



MITCHELL-LAMA RESIDENTS COALITION

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WEBSITE: www.mitchell-lama.org

Homeless rate highest ever in 2024; children showed largest increase

Homelessness in this country during 2024 soared to the highest it has ever been, a consequence of the declining availability of affordable housing, inflation, and wage stagnation among both middle-income and low-income households, as well as of "persisting effects of systemic racism," all of which "have stretched homelessness services systems to their limits."

The data comes from the latest annual [report](#) on homelessness by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, released in late December. HUD found that over the year, the number of people who were homeless leapt eighteen percent, a new record.

And for people in families with children, the rise in homelessness during some point soared 39 percent over 2023.

Children, defined as people under the age of 18, were in fact the age group that experienced the largest increase of those living outside a home. These children numbered 150,000.

And perhaps to no one's surprise, the report found that "People who identify as Black, African American, or African continue to be overrepresented among the population experiencing homelessness."

The one bright spot, if it can be called that, pertained to veterans. Their

homeless population dropped by eight percent over the year, a result of "targeted and sustained funding" of appropriate services.

The report noted that additional factors contributing to the record breaking rise in homelessness during the year included "public health crises, natural disasters that displaced people from their homes, rising numbers of people immigrating to the U.S., and the end to homelessness prevention programs put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the end of the expanded child tax credit."

In the report, HUD noted that its definition of homelessness also includes "sleeping in places not meant for human habitation such as sidewalks, abandoned buildings, bus stations, and vehicles parked for long periods."

Difficulty locating people in these situations means that "the actual number of people experiencing homelessness could be larger than reported."

Landlords fight new broker law: Page 3

Billionaire investors spur affordability crisis: Page 8

ProPublica: HUD's new chief poses threat to key federal housing programs

The new likely director of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, Scott Turner, has a long history of opposition to many of HUD's key programs, according to a report by [ProPublica](#), an investigative news service.

In a strongly worded analysis of the person likely to be appointed by President-Elect Donald Trump, the group notes that Turner "supported a bill ensuring landlords could refuse apartments to applicants because they received federal housing assistance. He opposed a bill to expand affordable rental housing. He voted against funding public-private partnerships to support the homeless and against two bills that called merely to study homelessness among young people and veterans."

ProPublica's report continues with an explanation of how Turner's likely agenda for HUD can be found in Project 2025, a manifesto prepared by the right-wing Heritage Foundation.

That report, the group states, calls for "cutting funding for affordable housing, repealing regulations that fight housing discrimination, increasing work requirements and adding time limits for rental assistance and eliminating anti-homelessness policies, among other changes." That part of the report was written by former HUD chief Ben Carson, who was also appointed by Trump.

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

MLRC

**General Membership Meeting
will be held on Saturday, January 25, 2025
10 a.m. - Noon**

**Agenda: Kim Lerner of Live On will speak
on benefits available to seniors**

**The meeting will be held via Zoom. Members
will be informed by regular mail and by email.**

Contact: Info@mitchell-lama.org

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

DiNapoli: Audit uncovers hazardous conditions, financial irregularities at three M-L projects

Three Mitchell-Lama developments have failed to rectify dangerous living conditions, and have spent more than a million dollars in ways that are highly questionable, according to a report released in October by the state's Comptroller, Thomas P. DiNapoli

The M-Ls were Arverne/Nordeck complex in Queens, Arlington Terrace/North Shore development on Staten Island, and York Hill in Manhattan.

The report also calls for "greater oversight" of M-Ls by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Mold, cracks, missing stairs

At Arverne, the auditors found "collapsed ceilings and walls caused by severe water damage." The also found "black soot, exposed nails, mold and peeling paint . . . inside vacant apartments. Cracks were also observed in the foundation of one building as was a large hole in the residents' courtyard."

At Arlington Terrace, the auditors discovered "collapsed and missing stairs, large holes and cracks in walls, peeling and chipped paint, water damage and leaks, exposed electrical wiring and pipes, mold, roach infestations, bird feces, broken sinks and cabinets, and missing floor tiles, window guards and doorknobs were found inside vacant apartments and common areas."

York Hill problems included "mold, water leaks and rusting were found in apartments and cracks, rust and peeling

paint on one building's façade."The comptroller also noted that several hazardous conditions previously reported by a separate agency (the Housing Development Corp.) "either remained uncorrected or persisted."

Regarding financial irregularities, the state audit found "approximately \$1.6 million in transactions for the period from January 2019 through August 2023 that were either unrelated to normal operations or inadequately supported." The report concludes with several recommendations, including annual inspections and "routinely checking to verify that all self-closing/fire doors are fully operational," and then taking "immediate corrective action when hazardous/unsafe conditions are identified."

Financial concerns

Concerning financial irregularities, auditors found that "managing agents spent approximately \$1.6 million that were either unrelated to normal operations or were inadequately supported with financial documentation. In addition, \$620,000 in contracts did not have written HPD approval and/or had no evidence of competitive analysis or bidding."

The state report recommended "Periodically reviewing a sample of contracts and expenses to identify payments to vendors and service providers that, in the aggregate, equal or exceed \$100,000 in any fiscal year, to ensure that they are competitively bid and that contracts at \$100,000 or more were approved by HPD."

UPCOMING EVENTS

MLRC

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Saturday, Jan 25, 2025

10 a.m. - noon

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**Note:
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**Members will be informed by regular mail and by email.
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Mitchell-Lama Residents Coalition, Inc.

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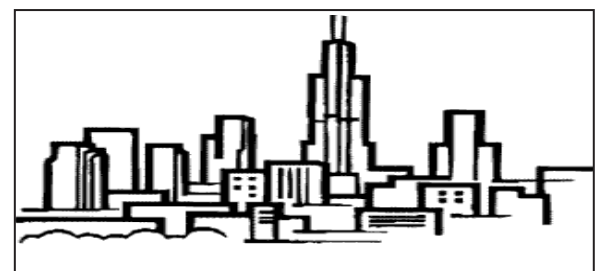
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Survey: Trump's proposals could raise costs for builders, cooperators, owners, and tenants

What can the nation's tenants, cooperators and would-be homeowners expect from the second Donald Trump Administration?

Above all, higher costs, according to a report on [CNBC](#), which was based on discussions with leading housing market experts. The report examines key Trump promises during his campaign:

Deportation: By attempting to follow through on his mass immigrant deportation plan (allegedly only for "illegals," or those without official immigration papers, but perhaps also for legal immigrants from nations he has called "shithole"), the likely effect would be much higher construction costs, because the industry depends largely on immigrant labor. Those costs would be passed on to would-be cooperators and home buyers.

Nor would the resulting shortage of labor be easily filled by native born Americans, because only about three per-

cent of those Americans say they would seek work in the construction industry, according to a survey by the [National Association of Home Builders](#)

Deregulation: Trump has embraced claims that various regulations—safety, environmental, etc.—add to construction costs, which in turn are passed onto housing buyers and renters. While some costs are indeed passed down, deregulation of any restrictions on rent "means less protection for tenants, therefore higher rents."

Reducing mortgage rates. That might in fact lower housing costs. But "Presidents do not control mortgage rates, experts say."

Soaring tariffs: A huge tariff increase, say around ten percent, on lumber and other construction materials would push up both construction costs and on owners of homes, co-ops and condos who need such items for home renovation.

Hell's Kitchen buildings, long in severe disrepair, will be rehabbed for the tenants & homeless

Four deteriorating apartment buildings in Hell's Kitchen, previously owned by the notorious ex-convict landlord Steve Croman, were purchased in June by a nonprofit social services group that plans to upgrade apartments for some of the remaining tenants—at affordable rents—and other now vacant units for homeless families who have rental vouchers with the City PHEPS program. Those families will pay only thirty percent of their income for rent.

The nonprofit, Services for the Underserved, purchased the buildings (351-357 West 45th Street) for \$20 million last June with a loan from HPD. Construction upgrades will be done by Highpoint Property Group and SMJ Development.

A report in [W42ndSt](#) quoted an official of the nonprofit as saying "A lot of the doors were off the hinges, bricks were loose, there were mice, vermin, rats."

The official further said that "Some of the buildings, including 353 West 45th Street, were difficult to enter due to the build up of pigeons and pigeon excrement The walls were covered in mold and a squatter lived on the first floor."

The former owner, Corman, who had spent eight months in prison for tax and mortgage fraud, has been the defen-

dant in twenty-four legal cases for, among other things, not providing sufficient heat and hot water.

In addition, The City Dept of Finances has charged him with \$50,000 for emergency repairs.

Kushner tenants win right to continue lawsuit alleging illegal rent collections

A group of tenants in four East Village connected buildings formerly owned by the Donald Trump-related Kushner family won the right to proceed with a legal case charging the owners with collecting rents without filing for certificates of occupancy. Press reports note that Kushner had filed for temporary COs, falsely claiming that work was ongoing. In the interim, Kushner collected some four million dollars in allegedly illegal rents, the tenants allege.

A report in [The Real Deal](#) noted that tenants' lawsuit "asked the court to bar the landlord from collecting rent until they fixed the hazards and secured certificates of occupancy. They also sought class action status," as reported in [The Real Deal](#).

If the tenants win their lawsuit, some of that money may be returned.

REBNY sues to block law protecting tenants from mandated broker fees

Although the veto-proof bill disallowing brokers from charging fees from tenants who never hired them is slated to take effect in 2025, the law may never become a reality if a suit filed by a powerful real estate lobby is successful.

The lobby, known as REBNY (Real Estate Board of New York), is claiming that the law violates free speech by contract rights because it prohibits "brokers from posting apartments on online listings platforms without being explicitly contracted by a landlord to do so," as reported by [The Gothamist](#).

Or as the [New York Law Journal](#) wrote, REBNY argues that because the law that would "mandate blocking brokers from passing along their fees to tenants, it will 'effectively eliminate' brokers' rights to advertise open properties."

Victory for tenants

Sponsored by more than thirty Councilmembers and several other officials, the Fairness in Apartment Rental Expenses Act (FARE) prohibits both brokers and landlords from requiring tenants to pay their fees, if the landlords were the ones who had engaged the brokers' services in the first place.

The Council's vote was a victory long sought by tenants, who often pay at least one and sometimes more than one month's rent as a non-returnable fee. Such fees were mandatory even if the tenants themselves had found the apartments that they eventually rented.

According to data provided by Streeteasy to [The City](#), "in the first ten months of the year, a renter who paid a broker fee spent an average of 47.7% more in upfront expenses than someone who moved into a no-fee apartment."

The bill also requires landlords or their agents "to disclose the fees that the tenant must pay in their listings and rental agreements."

Enforcement of the bill, if the REBNY lawsuit fails, will be in the hands of the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection. Fines start at \$1,000 for a first offense, and may rise to \$2,000 per offense.

Owners have argued that tenants will ultimately suffer from the bill, since it would force owners to raise rents to compensate for the added expense of the fees.

Homeless school children in NYC reached more than 146,000 last year

Last year more than 146,000 school children—over one in eight who were enrolled—were homeless at least part of the school year. That marks the ninth year in a row that more than 100,000 kids were without a permanent home, according to a study by [Advocates for Children](#).

Using data obtained from the NYS Education Dept., the study shows that youths who spent at least part of the year in shelters or were temporarily doubled up with other families were concentrated in upper Manhattan, Southwest Bronx, and various sections of Brooklyn. The study did not appear to include kids living on the street. Further, the AFC noted that "a city comptroller analysis suggests there were roughly 50,000 migrant families with children in city shelters this past summer."

In a related finding by the City's Department of Youth and Community Development, more young people in New York City who have no homes but were denied shelter, and were therefore most likely forced to sleep on the streets, leapt this year. A report in [The City](#) noted that the Department's data showed more than eleven hundred adolescents who sought a place to sleep were denied facilities. That is an historically high figure.

Among them are an increasing number of asylum seekers, although the actual percentage of homeless youths seeking asylum was not tracked by the Department.

By comparison with youths, almost all homeless adults who sought [shelter](#) were likely to find one.

Manhattan Plaza gets moment of fame, as movie icon Timothée Chalamet, star of 'Dune,' notes he grew up there

The Mitchell-Lama program got an unexpected boost of a sort when French-American movie star Timothée Chalamet was interviewed on the TikTok podcast "[This Past Weekend "w/ Theo Von,"](#)" in which he mentioned how significant it was for him to have grown up in the M-L complex Manhattan Plaza. The episode aired in December.

Starring in such films as *Wonka*, *Dune*, *A complete Unknown* (about Bob Dylan) and others, the podcast noted that Manhattan Plaza has housed numerous famous actors as well as others involved in film and theater. Among them were Alicia Keys, Angela Lansbury, and Tennessee Williams. Visitors often included such luminaries as Al Pacino and Robert De Nero.

During the podcast, Chala-

met, who has been nominated for an Academy Award and four Golden Boy awards among others, noted the importance to him of affordable housing programs like M-L.

When the host explained what the program is—calling it suitable for moderate-income families—Chalamet noted "That's me, Baby, moderate" as reported by [W42St.nyc](#), an online news source covering Hell's Kitchen.

The podcast went viral quickly, and received comments supporting M-L from Brooklyn Councilmember Justin Brannan, Comptroller Brad Lander, and Hell's Kitchen Assemblymember Tony Simone.

Even Housing Justice For All, a tenant advocacy group, called in to offer support for Chalamet and the need for more programs like M-L.

City's median rents rising faster than incomes

Surprise! Rents in New York City are rising faster than tenant incomes.

That's the conclusion of a new report issued by the Fiscal Policy Institute, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization, as noted by [The Gothamist](#).

The report, issued in November, found that "median rents in New York City increased by around 18% between 2019 and 2023, while incomes grew by just 11.5% over that span."

Homeowners as well are beset by rising housing costs, the report found.



MLRC Developments

These developments are members of the 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	Meadow Manor
Albany Executiver House Apartments	Michangelo Apartments
Amalgamated Warbasse	109th St. Senior Citizens Plaza
Arverne Apartments	158th St & Riverside Dr. Housing
Bethune Towers	Parkside Development
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	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	Washington Park SE Apts
Lindsay Park	Washington Square SE Apts
Lindville Housing	Westgate Tenants Assn
Lincoln Amsterdam House	Westgate
Manhattan Plaza	Westview Apartments
Marcus Garvey Village	West View Neighbors Assn
Masaryk Towers Tenants Assn	West Village Houses

The Mitchell Lama Residents Coalition

wishes all its members, readers, and supporters of permanently affordable housing

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

'City of Yes' becomes official policy as Council votes approval in December

Despite last minute opposition by tenant activists, some Staten Island homeowners, and some City Councilmembers, Mayor Adams' "City of Yes" program became official policy on December 6th, 2024, when the City Council voted, 31 to 20, to approve it.

The pro-vote by the City Council was long expected, especially after a late November meeting during which the Council agreed to provide the program with an additional five billion dollars (of which \$1 billion will come from the State budget).

Theoretically, the infusion of funds will enable the program, largely a massive zoning change, to build some 80,000 new units, along with infrastructure improvements over the next fifteen years.

Affordable housing issue

Although the program does not specifically authorize inclusion of affordable housing, developers may choose to take advantage of the opportunity to build twenty percent more units so long as they are affordable.

Also, some argue that through traditional supply-and-demand reasoning, increasing the supply of housing will offer tenants and would-be homeowners more options, so landlords competing against each other will lower their prices.

The new housing will take advantage of the program's zoning changes to allow larger residential buildings in some areas, transform empty office buildings to residential units, permit small "accessory dwelling units" in structures like garages

and basements on properties hosting one- and two-family houses, and rescind the original plan's call to reduce parking space requirements for some new construction, among other changes.

Much of the money is expected to be used for neighborhood infrastructure projects, such as flood mitigation and sewer enhancements.

Opposition

Shortly prior to the City Council's Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, and Committee on Land Use, cast their votes, two groups of residents had voiced their opposition. One comprised about fifty Staten Island homeowners who feared the influx of new large housing would alter the character of the borough, or at least their own neighborhoods.

The other group was organized by Metropolitan Council on Housing, a leading tenant advocacy organization, which argued that the program does not specifically mandate sufficient affordable new homes. Instead, on Instagram, Met Council called for "real solutions: #UniversalRentControl, public housing, & tenant protections."

Opposition had also come from the Council's Speaker, Adrienne Adams, who had proposed an alternative—or modification—known as the [City of All](#), which consisted, among other things, of "investments in community infrastructure, stronger tenant protections, better use of housing vouchers, and increased capacity for housing agencies."

Mitchell-Lama explained: new chart provides clear explanations of program, history, income requirements, etc.

A brief, easy-to-read summary of the Mitchell-Lama program is now available online.

Prepared by [DocumentedNY](#), an online reporting service, the article, presented in non-technical language, explains key factors as eligibility requirements, such as the 2024 income limits for each household size and each type of development; how to apply both by mail and online, details of transferring a M-L apartment to family members, available lotteries and other aspects.

As an example, the article notes the family size and income limits in 2024 for a family of three:

For a federally assisted rental, the limit is \$111,840.

For a federally assisted co-op, the limit is \$174,750.

And for a non-federally assisted rental or co-op, the limit is also \$174,750.

Another source that provides a clear explanation and directions on how to apply is [Access NYC](#), a NYC government website.

Massive tower proposal for former Mitchell-Lama sparks new coalition

Plans by one of the city's largest real estate corporations to construct a 94-story luxury apartment building smack in the center of a mixed-income former Mitchell-Lama complex in Manhattan will now be confronted by a new organization, the [Community First Development Coalition](#), representing not only the tenants but homeowners and residents in surrounding streets.

Known as Independence Plaza North, the complex, operating on three categories of rent, contains 1,339 apartments (some of which are townhouses) in three 39-story towers. Two of the towers are connected by a long plaza.

As proposed by the owners, Stellar Management and Vornado Real Estate Trust, the new tower would be situated directly onto that plaza, and would soar above the existing buildings.

Residents have expressed anger not only that the surrounding area, known as Tribeca, is already one of the wealthiest in the city, and hardly needs more luxury units, but that the construction would generate massive disruption of the neighborhood, and would adversely affect light and air for years to come.

'Thoughtful development'

The new group is not starting from scratch. Nor is it merely opposed to any new development. Rather it defines its mission as encouraging "thoughtful development," which would include more permanently affordable housing, safeguarding architectural integrity, and promoting environmental safeguards for the surrounding ecosystem and streetscapes.

Since its formation several months ago, the Coalition has been conferring with numerous experts in zoning, construction, historic preservation, and related issues such as engineering, since the tower is proposed for situation on landfill.

Months earlier, Vornado had told a community board meeting that the project would undergo a required environmental review, which would include a statement on what's needed to minimize the impact of the construction.

In general, projects of this size also need a land use review, but the owners have said that because they are not seeking a zoning change, such a review is not required. This is one of the key issues that the new group will be exploring.

The group has obtained 501(c)(3) tax status, which means donors can deduct their gifts for tax purposes.

Housing authority's PACT program records steep rise in evictions

Evictions in public housing developments that have switched to the PACT program have soared to the point where they almost match the rate in private units, according to the City's Fiscal Year 2024 Mayor's Management Report.

PACT (Permanent Affordability Commitment Together) is a NYCHA program that works with private and nonprofit developers to handle the enormous burden of repairs neglected for years by the city's Housing Authority.



When the repairs and renovations are done, the projects are converted to Section 8 status, which allows tenants to pay only a third of their income for rent.

Upon conversion, the land and buildings are leased to "the development partners, who will conduct the repairs, serve as the new on-site property manager, and provide enhanced social services and community programs," as explained on the [NYCHA website](#).

PACT also requires the non-government developers to confer with tenants on repairs and management issues.

In addition, the developers must install laundry facilities, security systems, and free WiFi. In exchange, they get tax benefits and a guaranteed source of income.

87 projects now under PACT

The Mayor's report said that the housing authority has already converted 87 developments to PACT, which includes more than 23,000 apartments throughout the city, as noted by [Qns](#), a Queens online newsletter.

The news service reported that "eviction rates at PACT-managed properties have more than tripled in the past year, now closely resembling citywide eviction rates." The PACT eviction rate last year was "0.57%, up from 0.18% . . . nearly matching the 0.60% rate in private rental units."

In terms of actual numbers, evictions rose from fifteen to one hundred eighty over the year.

The eviction rate rise was three hundred percent over the rate during the previous year.

The QNS article quoted a NYCHA spokesperson as saying that the seven billion dollars invested in the PACT program was successful, and highlights "our commitment to improving living conditions for NYCHA residents."

End-of-year affordable housing developments: State grants, new Bronx units, new lotteries

A flurry of affordable housing developments have been announced at the end of the year. They refer to new state grants for repairs and home ownership, a renovated Bronx structure providing homes for shelter inhabitants, and new housing lotteries.

Concerning state grants, New York has allocated \$51 million to help low-income families with a variety of home renovations and purchases.

Some of the grants will be used to assist with "home repairs, accessibility modifications, safety upgrades, replacement of manufactured homes, and down payment assistance for first-time buyers," as announced in a state [press release](#).

First time home buyers will also be assisted in "facilitating their entry into the housing market."

About \$2.3 million of the funding

will be directed towards supporting sixty-four households on Long Island.

Like the grants to the City, the LI funding will be directed towards "home repairs, accessibility improvements, and down payment assistance."

In a related development, YIMBY announced that an Affordable Housing Services (AHS) site has opened at 2736 Creston Avenue in The Bronx, which will provide 63 units for people currently living in shelters.

Participating agencies in the development include the City's Department of Social Services and The Doe Fund.

Finally, lotteries for affordable apartments have opened in Manhattan's East Village, Brooklyn's Cypress Hills, and Queens' Jamaica. More info on lotteries, such as how to apply, is available at [NYC Housing Connect](#).

Key stories during 2024:

- **Soaring unaffordability;**
- **Landlords fail to gut protections;**
- **Black vs white home ownership rates**

Stories regarding the related issues of housing affordability, homeless, tenants rights and disparities between Black and white homeownership were pinpointed during the 2024 year by the MLRC. Here are a few of the key issues we covered.

Harvard housing report shows growing unaffordability nationwide

Perhaps to no one's surprise, securing an affordable place to live in the United States today is becoming less and less of a likelihood, at least for millions of working, low-income and middle-income citizens who are either looking to rent or desiring to buy. In fact, this growing unaffordability affects even those who are already tenants or who are currently residing in their homes.

Landlords' latest gambit to gut pro-tenant law fails as SCOTUS refuses to hear their case

The latest effort by landlords to destroy New York State's Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act crumbled in February, as the US Supreme Court, which had earlier declined to hear two other landlord groups' lawsuit on much the same issue, declined in February to hear the current cases. That move left intact the law, passed several years ago, that provides the strongest protections tenants have had in years.

New AG report: Vast gulf between Black and white home ownership

White people in New York State are twice as likely to own their own homes as Black people or Latinos, and a quarter more likely than Asians. How surprising. This is the finding of a report issued at the end of October by the office of Letitia James, the Attorney General of New York State. Further, these disparities, which include access to home financing, occur in every region of the state, even when controlling for credit scores, income, and size of loans, among other factors.

Affordable Housing News from Around the Nation

National: Home insurance hikes threaten community developers

Rising property insurance rates are threatening nonprofit developers from constructing affordable housing, according to a [Shelterforce](#) report. In a survey, community developers said "they have had to cut costs elsewhere in their operations, from selling off properties to raising rents, laying off staff, and eliminating programming. Almost all of them said that they've had to reconsider future projects because of rising insurance premiums, throwing their futures into question."

One developer said that the more that is required to pay for insurance "the less we have in available funding to pay for supportive services that help stabilize tenancy, which is the goal of affordable housing."

National: HUD awards \$225 M for manufactured housing proposals

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development [awarded](#) \$225 million to seventeen proposals in twenty-six states to preserve and modernize manufactured housing, which are structures built in a factory according to a HUD code and then transported to various sites. They are used for lower-income tenants and homeowners in rural, urban, suburban, and tribal areas.

The new HUD grants will also be awarded to disaster impacted locations, and will be targeted to "repairs and rehabilitation of existing homes, accessibility upgrades, infrastructure improvements, mitigation strategies to increase resilience, resident services including eviction prevention and housing counseling."

Palm Springs, Fla.: City votes \$5.9 million for people evicted during the 1950s and 1960s

Almost three quarters of a century ago, City officials forced numerous families in an area known as Section 14, almost all of whom were African Americans, out of their homes, which were then destroyed, in an effort to get owners to "stop renting homes on short-term leases and make long-term deals with mostly white property owners," according to a report in the [Precinct Reporter Group](#). Evictions and burnings were not uncommon.

In a belated but much welcome effort to compensate the evictees and their

survivors, the City Council agreed recently to offer "direct cash payments in a \$5.9 million settlement." In addition, the City Council voted to allocate \$20 million into affordable housing over the next 10 years.

Reno, Nevada: City's HA gets \$37M for new and refurbished housing

The Reno Housing Authority completed a deal with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for a \$37 million RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) project to provide 150 new affordable homes for low-income residents in the city, plus rehab of existing HA units, known as Silverado Manor, within the area.

Dallas: Former celebrity hotel will become mixed-income housing

A hotel that was once famous for hosting rock stars like The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix, as well as Presidential campaigners like Richard Nixon, will be transformed into mixed-income multifamily housing in an area known as the Dallas Design District. An article in [Bisnow](#), an online real estate reporting service, notes that developers of the building, currently a ten-story, 300-room hotel, will restore the common area's terrazzo flooring and the original pool deck shade covers, because they are considered historic.

Charlotte, NC: Borrowing plan approved to fund affordable housing

Voters approved by a wide margin a bill to enable the city to borrow \$100 million to create low- and moderate-income housing. The bill also allows for rehab and preservation of existing and supportible housing, according to a report in [Shelterforce](#).

New Jersey: Cities have one year to present affordable housing plans

A law passed in March requires municipalities to present their housing plans, by the end of 2025, that will insure that half of all affordable units built by 2035 must be set aside for low-income families. The law further requires that at least thirteen percent of those homes "must be reserved for very low-income residents," according to a report in [Backyard](#). All the remaining affordable homes will be set aside for residents defined as low- to moderate-income.

Local Housing Briefs

US Supreme Court rejects final appeal by city's landlords

A final effort by New York landlords to have the conservative-dominated Supreme Court review their case that the State's 2019 Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act is unconstitutional, failed in November, when the Court declined to hear the challenges. As is the norm in such situations, the Court gave no reason for its decision. All lower courts have ruled that the Act was fully in keeping with the US Constitution and all historical precedents. It is likely, but not definite, that the owners' defeat will finally mark the end of such challenges.

Plan to convert NYC office tower into mixed income apartments

A plan to convert a major NYC office tower into a mixed housing structure is currently in the presentation stage. If the plan goes through, the project will cost the developer \$805 million, even with a tax abatement (known as 467-m) which requires the owner to set aside twenty-five percent of the units as affordable.

The building is 750 Third Avenue, which would house 639 apartments, if the project goes as planned, which means that around 160 of the units would rent below market rate.

An investor, SL Green, noted that when complete, the conversion will boast retail shops, a fitness center, a membership club, and some co-working space, as well as rooftop terraces for residents, according to a report in [Bisnow](#).

Three Brooklyn tenants win suit to have security deposits returned

Three tenants in Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant community won a small claims court decision in December to have their security deposits returned, after an online news service reported on their efforts. As noted in [The Gothamist](#), the tenants—Alice Liao, Numa Briet and Azu Roma—altogether received over \$7,000 from the same landlord, Ches Parnes. Yet another tenant is awaiting half her return as of this writing. She received the first half a year after leaving her apartment.

A Legal Aid Society lawyer has asked the state Attorney General, Letitia James, to identify owners who are "routinely accused" of withholding deposits.

Landlords are currently fighting a bill disallowing brokers to charge fees of tenants who never hired them. That bill is slated to take effect in 2025. See story page 3.

Report: Affordable housing shortage results from growing trend of billionaires in market

The severe shortage of affordable housing is not a reflection of the scarcity of housing in general, as is often alleged, but is a direct result of the growing trend of billionaires buying up huge swaths of both single- and multi-family homes across the country.

That, at least, is the conclusion of a new [report](#) from the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive-leaning research center founded in 1963.

Billionaire Blowback on Housing, released in October, argues the following points:

- Billionaire investors are purchasing "an unprecedented share of single-family homes, apartment buildings, and mobile home parks," often in communities of color. That results in relentless increases in rent and an increase in evictions.

- Throughout various cities, vacant homes are purchased by wealthy investors, who keep them empty in the expectation that they will rise in value. Such vacant buildings actually outnumber

homeless people. These investors are also entering the short-term rental market, like Air B&B, which further diminishes the supply of affordable homes.

- Private equity firms are receiving tax breaks for investing in affordable housing programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, but often "are not providing working-class families with dignified and truly affordable homes."

- Investors bid up land and housing, adversely affecting first time homeowners, largely in communities of color.

The authors argue that the solution to the dearth of affordable housing is "to expand the social housing sector: community-controlled or publicly owned housing that is outside the speculative market, such as quality public housing and other forms of nonprofit-owned housing."

They argue further that state and local government officials should enact their own tenant and small homeowner protections without waiting for the federal government to act.

Malcolm Peabody, founder of Section 8, dies at 96

Malcolm Peabody, known as "Mike, who set the stage for Section 8 rent subsidies, died of a stroke in December. He was 96.

Although a Republican who served at the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Nixon administration, he promoted an idea that today most Republicans might disapprove—direct cash gifts to low-income families would be more effective, and less costly, than channeling the funds through landlords or developers.

That concept underlies what became to known as Section 8, a subsidy program that today allows millions of Americans to secure an affordable place to live.

A Co-Director of the Boston Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—the civil rights organization headed by Martin Luther King, Jr.—his views had been honed during his work on low-income housing in Massachusetts from 1963 to 1965, as an advisor to his brother who headed the

Housing Allowance Program at HUD, under the Model Cities legislation. That program eventually became Section 8.

Former Staten Island garbage truck garage will be renovated into affordable units

A site formerly used as a depot for city-owned garbage trucks on Staten Island's North Shore will be transformed into an affordable housing complex, comprising four-story and five-story buildings containing ninety units for low-income seniors and 105 units for low- to moderate-income families. An additional group of units will be reserved for home-ownership.

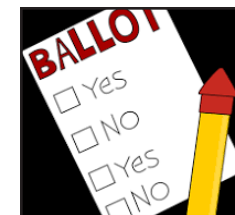
Facilities such as a grocery store and underground parking will also be included.

Developers of the property will be Volunteers of America – Greater New York, Spatial Equity, and Nehemiah HDFC, according to a report in [Purpose by Design](#), an online news source.

State, local ballot issues had mixed outcomes for housing protections

From the perspective of tenant protections and affordable housing, the results of [ballot measures](#) in more than a hundred state and local jurisdictions during the year were mixed.

A compilation of the results has been collected and released by the National Low



Income Housing Coalition. Notwithstanding the negative outcomes of some ballots, the Coalition concluded that "Overall, the results from the November

elections demonstrate that ballot measures remain a promising pathway towards enacting bold housing policy solutions at the state and local levels."

Bonding, taxes, zoning, land use

The measures pertain to bonding (enabling governments to borrow funds), housing preservation, taxes, tenant protections, zoning and related land use policies, and punitive issues around homelessness.

Case studies in Los Angeles, Hoboken, New Orleans and Rhode Island are also included.

Highlights of the report include:

- Across the country, voters collectively authorized more than \$640 million in bonds for affordable housing and shelter by wide margins.

- Voters approved every measure to reallocate existing resources to housing and homelessness programs or to permanently enshrine existing programs.

- Tenant protections saw mixed results. In Hoboken, NJ, tenants achieved a landslide victory over a harmful rent control referendum, and voters in Berkeley, CA, approved a comprehensive tenant protections measure while defeating a landlord-backed alternative.

Elsewhere, some jurisdictions rejected measures to strengthen rent stabilization and other tenant protection.

- Measures to facilitate affordable housing development via zoning and land use changes also saw mixed results.

- Widespread support was shown for two harmful ballot measures in Arizona and California that will punish people experiencing homelessness.

- Lodging taxes and real estate transfer taxes were overwhelmingly successful mechanisms for raising revenues.