



# MITCHELL-LAMA RESIDENTS COALITION

Vol.31  
Spring 2026

WEBSITE: [www.mitchell-lama.org](http://www.mitchell-lama.org)

## ***Harvard: Cost burdens for families soar since the start of the 21st century***

Since the start of the present century, from 2001 to 2024, the number of the country's households considered "cost burdened," that is, having to pay more than thirty percent of their income for rent, has far more than doubled, from fifteen million households to forty-seven million.

And that is only part of the story. Among all those families, those who are "severely" cost-burdened—paying more than fifty percent of their income on rent—has tripled, from around seven million to around twenty-one million.

These are some of the findings released in March by Harvard University in its latest [report](#) on the state of the nation's housing, perhaps the most exhaustive review of the issue in the United States.

To be sure, those most affected are families earning at the lowest levels. "Among those making \$30,000 to \$44,999, seventy-two percent were burdened in 2024, an increase of [almost fifteen] percentage points since 2001, including a 3.8 percentage point rise just since 2019."

But the burden keeps moving up the income scale. "Affordability challenges for renters earning \$45,000

to \$74,999 have grown even faster. Just over 49 percent were burdened in 2024," up nearly twenty-five percent since the start of the century and almost ten percent since the start of the Covid pandemic."

And it gets worse. "The cost-burden rate for renters earning \$75,000 or more was 14 percent in 2024, up 4.1 percentage points since 2019 and 8.8 points over two decades."

This is not to say that help is completely absent, given the existence of public and other forms of social housing as well as subsidies and rent vouchers. But even here the picture is not bright: "Funding for rental assistance has failed to keep pace with the rising need, leaving millions with severe housing challenges. Just over one in four income eligible renter households receive some form of assistance, and the majority of those who do are older adults, families with children, and people with a disability."

And finally, "Solutions and resources to end homelessness are also at risk, even as the number of people

*(Continued on page 5)*

## **State court invalidates 'source of income' law prohibiting discrimination**

A major civil rights law protecting tenants against discrimination based on their sources of income, such as rent vouchers, has been declared unconstitutional by the New York State Supreme Court on March 5.

The ruling could affect tens of thousands of households [nationwide](#) who now receive federal Section 8 and local vouchers. But voucher holders in public housing authority developments and tenants who obtain vouchers as a result of a separate contract with their landlords may be unaffected by the court's decision.

Also, the court's ruling does not affect holders of CityPHEPS vouchers or of the new New York State program.

In its unanimous [ruling](#), the five-member Court found that the statute, which allows the government to check owners' records, "violates landlords' Fourth Amendment rights to be free from unlawful searches," because such searches are done without the constitutional requirement of a warrant.

A notice to appeal the ruling was announced in April by NY State Attorney General Letitia James.

***One in four New Yorkers lives in poverty, Page 8***

**Strengthen MLRC. Join today (use form on page 2)**

## **MLRC**

**Annual Meet & Greet:  
April 25, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Zoom**

• • •

**General Membership Meeting:  
Saturday, June 20, 2026  
10 a.m. to Noon on Zoom**

**Members  
will be informed by regular mail and by email.  
Contact: [Info@mitchell-lama.org](mailto:Info@mitchell-lama.org)**

Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition  
PO Box 20414  
Park West Station  
New York, NY 10025

## RGB report: Owners' net operating income surpassed rents in stabilized apartments

The City's Rent Guidelines Board—the agency that determines the amount of increase that rent stabilized tenants will have to pay when their current leases end—released a study during its first hearing towards the end of March showing that overall, net income of landlords whose buildings contained at least one stabilized unit rose 6.2 percent, between 2023 and 2024, the last year for which data is fully available.

But during those same two years, the rent owners collected rose only 4.8 percent, which means that their income surpassed the rents that tenants had to pay.

Both figures reflect "unadjusted" data, or dollars before inflation. But since the inflation index used applies equally across the board, the data still shows that owners collected more from rent than they spent on operating costs.

Not all owners fared equally; net income was not uniform across all boroughs. In Staten Island it was 15.1 percent, whereas in "core Manhattan" it rose ten percent. And in the Bronx, it fell, but by only 0.1 percent, again in unadjusted figures.

Owners' largest expense in stabilized buildings was taxation.

### Study reviewed 805,000 units

The study used a sample of almost 17,800 buildings with stabilized apartments across all boroughs. The number of apartments reviewed totaled more than 805,000.

The 43-page study is chock full of

statistics, some of which are eye-opening. For example, in the nearly quarter century between 1990 and 2023, landlords' net operating income, *after* adjusting for inflation, grew 48 percent—well above adjusted operating costs of 30.6 percent.

### Tenants and landlords argue over findings

At the hearing, groups representing tenants and landlords clashed on some of the findings.

As reported in the weekly [AMNY](#), representatives of the Community Service Society argued that stabilized rents are far too high for many needy tenants, noting that "two-thirds of low-income rent-stabilized tenants cannot make ends meet or are barely getting by, and 55 percent said they could not cover a \$400 unexpected expense."

On the other side, the president of the Small Property Owners of New York argued that Net Operating Income "is a flawed metric that presents a grossly inaccurate representation of the financial realities of small property owners."

"She added that such a metric "doesn't factor in mortgage debt, costly apartment improvements, and major capital expenses."

And the president of the Real Estate Board of New York argued that the report ignores "declining operating income, more housing violations, and lower assessments among buildings with large percentages of rent-regulated units."

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MLRC

#### Annual Meet & Greet

April 25, 2026

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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#### General Membership Meeting

Saturday, June 20, 2026

10 a.m. to Noon

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Both meetings will be held on Zoom

Members will be informed by regular mail and by email.  
Contact: [Info@mitchell-lama.org](mailto:Info@mitchell-lama.org)

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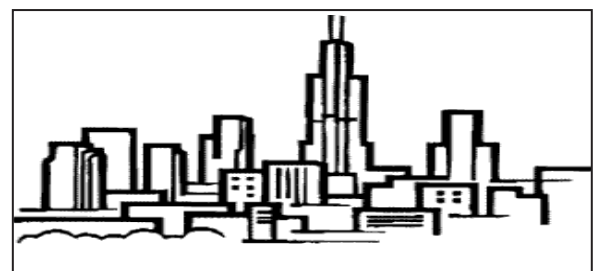
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NOTE: Checks are deposited once a month.

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## Revised review process spurs plan for new affordable development in the Bronx

A sharply curtailed public and government review process for new housing development will be put to the test in the Bronx, where the Mamdani Administration is supporting a plan to build an 84-unit, one hundred percent affordable building on a city-owned empty lot at 351 Powers Ave.

When the new review process is completed, the development, known as Powerhouse Apartments, at 351 Powers Ave, will allocate thirty units to formerly homeless residents. Rents should range between \$1,200 and \$1,600, depending on number of bedrooms.

Last November, voters ap-



351 Powers Ave.  
NYC HPD

proved a resolution to sharply curtail the review process, which had included some two hundred days of hearings by the local community board, the City Council, the City Planning Commission and the borough president. The new review process should take only around fifty days.

### 'Member Deference' vanishes

Also, prior to the resolution, if a local City Council member disapproved of a proposed development, the entire Council would vote it down, under a system known as "member deference."

That practice is now gone.

Among many tenants, including those who actively support the construction of more affordable units, the resolution presented a dilemma: While the new process could hasten the development of affordable housing, which most tenants support, it could also pave the

way for new luxury towers in a community, with its inevitable disruption and displacement, so long as it contained a mere handful of affordable units.

That fear is far from theoretical: in Harlem, for example, a proposed free-market development known as One45 was consistently opposed over the years by the then-Councilmember for its paucity of below-market-rent units. Her opposition pushed the owner to steadily increase the affordability proportion, until a new Councilmember finally approved the much-improved offer.

### Proposed tower for IPN

Nor was that the only example. In downtown Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood, Vornado, one of the city's largest and most powerful real estate trusts, has floated a plan to construct a 90-story (900 foot!) luxury tower in the midst of a bustling mixed-income, mixed-rental development known as Independent Plaza North, or IPN, a former Mitchell-Lama. Construction would entail years of massive disruption in a vibrant neighborhood.

At a public hearing on the plan two years ago, Vornado representatives mentioned the possibility of including some affordable units, but offered no specific number.

Opposition among the attendees, including low- and middle-income tenants from IPN and surrounding units, as well as local homeowners, was intense.

The area's Councilmember, Christopher Marte, has also opposed the proposal. Under the new procedure, his opposition will no longer carry the weight it formerly had.

## New HPD chief notes City's \$1.1 billion efforts on preserving Mitchell-Lama projects

At a hearing held by the City Council's Committee on Housing and Building held in late March, Dina Levy, the newly appointed head of the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, noted that "Over the past 10 years we have invested \$1.1 Billion to preserve our Mitchell Lama housing, and we are currently working with 15 Mitchell Lama projects to provide financial restructuring and major capital improvements.

"We also know there is more to do here, and we are actively looking at ways to increase our preservation efforts for our 92 Mitchell Lama projects."

She added that, among other items, "In calendar year 2025, HPD financed or supported the creation and preservation of almost 30,000 affordable homes, including more than 13,000 newly constructed units through our capital and tax incentive programs.

## Budget realities force new Mayor to backtrack on rent voucher growth

Faced with a \$7 billion budget deficit, Mayor Zohran Mamdani was forced to back down on his campaign promise of expanding access to the City's rent voucher program, known as CityPHEPS [Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Pre-



CityPHEPS logo

vention Supplement], to struggling tenants whose income is slightly higher than the current maximum, and to tenants facing eviction.

By law, the Mayor is required to balance the budget, that is, insure that expenditures do not exceed revenues.

At present, the program aids around sixty thousand households, comprising some 140,000 people.

Mamdani's campaign pledge to expand the program was made in the face of a severe affordable housing shortage, which the *New York Times*, among with many others, called "desperate."

But once he assumed office, the new mayor in effect acknowledged that his hands were tied.

### Anger and support

Predictably, his back-tracking on expanding the program has generated dismay and anger among tenant groups and other progressives, and support among conservative organizations.

For example, WIN [Women in Need], the largest shelter program in the city, argued that "When accounting for the extremely high rates of shelter return, we find that shelter actually costs 35% more and moving families into permanent housing with CityFHEPS could save the City as much as \$635 million in shelter costs over 5 years."

An opposite argument was presented by the conservative [Citizens Budget Commission](#), which argued earlier that "even though vouchers may offer some initial savings compared to the cost of shelter or one-time rental assistance, the cumulative effect is recurring costs that very quickly overtake any upfront savings realized from shortening or avoiding shelter stays."

At a City Hall rally on March 17 condemning Mamdani's decision, Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez said that "25,000 [evicted families] could have stayed in their homes if they had access to CityFHEPS," as reported by [City and State](#).

## Serious health conditions & financial issues found at 4 M-L developments; MLRC Co-chair speaks at hearing

**H**azardous physical conditions and questionable financial transactions were discovered at four Mitchell Lama developments by State Comptroller **Thomas P. Napoli** during an [investigation](#) in January.

Three of them, reported together, were Clinton Towers in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood, Tivoli Towers in Brooklyn's Crown Heights, and Evergreen Gardens in the Southwest Bronx.

The fourth was Arlington Terrace apartments in Staten Island's Mariners Harbor area.

Among the key findings in the first three investigations were "facade damage, non-working self-closing/fire doors; units with mold, water damage, and peeling paint; and a commercial tenant (day care) with mouse droppings in classrooms," according to a [report](#) issued by the office.

In the Staten Island case, the report noted that "For years, an estimated \$47 million worth of health and safety repairs at a Staten Island apartment complex have been identified by officials but never resolved," as reported by [SILive](#).

### MLRC Co-Chair Jackie Peters sees 'blueprint' for change

At a Comptroller's press conference on March 9 discussing the findings, MLRC Co-Chair **Jackie Peters** noted that "The Mitchell-Lama community is grateful for the many audits of Mitchell-Lama rentals and co-ops that have been completed by State Comptroller DiNapoli. [The] audits included developments under NYC supervising agency HPD and the State supervising agency HCR. These audits enumerate the many problems, and most importantly include suggested remedies. This gives me hope. A blueprint has been provided, proof of dysfunction is clear. Let's make the needed changes."

### Failure to provide a safe environment

The report blamed management at each development for failing "to provide a safe and clean living environment for their residents and commercial tenants."

Among the hazardous conditions in all three complexes were "façade damage; non-working self-closing/fire doors; units with mold, water damage, peeling paint; and a commercial tenant (day care) with mouse droppings in classrooms."

In addition, the managers used "funds for activities that were not directly related to the developments' operations."

Those funds totaled more than \$325,000 for such things as non-mandated bonus payments, holiday events, tips, expenses for which there were no invoices or canceled checks, and at least another \$329,000+ that the managing agents "were unable to collect . . . in unrealized rental income from units that remained vacant for more than 120 days at Clinton and Tivoli Towers."

### Evergreen manager responds

In a statement to the [Bronx Times](#), a spokesperson for Nelson Management, the manager of Evergreen Gardens, said that it took over management of the complex in 2022 "after many years of serious neglect by the prior owners" and that the audit no longer reflects conditions today."

"We have since invested more than \$7.5 million in capital improvements, including a new roof, new boiler, extensive facade and brick work, brand new lobbies, installed numerous security cameras, and created new parking lots to make them secure against theft," the spokesperson said.

### Bklyn's 5 Wachtower bldgs may become residential

**A** proposal by the CIM Group, a developer with projects in several states, would transform the five architecturally distinct Wachtower buildings in Brooklyn into a mixed income apartment complex containing 661 apartments, a quarter of which would be affordable.

Although a public hearing on the proposal was held in March at the City Planning Commission, specific rents were not discussed, according to reports in [Spectrum News](#) and [Gothamist](#).

## Trump's budget plan scales back HUD cuts, but at expense of environment and racial equity rules

**I**n a move that could pit advocates of affordable housing against advocates of environmental protection and racial equality, the Trump Administration has modified its earlier demand for a 44 percent cut in the budget of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in its latest fiscal plan; it is now seeking only a 13 percent cut.

But to compensate for the cutbacks the proposed plan would scrap HUD "programs that promote racial equity and environmental protection," as reported by [Bloomberg News](#).

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## MLRC Developments

### Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition

**Individual Membership: \$15 per year**  
**Development Membership: 25 cents per apt**  
**(\$30 minimum; \$125 maximum)**

*Donations above membership dues are welcome*

Adee Towers	Michelangelo Apartments
Albany Executiver House Apartments	109th St. Senior Citizens Plaza
Amalgamated Warbasse	158th St & Riverside Dr. Housing
Arverne Apartments	Parkside Development
Bethune Towers	Phipps Plaza East
Castleton Park	Pratt Towers
Central Park Gardens	Promenade Apartments
Clayton Apartments	RNA House
Coalition to save Affordable Housing of Co-op City	Riverbend Housing
Concerned Tenants of Sea Park East, Inc.	River Terrace
Concourse Village	River View Towers
Dennis Lane Apartments	Rosedale Gardens Co-op
1199 Housing	Ryerson Towers
Esplanade Gardens	Sam Burt Houses
Executive House Apts	Starrett City Tenants Assn
Franklin Plaza	St. James Towers
Independence House	St. Martins Towers
Tenants Assn	Strykers Bay Co-op
Independence Plaza North	Tivoli Towers
Inwood Towers	Tower West
Jefferson Towers	Trinity House
Knickerbocker Plaza	Village East Towers
Linden Plaza	Village View
Lindsay Park	Washington Park SE Apts
Lindville Housing	Washington Square SE Apts
Lincoln Amsterdam House	Westgate Tenants Assn
Manhattan Plaza	Westgate
Marcus Garvey Village	Westview Apartments
Masaryk Towers Tenants Assn	West View Neighbors Assn
Meadow Manor	West Village Houses

## Affordable housing groups lose in veto of 'Opportunity to Purchase' bill

Community organizations that had been hoping to get first dibs on distressed housing placed on the market suffered a defeat earlier this year, as the City Council refused to override a veto of a bill to that effect by outgoing Mayor Eric Adams.

The groups had been hoping to access a whole new source of potential affordable housing.

Under the bill, owners looking to sell their housing would have had to "provide qualified entities [i.e., the non-profits] a right of first offer, including a 45-day time period within which the qualified entity must express interest, within an additional 90 days to submit an offer," as explained by the law firm of [Kucker Marino et. al.](#)

The veto of the bill—Community Opportunity to Purchase Act—was one of the only vetoes by Adams that the Council declined to override.

That decision may have been made following an opinion by Mayor

Zohran Mamdani's own Law Department.

As reported by [Politico](#), members of the Department were "concerned the COPA legislation could unlawfully restrict a property owner's commercial speech rights to engage with the market."

In addition, Politico said, the city attorneys "raised the possibility that the bill could be legally challenged due to a constitutional prohibition against placing certain restrictions on private property usage."

The new mayor, while disappointed in the Council's decision not to override, may see the bill resurface during his term.

As noted by the [Commercial Real Estate Finance Council](#), "While the bill did not muster a supermajority, the mayoral support and comfortable margin make it more likely some version of COPA will be reintroduced and acted on this year."

## State rent voucher program finally becomes reality

While New York City has been forced to cancel its ambitious effort to broaden its rental voucher program, known as CityPHEPS [see story page 3], New York State has finally succeeded in establishing its own limited program offering vouchers to needy tenants statewide.

With \$50 million to allocate, the state has authorized the City's department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to start accepting applications.

After using ten percent of the funds for program administration, the City will provide each tenant with roughly \$2,500 a month, according to a report in [City Limits](#). Enough money is available to fund between 900 and 1100 tenants, who will pay only thirty percent of their income for rent, to remain in their apartments. As is the case with all vouchers, the remainder of their rents will be funded by the state government.

Unless renewed, the state program is funded through the next four years.

Notwithstanding the federal government crackdown on undocumented

immigrants (and often, even immigrants with legitimate documentation), the new state vouchers will not discriminate on citizen status.

Because the program will only support around 1100 tenants, some tenant advocates are already calling for its expansion.

## Harvard: Cost burdens for families soar since the start of the 21st century

(Continued from page 1)

staying in shelters and living in places not suitable for human habitation hit record highs in 2024. A July 2025 federal executive order pivots from Housing First—an approach proven to increase housing stability by prioritizing housing before offering voluntary supportive services—programs that criminalize homelessness and require treatment as a condition for housing."

The report does show that some state efforts to deal with the problem of unaffordability are successful, but concludes that "they simply cannot fill all gaps left by the federal withdrawal."

## Borough Pres and HPD release annual list of city's 'worst landlords'

Jumanne D. Williams, the Borough President of Manhattan, and Dina Levy, the newly appointed Commissioner of the City's department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), in January made public the city's list of the "100 worst landlords" as defined by those who "consistently flout City laws intended to protect the rights and safety of tenants."

The annual list dates back several decades and was first compiled by the Village Voice.

First on the list is **Margaret Brunn**, who recently agreed to a two million dollar settlement "to address tenant harassment and hazardous conditions across 14 buildings in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens," as noted in a [statement](#) issued by the Mayor's Office in January.

The statement continued that "In addition to the civil penalties, the settlement requires [A&E Real Estate properties, the landlords' firm] to correct more than 4,000 building condition violations across [their] buildings and imposes injunctions prohibiting tenant harassment moving forward."

Here are the top ten on the list. The other 90 can be found, along with a list of open violations for each, at [www.landlord-watchlist.com](http://www.landlord-watchlist.com)

1. **Margaret Brunn**
2. **Donald Hastings**
3. **Barry Singer**
4. **Joseph Cafiero**
5. **Peter Fine**
6. **Robyn Lucas**
7. **Yonatan Bahumi**
8. **Claudette Henry**
9. **Joseph Pistilli**
10. **David Tennenbaum**

Note: A report in [Gothamist](#) noted that David Tennenbaum, number ten on the list, is an executive of companies owned by Summit Properties, which is planning to purchase more than 5100 rent-stabilized apartments. A subsidiary of Summit has "thousands of open code violations in their housing portfolios, city and state officials said."

In a related development, a federal judge ruled in January that the Pinnacle Group and Summit "could complete a \$451 million purchase of thousands of apartments from a landlord that has filed for bankruptcy, an early setback for Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who had vowed on his first day in office to protect the tenants," as reported by the [New York Times](#).

## Adams fails to thwart Mamdani's goal of a zero increase in stabilized rents

Former Mayor Eric Adams' effort to prevent the new Mayor, Zohran Mamdani, from blocking any increase in stabilized rents will likely not succeed, as Mamdani was able to secure a majority of appointees to the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB), the body charged with authorizing new one- and two-year rents annually.

His ability to do so was made possible by the fortuitous resignation of Alex Armlovich, a landlord member who was appointed by Adams.

Under Adams' administration, the RGB had raised rents by three percent on new one-year leases and four-and-a-half percent on new two-year leases.

That increase was on top of years of a annual hikes, with the exception of a one time freeze under former Mayor Bill de Blasio.

### Tenants groaned, landlords cheered

Following Adams' increase, tenant groups were, typically, enraged, as the city's affordability crisis intensifies, especially regarding housing. And just as typically, landlord organizations cheered, as owners in general claimed their rental income was insufficient to keep up with expenses and still make a profit.

Early in his tenure, Adams, who owns some properties, had boasted "I am Real Estate."

The RGB consists of two tenant

representatives, two landlord representatives, and five "public" or, theoretically, non-partisan members.

The new Chair of the RGB will be **Chantella Mitchell**, a program director at the New York Community Trust, and former Housing and Economic Development Taskforce at the Office of Management and Budget. She had also worked at the City's Housing Preservation and Development agency.

The three new public members are **Sina Sanai**, **Lauren Melodia**, and **Brandon Mancilla**.

Sanai is a data analyst at the Jain Family Institute; Melodia is Director of Economic and Fiscal Policy at the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School; Mancilla is a director of the United Auto Workers (UAW), overseeing collective bargaining and union operations in New York and several other states.

The new owner member is **Maksim Wynn**, Director of Development at Procida Development Group, where he manages the creation of affordable and transitional housing in New York City.

The new tenant member is **Adán Soltren**, who was reappointed by the Mayor. He is a Supervising Attorney in the Housing Justice Unit Group Advocacy practice at the Legal Aid Society.

More information on the new appointees is available at [The Mayor's Office](#).

## Temporary halt to demolition of Elliott-Chelsea and Fulton Houses

The controversial plan to demolish two public housing projects in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood and replace them with more social and private housing was put on a temporary hold in February through a court order.

An appeals court in Manhattan approved a petition by a group of tenants in Elliott-Chelsea and Fulton Houses who oppose the plan, arguing that the usual public review process was not properly conducted.

Under the plan, affected tenants will be placed in temporary homes during the demolition, and will be allowed to return to new apartments upon completion.

When first proposed a few years ago, most tenants had expressed their opposition. But subsequently many reversed course, arguing that the deterioration was so bad that repairs were often useless.

Still, some tenants continue to argue that total demolition would invariably result in disruption and displacement.

According to [NYCHA](#), which will partner with private developers, "Every public housing unit will be replaced, and all authorized residents will have a right to a new apartment. All 2,056 existing NYCHA apartments at Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea will be replaced with new, permanently affordable homes."

When completed, the development "will create approximately 3,500 new homes, including approximately 1,000 new, permanently affordable apartments," NYCHA said.

Nevertheless, many tenants, especially the elderly, fear that they will not live long enough to resettle into their permanent homes. For more about why they are fearful, see [The City](#).

## Affordable housing found no barrier to evictions

For many city tenants fortunate enough to live in various types of affordable housing, the rent is still "too damn high."

And their incomes are still too damn low.

Which, inevitably, results in a growing number of eviction notices, among the very things that affordable housing was meant to eliminate.

A February [report](#) issued by the New York Housing Conference, a non-profit advocacy group, found that in 2024, more than a third of the city's eviction filings—43,000 out of a total of 120,000—were in some sort of subsidized or otherwise affordable developments.

Among the consequences is that "More New Yorkers may be losing affordable housing than attaining it through the lottery in a year."

### Affordable buildings in distress

Another consequence is that the inability to pay rent is causing financial distress for the affordable buildings; more than half of them "do not have enough income to cover expenses. . . ."

And the lengthy eviction process is no help; cases in housing court often take more than a year to resolve.

Also, in rent stabilized units, rents almost always increase annually or every two years, following the decisions of the city's Rent Guidelines Board. Lately only tenants who are seniors or disabled are exempted.

The median amount sought in eviction cases ranges from \$4,194 to \$5,477, depending on borough.

### New 'court initiative' sought

Among the recommendations offered by the New York Housing Conference is the establishment of a new "Affordable Housing Stability Court Initiative."

That would include, among other things, "Dedicated case management staff to work with tenants to resolve issue."

These staffers, known as Navigators, would "work directly with tenants to resolve cases by assisting with applications for emergency assistance, addressing existing issues and helping them develop and execute a plan to pay the arrears and afford the rent moving forward. This includes helping with related issues that can impact housing stability (e.g., financial planning, health, mental health, childcare, etc.)"

# Affordable Housing News from Around the Nation

## National: 200,000 residents of public housing may have to prove again that they are US citizens

In a follow-up to last year's allegation that some 6,000 residents of HUD-assisted housing may be "possibly ineligible tenants" because of non-US citizenship, a HUD official [warned](#) managers that they now have to use a new Income Verification system "to verify the citizenship and immigration status of all individuals prior to admission to the Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs." The policy may require that some 200,000 residents who have already proven their citizenship status may have to go through the process all over again.

## National: HUD seeks to require employment and time limits for voucher holders

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development is seeking to modify its rental voucher programs to require recipients meet strict work standards and time limitations. If implemented, the changes would likely threaten to deprive millions of tenants of their homes.

Under the proposal, local housing authorities and private owners who accept Section 8 and other vouchers could demand the limits and work requirements, which would apply to all tenants except the elderly and disabled. Among the stated purposes of the [proposal](#) is to adhere to the 1937 public housing act's goal of offering local agencies "the maximum amount of flexibility in program administration." Another goal is to foster "upward mobility" of the tenant recipients, an argument long promoted by the ultra-conservative [Heritage Institute](#).

## National: Private home prices also rise in many parts of the USA

From the beginning of 2024, "the national median home price has risen by 8 percent from \$333,438 to \$360,000," according to a newly released study by [Attom](#), a real estate analytics firm.

In a report released in late March, the firm noted that "Meanwhile, average weekly wages have increased by 6.4 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest data, which runs through the third quarter of 2025."

## Los Angeles: Homeless aid program said to displace more than it helps

A program geared towards providing social services to the homeless is displacing far more people than it helps. As reported in [Planet Citizen](#), a spokesperson for Smart Cities Drive said a study found that "Among 51 unhoused residents surveyed . . . , 37% estimated they'd been forced to relocate more than five times in the past 30 days, and five had been offered access to shelter, according to the report. Only one respondent said shelter was obtained, in the form of a hotel voucher."

## Albuquerque: Conversion of old abandoned structures into housing

In Albuquerque and many other western cities, formerly bustling areas have long deteriorated into "ghost towns," with crumbling buildings which had once served as houses, hotels and motels. But a recent effort by the city is transforming some of the vacant buildings into new affordable housing.

As reported in [High Country News](#), the city last year "created a program that offered developers \$4 million to turn hotels and other existing buildings into apartments. . . . Today, Adobe Manor has 16 renovated units for families and individual renters. Adobe Manor offers Section 8 affordable housing." Some of the units are rented to Catholic Charities, which offers them to immigrants and other low income residents.

## Boise, ID: New zoning changes generate increase in permits for Accessory Dwelling Units

A new zoning code making it easier for homeowners to apply for permits allowing them to create assisted housing units on their properties, such as room additions, garages, etc., has resulted in a notable increase in permit applications.

According to the [Sightline Institute](#), three zoning changes are essential to generate more of these affordable housing entities. They are (1) Removing bans on renters (such as banning one's own house as a rental facility); (2) Removing off-street parking requirements; (3) generating a "shared vision" for "elected officials, planning and permitting staff, and most Boise citizens on a shared vision for infill development."

## Local Housing Briefs

### Assembly proposes funds for Mitchell-Lama and vouchers

Following are the [budget proposals](#) issued by the NYS Assembly in March:

- Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP): \$250 million
- Mitchell-Lama and NYCHA maintenance: \$100 million
- Mitchell-Lama capital: \$750 million
- NYCHA capital: \$750 million
- Public Housing Authorities outside of NYC: \$225 million
- Down payment assistance: \$50 million

### All-affordable tower planned near South Street Seaport

A 24-story tower containing 120 below-market-rate rentals should rise within the next three years on Cliff Street, located near the South Street Seaport. Some of the units will be set aside for residents who were formerly homeless. The sole developer is the Settlement Housing Fund, which, by virtue of not having to partner with a private firm, can guarantee that all units will remain affordable. Estimated cost of the construction is \$70 million, as reported by [The Tribeca Trib](#).

### Troubled Wall Street tower to be converted to residential

A 24-story Wall Street financial tower long facing financial difficulties will be turned into a 30-story mostly luxury housing complex comprising 1,568 units, of which around a quarter will be reserved as affordable. As reported by [Bisnow](#), the developers have taken out a \$867 million loan for "the largest office-to-residential financing package for a single-building conversion in U.S. history."

### Brownstones owner sued for renting stabilized units on a short-term basis

Mark David Militana, an owner of brownstones on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, was sued by the City in February for illegally leasing rent-stabilized apartments on a short-term basis, rather than offering them for regular tenant occupants. As reported by the [New York Times](#), "By illegally renting units by the night, Mr. Militana has netted \$550,000 since 2023, according to the lawsuit."

### Manhattan rents soar again

The median monthly rent for a Manhattan apartment has risen to a new high of \$5000 per month, while the vacancy rate is two percent, [Corcoran](#) reports.

## Report: Poverty in NYC soars over past decade

More New Yorkers were struggling with poverty in 2024 than at any other point in the past ten years.

That translates to 2.2 million people overall, or one in four of the city's dwellers, who can barely make ends meet. Among them are 1.7 million adults (about one in four) and 450,000 children (more than one in four).

This is the chief finding of the latest annual [report](#) of the Robinhood Foundation's Poverty Tracker.

In a [release](#) accompanying the report, the Foundation noted that "As inflation slowed in 2024 and the economic consequences of the pandemic continued to recede, one might have expected the city's poverty rates to fall between 2023 and 2024, possibly returning to pre-pandemic levels. Unfortunately . . . no such decline occurred."

### 'One Big Beautiful Bill'

Noting that President Trump's Budget Reconciliation Act (known as the One Big Beautiful Bill) which imposed significant changes to taxes and other policies, the authors predict that "These changes are expected to substantially shrink two of the nation's longest-standing and largest safety net programs — the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid — which support individuals

and families struggling to afford food and medical care, even when working full time."

This withdrawal of the federal safety net, however, provides an opening for state and local governments "to implement policies they know can support individuals across New York City and State."

### State and local options

The release continues: "At the state level, this includes increasing funding for emergency food providers statewide and supplementing SNAP benefits with state funds, as well as continuing to expand the Empire State Child Tax Credit and the Housing Access Voucher Program, which helps households avoid homelessness."

"To combat cuts to Medicaid, New York State should consider funding health insurance coverage for the nearly half a million New Yorkers who are at risk of losing coverage under the Essential Plan as a result of OBBBA and invest in Community Health Centers, which provide crucial medical services to New Yorkers statewide.

"At the local level, Mayor Mamdani's ambitious plans to address the affordability challenges that have long plagued New York city can also help mitigate the harms caused by federal cuts."

## Residents of Brooklyn's Bensonhurst area protest construction of planned homeless center

A long-proposed shelter for homeless men in Brooklyn was the site of a huge protest in March, as hundreds of residents took to the streets in opposition.

Planned for Bensonhurst's District 43, a largely Asian-populated area, the shelter would be located near schools and a senior center.

As reported by [AMNY](#), area residents have been protesting for more than two years.

After Zohran Mamdani was elected Mayor, many of the residents had hoped he "would reconsider one of the most contentious shelter fights inherited from the Adams administration."

Those hopes were dashed. Instead, Mamdani is moving ahead with the project, setting up a clash between local officials who say the site should be used for affordable housing and homelessness advocates who insist the city cannot meet its obligations without adding more shelter beds."

If and when built, the facility, "which is planned to be operated by Bronx-based VIP Community Services, is being developed by 86th Street NY LLC, led by The Sandhu Group, and could house up to 150 single men experiencing homelessness, including some with mental health challenges."

The firm had purchased the site for \$4.8 million in 2023.

## NoHo luxury tower proposed with some affordable units

A mostly luxury 600-foot apartment tower with about a quarter of the units (around fifty) set aside as affordable has been proposed for the low-rise historic district of Manhattan's NoHo [North of Houston Street] neighborhood.

Opposition in the once entirely affordable neighborhood has been fierce.

"My window faces that funky parking lot with the cars going up and down. It's a real neighborhood feeling," according to one resident as reported by [Bisnow](#). "And we are now going to have this massive behemoth."

Even renting the affordable units would require an income of 60% of the area's median rent "that will still be higher than most New Yorkers can afford."

Some opponents also argue that "new [luxury] developments can be used as second homes or investment properties, sitting vacant for most of the year," as exemplified by ultra-luxury buildings on Billionaires' Row [on and near 57th Street and Central Park South], where apartments are "vaults for the rich."

The NoHo area can be seen as a microcosm of so many of the city's formerly affordable neighborhoods—Chelsea, Greenwich Village, East Village, Hell's Kitchen, etc.—where the absence, or lack of enforcement, of strong rental controls has resulted in a city largely unaffordable to all but the most financially well off.

## South Bronx owner is first to face fines under City's new "nuisance" penalties

A South Bronx landlord who has consistently neglected to repair seriously dangerous conditions in his building is the first to face the maximum penalties under the city's new Public Nuisance law, unless he makes the long-neglected repairs within one month as of March 12.

Penalties can amount to \$1,000 for every day that the public nuisance continues, plus retroactive payments of well over \$2 million.

The owner is Seth Miller, who has appeared on the City's 100 worst landlords list. His tenants have long complained of winter heat cutoffs, lead paint, falling ceiling parts, rats and other violations.

In a [public statement](#), Cea Weaver, a former tenant activist who now directs the Mamdani Administration's new Office to Protect Tenants, said that "The tenants of 919 Prospect Avenue have fought for a livable home for more than a decade, and this victory is a turning point in that fight."