants' rights, homelessness prevention, economic development, and community revitalization.
www.goles.org



Mothers on the Move (MOM) is based in the South Bronx and organizes low-income people, working on issues of economic justice, education, and environmental justice. Youth on the Move (YOM) works on education and safety issues.
www.mothersonthemove.org



Research Partner:

Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center (CDP) strengthens the impact of grassroots organizations in New York City's low-income and other excluded communities. CDP partners with community organizations to win legal cases, publish community-driven research reports, assist with the formation of new organizations and cooperatives, and provide technical and transactional assistance in support of their work towards social justice.
<http://cdp-ny.org/>

