

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA/WITNESS LIST
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 112, Washington, DC 20004**

**ANITA BONDS, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ANNOUNCES A BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING**

on

**Housing Finance Agency
District of Columbia Housing Authority**

on

**Wednesday, April 15, 2015
10:00 a.m., Room 123, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004**

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. OPENING REMARKS**
- III. WITNESS TESTIMONY**

Housing Finance Agency

- 1. (No witnesses)

Executive Witness

Maria K. Day-Marshall

Interim Executive Director, Housing
Finance Agency

RECESS UNTIL 1 P.M.

District of Columbia Housing Authority (*Begins at 1 p.m*)

- 1. Kenneth Ellison Senior Housing Advisor SOME, Inc.(So Others Might Eat)
- 2. Adrienne Lyon Buenavista Staff Attorney, AARP/Legal Counsel for the Elderly
- 3. Lara Pukatch Advocacy Specialist, Miriam's Kitchen

- 4. LaJuan Brooks Public Witness
- 5. Cynthia Green Public Witness

**TESTIMONY OF
ADRIANNE TODMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Before

**THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
CHAIRPERSON ANITA BONDS**

April 15, 2015



Good afternoon, Chairperson Bonds and the members of the Committee on Housing and Community Development. My name is Adrienne Todman and I am the Executive Director of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA). Today I am pleased to testify before you in support of the Mayor's proposed FY 16 Housing Authority Subsidy. I will provide an update on the programs supported by this subsidy, and respond to questions the Committee may have on the use of the funding.

First, I would like to thank the Mayor, the City Administrator and the Budget Office for proposing a subsidy that not only supports the mission of the housing authority by sustaining current funding levels to provide housing assistance to over 3,000 extremely low-income District of Columbia families, but also supports the creation of an additional 200 housing units affordable to families and individuals who have incomes at or below 30% of AMI as well as supports rental assistance for 250 extremely low-income District households. Additionally, this subsidy request will also help the housing authority maintain its public safety program that is designed to support our public housing management operations and complement the efforts of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

The proposed FY 2016 DCHA subsidy totals \$52.1 million. Four million (\$ 4 million) of these funds will support public safety efforts in and around our public housing communities. This public safety initiative began in the late 1990's with the goal of improving DCHA's ability to be an effective landlord and to assist in

the prevention and reduction of crime. Our public safety force works closely with the Metropolitan Police Department, and serves as a key part of our management operations. The \$4 million allocation provides half of the operating costs for this department, and is the same amount DCHA received last year. On behalf of the entire DCHA team, and the almost 20,000 housing residents we serve, we respectfully request that the Committee and Council support and approve these funds.

The remaining \$42 million included in the funding request supports the Local Rent Supplement Program and a smaller rental assistance initiative, DC Local. Together these programs will provide ongoing rental assistance for over 3,000 extremely low-income families and individuals living in the District of Columbia. The Mayor's proposed budget includes \$6.1 million in new funding for the Local Rent Supplement Program: \$2.4 million in the project/sponsor category and \$3.7 million in tenant-based vouchers. Together these funds will create approximately 450 new units affordable to low income families.

This concludes my testimony. I would like to thank you, Chairperson Bonds, for your stated commitment to the preservation and creation of affordable housing. DCHA is dedicated to being a responsible partner, and we look forward to working with the Council during this budget season.

Testimony before Councilmember Anita Bonds, Chair
Committee on Housing and Community Development
Budget Oversight Hearing
Wednesday, April 15, 2015
LaJuan Brooks

Good Morning Councilmember Bonds and other Councilmembers and Staff. My name is LaJuan Brooks and I am a Local Rent Supplement Program Voucher holder. I am a formerly homeless, disabled vet who spent four years in the United States Army proudly serving my country. I am a mother of three and a very proud grandmother as well. I have been a participant in this voucher program since it began. It was because of the voucher program that I was able to move out of the District family shelter system and into a place of my own more than nine years ago. My family and I endured homelessness for a period of 4 years. For me it seemed as if the cycle of homelessness would be never ending. During my time in the shelter I was gainfully employed through a series of temporary jobs. Unfortunately, I was unable to afford any suitable housing for myself and my family. I searched high and low for something, anything that would meet my family's need. What I found was that I could not afford to live in the very city I called home. Fortunately, with the help of the Local Rent Supplement Voucher Program, I was able to move out of the family shelter and into a stable, safe and affordable home. I no longer worried about my rent being more than my income. I no longer worried about the possibility of my children and I facing homelessness again. I was one of the fortunate ones. This was an opportunity for me to move forward in a positive and productive way in spite of all the setbacks I had experienced.

The reason I am here testifying today is to hopefully dispel any myths that having a voucher makes one dependent or lazy. That mindset is simply not warranted. The idea that once a voucher is in hand, that there is no desire to work or to improve oneself, is a falsehood from the core. What is true, is that there is a major lack of affordable housing in the District area. There are many families whose dynamics are similar to what mine were. For those people, as it was true for me, this voucher could be a segue out of poverty and homelessness. It could and would provide for that single mother, father or household the opportunity to seek employment, to return to school and to simply improve their overall chances of survival. Because of the Local Rent Supplement Voucher Program I was able to identify a safe and stable home for my family. This allowed me to diligently pursue and find a full time permanent job in my career field. A job, I might add, that I am still working eight years later. It allowed me an opportunity to focus on my family and their wellbeing. It allowed me to be a mother who can provide the basic necessity of a secure home to my children.

The reality is that despite being gainfully employed, without the assistance of this subsidy I would not survive the high cost of living here in the District. Washington, DC is my home. I am not a visitor. I did not come here from another city or town. I was born and raised right here in this wonderful city. A city that is, in my opinion, failing its most vulnerable citizens in unimaginable ways. The shelter system has become even more difficult to access, the number of affordable housing units has significantly decreased and the Local Rent Supplement voucher program is a much needed safety net that has been underfunded and under used for far too long.

Despite what some may think, my plan is not to be a recipient for life. However, it is a much needed support for me and my family right now. Yes, I'd like to own my own home, build my wealth and ultimately exit the program. But even that goal would not have been a thought much less a reality had I not been able to first exit the shelter system and enter into stable housing. From my point of view, there is no separation of the homeless crisis and the housing crisis. People are homeless because they cannot afford a place to live. And they cannot afford a place to live because there is very little affordable housing in the District of Columbia. And the housing that we do have is being threatened. We all know minimum wage, TANF, and SSI is not enough to live on. We have to stop looking at affordable housing as a handout for people to be lazy and dependent and realize that it can be a means to an end. Affordable housing is a foundation for people to move into careers and goals. If you want people to be self-sufficient, more affordable housing is needed. The Local Rent Supplement Voucher program can be a foundation to assist with that need. Thank you so very much for your time and please feel free to ask me any follow up questions.

My name is Corten word,
I was living at 1349 1st S.W
which I was ask to move on 3/20/13,
I was ask to move into a smaller
house which is 5 doors down from 1349,
I hired 3 men to help me move
when ask the 3 men signed a
necessary papers stating they help
me move and had to pay them.

I got a lawyer from AARP, Mr Stevens
Clark on the 1st of April 2013 - he
has sent made any progress,
also my rent went up 400\$
for no reason and I am being charged
extra for a refrigerator I dont have
and also charging me for 3 A/C
which is \$21 I dont have ^{March 2013} A/C I was
sent \$594.00 and April \$594.00
on my rent. The lawyer has copies
and haven't done nothing.

I went to the manager to ask
him what was going on with raising
my rent ~~he~~ he said it was OK
yet they still charged me the 594 again

I was born 1926 in aug, I am
~~now~~ now 88 years old in a motorised
chair, I only get SSEC once
a month and I cant afford this
kind of rent this place has
been checked 5 times that I ~~do not~~
do not have these things in my
name.

The lawyer ^{MR} Steven Clark
(202) 434-2656

Mr Carlton word

(H) 202-483-6644

(Cell) 202-421-4151

Transaction Receipt

All deposits and payments are subject to bank verification. Deposits may not be available for immediate withdrawal.

Thank you for banking with us.

Date: 2/13/15 FEB 03 2015

Account Number: 29900

Amount: 299.00 Check one: Deposit Payment

AU #: 66016

Cash Box #: 05



015

163-2

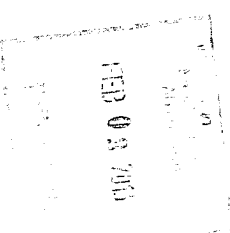
8889379 (Rev 08-10/12)

Wells Fargo Internal Use when blank; Wells Fargo Confidential when completed.

01/01/2015	Balance Forward		\$ 197.00
01/06/2015	Air Conditioner Payment	4.00	\$ 4.00
01/06/2015	Freezer Payment	14.00	\$ -14.00
01/06/2015	Washer Payment	16.00	\$ -16.00
01/06/2015	Dryer Payment	4.00	\$ 4.00
01/06/2015	Extra Refrigerator Payment	237.00	\$ -237.00
02/01/2015	Rent Payment	25.00	\$ 25.00
02/01/2015	Extra Refrigerator		\$ 25.00
02/01/2015	Air Conditioner		\$ 25.00

es/ Payments Received Outstanding Balance

es/	Payments Received	Outstanding Balance
	\$ 197.00	\$ 297.00
	\$ 4.00	\$ 271.00
	\$ -14.00	\$ 257.00
	\$ -16.00	\$ 241.00
	\$ 4.00	\$ 237.00
	\$ -237.00	\$ 0.00
	\$ 25.00	\$ 4.00
	\$ 25.00	\$ -272.00
	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00



ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Previous Balance	\$ 297.00
Payments/Adjustments	\$ 297.00
	\$ 0.00

Transaction Receipt

All deposits and payments are subject to bank verification. Deposits may not be available for immediate withdrawal.

Thank you for banking with us.

Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
Navy Yard
AU 60016
MAR 03 2015
Teller #05



Authority

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Date: 03/03/2015
 Account Number: 003-00163-2
 Amount: 297.00
 AU #: 066016
 Cash Box #: 05
 Check one: Deposit Payment

3/2015
10163-2

BR19379 (Rev 00-10/12)

Wells Fargo Internal Use when blank; Wells Fargo Confidential when completed.

Date	Description	Amount
03/01/2015	Balance Forward	
03/01/2015	Navy Yard Rent Charge	
03/01/2015	Air Conditioner	
03/01/2015	Freezer	
03/01/2015	Washer	
03/01/2015	Dryer	
03/01/2015	Extra Refrigerator	

Date	Description	Forward	Adjustment	Payments Received	Outstanding Balance
		\$ 297.00			\$ 297.00
			\$ 23.00		\$ 534.00
			\$ 21.00		\$ 555.00
			\$ 5.00		\$ 560.00
			\$ 14.00		\$ 574.00
			\$ 16.00		\$ 590.00
			\$ 4.00		\$ 594.00
		\$ 297.00		\$ 297.00	\$ 594.00

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Previous Balance	\$	297.00
New Charges/Adjustments	\$	297.00

Transaction Receipt

All deposits and payments are subject to bank verification. Deposits may not be available for immediate withdrawal.

Thank you for banking with us.

Date: 04/03/15

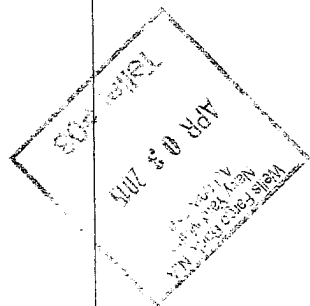
Account Number: 003-0063-2

Amount: 1,297.00

AU #: 000000

Cash Box #: 03

Check one: Deposit Payment



Authority

2015
1163-2

BR19579 (Rev 00-10/12) Wells Fargo Internal Use when blank; Wells Fargo Confidential when completed.

Date	Description	Forward	Adjustments	Payments Received	Outstanding Balance
03/01/2015	Estimated Forward	\$ 594.00			\$ 594.00
03/05/2015	Rent Payment			\$ -237.00	\$ 357.00
03/05/2015	Rent Payment			\$ -60.00	\$ 297.00
04/01/2015	Monthly Rent Charge		\$ 237.00		\$ 534.00
04/01/2015	Air Conditioner		\$ 21.00		\$ 555.00
04/01/2015	Freezer		\$ 5.00		\$ 560.00
04/01/2015	Washer		\$ 14.00		\$ 574.00
04/01/2015	Dryer		\$ 16.00		\$ 590.00
04/01/2015	Extra Refrigerator		\$ 4.00		\$ 0.00
		\$ 594.00	\$ 297.00	\$ -297.00	\$ 594.00

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Previous Balance	\$ 594.00
New Charges/Adjustments	\$ 297.00
Payment Received-Thank you	\$ -297.00
Current Balance Due	\$ 594.00

Balance	1-30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	Over 90 days
\$ 594.00	\$ 297.00	\$ 297.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00

PAYMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE 25TH OF THE MONTH WILL BE POSTED THE FOLLOWING MONTH

Please refer to the back for important information related to this rent bill and the administrative grievance rights. *Keep this portion for your record*

Committee on Housing and Community Development
Budget Oversight Hearing
April 15, 2015

Testimony of Monica Kamen, Advocacy Coordinator of the DC Fair Budget Coalition

Good afternoon, committee members. My name is Monica Kamen, and I'm the advocacy coordinator of the DC Fair Budget Coalition. Since October, the 70 service providers, faith organizations, and community members that comprise our coalition have been advocating for funding in the city budget for vital human service programs that fight poverty and help create pathways to economic stability. Our priorities this year have focused on housing, solutions to our homelessness crisis, the creation of good paying jobs, and protecting the public benefits that are helping keep families afloat.

We know that building new units of affordable housing is essential to solving our city's housing and homelessness crisis, and we applaud the mayor and the city council for their commitment to putting \$100 million in the Housing Production Trust Fund. However, we also know that in a city with almost no affordable housing options for people making less than 30% AMI, and where you have to work 120 hours a week on the current minimum wage to afford an average 2 bedroom apartment, it is critical that the city look beyond just the creation of new units and explore all available tools to help families who are struggling to meet their most basic needs in an increasingly unaffordable city.

Rental assistance and public housing are the two tools that create truly affordable housing. They both ensure that families and individuals are only paying 30% of their income in rent.

The Fair Budget Coalition strongly supports the mayor's new investments in rental assistance, particularly for homeless families and individuals who have entered our shelter system or other city housing programs. The Local Rent Supplement Program provides tenants with vouchers that enable them to quickly access housing. Tenant vouchers are critical, as they are the fastest way to leverage available, private market housing. Vouchers can also help some families move out of shelters and prevent others who are precariously housed from becoming homeless—and later having to access much more costly emergency services such as shelter. We also support the mayor's investments in the project-sponsor based vouchers to support the building of new, affordable units, particularly for those who make 0-30% of AMI and whose units are more costly to build.

FBC urged the mayor to invest \$5 million in new tenant-based vouchers for those on the DCHA waitlist, and we strongly urge the council to commit more resources to vouchers to connect those who are homeless or precariously housed to stable, longer term housing. DCHA is currently pulling names from the waitlist of people who applied over 10 years ago. No one should have to wait over a decade to find a secure place to live.

Though money has been allocated for the New Communities program, we are deeply concerned that we are spending \$40 million in public money to demolish some of last units of affordable housing left in the city. There are hundreds of vacant units of public housing that need repair and refurbishment, and our city's resources would be far better spent making public housing livable for residents, rather than razing them to the ground. We urge the committee and the council to reallocate this money to the preservation and refurbishment of our public housing units.

Finally, as an advocate representing a large coalition, I see every day how tirelessly organizers and community members around the city work to engage city residents in the political process. People with very little free time and even less disposable income spend hours preparing for hearings, traveling downtown, rearranging work and childcare schedules so that they can participate in a process that can frankly feel intimidating, unwelcoming, and inaccessible. Many people who already feel disenfranchised, who feel like they don't have a voice, who feel like the legislative process doesn't work for them continue to come down to this building on their own dime and wait for hours to testify at hearings like this, all to make their voices heard and in hopes to improve their lives and the lives of their neighbors.

We absolutely recognize that sometimes hearing times and dates must be changed. However, we respectfully ask that when you do change hearing times, keep in mind that this has a tremendous impact on our residents ability to participate in their democracy. Every time a hearing gets postponed, or worse--moved up, someone has to contact their boss and risk a day's wages in order to change their schedule and come down here. Someone has to call a baby sitter again. Someone has to call their neighbors and friends and alert them to the change. We ask you to respect the time that the folks in this room have taken to be a part of this process and to work together to make sure that it is as accessible, welcoming, and meaningful as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on these issues. We look forward to working with this committee to make the investments that will help improve this city and make it livable for all of its residents. I'm happy to answer any further questions.

**Testimony on Oversight of the DC Housing Authority
Before the Committee on Housing and Community Development**

Council of the District of Columbia

April 15, 2015

By Sam Jewler

Jews United for Justice

Thank you Chairwoman Bonds and the Housing Committee, for the opportunity to testify today on the need for greater affordable housing funding to end the displacement of low-income families and seniors. My name is Sam Jewler, and I'm a community organizer with Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), a DC-based volunteer-driven organization that represents thousands of people in the local Jewish community who are working to improve life for all area residents.

We applaud the mayor and the Council's commitment to \$100 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund. Today, I'm testifying in support of maintaining the mayor's allocations to the project sponsor-based Local Rent Supplement Program, and expanding the tenant-based LRSP allocation to the \$5 million originally requested by the Fair Budget Coalition and JUFJ. Our members also consider public housing the safety net of affordable housing, and would like to see the city make an investment in the people who rely on it for their livelihoods. DC is growing increasingly unequal, and we know we have the resources available to house the tens of thousands of people on DCHA's waiting list. No one should have to wait years or decades for housing in the place they call home.

DC has lost over 50% of its affordable rental units in the past decade. In that time, some 40,000 people of color have left the city. One out of every four people left in DC pays more than half of their income on rent and utilities.

There is no one-size fits all solution to the housing crisis, but the city needs to invest in multiple housing programs that each meet the unique needs of DC residents and that are proven to be effective.

The Local Rent Supplement Program both builds new affordable housing units for low-income families in the District and provides tenants with vouchers that enable them to pay only 30 percent of whatever their income is on housing. Both models are important. The construction of new units is necessary, given the dwindling supply of the affordable housing stock. Tenant vouchers are critical, as they are the fastest way to leverage available, private market housing, and keep it affordable even if the tenant goes through a crisis. Vouchers can also help some families move out of shelters and prevent others who are precariously housed from becoming homeless—and later having to access much more costly emergency services such as shelter

JUFJ strongly supports the mayor's new investments in rental assistance, particularly for homeless families and individuals in the DHS system.

JUFJ, Fair Budget Coalition and other housing advocates urged the mayor to invest \$5 million in new tenant based vouchers, and we strongly urge the council to commit more resources to vouchers to connect those who are homeless or precariously housed to stable, longer term housing.

Our community has also heard from our neighbors in public housing that the redevelopment of public housing has caused mass displacement. Public housing is the safety net of affordable housing, and it should not be replaced by misguided mixed developments that displace people for years during construction and often don't build enough affordable units to allow them to come back. Public housing serves some of our most vulnerable populations, including seniors – more than half of public housing residents are over the age of 50.

We have also heard about several hundred vacant public housing units that could house people relatively quickly if they were given some basic repairs – we support the city making that allocation. There is no reason why thousands of people should be experiencing homelessness while there are nearly usable units of housing that could become available at little cost to the city. We have also heard from partners that there is no comprehensive study of how public housing redevelopment is causing displacement – this should be done by the city immediately.

As Jews we do this work because we have known the pain and struggle of displacement. All Washingtonians deserve the dignity of being able to come home from work and raise a family in a livable space that doesn't eat up all of their income.

JUFJ supports and stands in solidarity with the testimony of the Fair Budget Coalition, Coalition for Non-profit Housing and Economic Development, Empower DC and the rest of the affordable housing and homelessness advocates. We want our city to remain diverse and affordable for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE DC COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BUDGET OVERSIGHT HEARING ON DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING
AUTHORITY**

APRIL 15, 2015

**BY ANGIE RODGERS, POLICY CONSULTANT
ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Angie Rodgers and I am a consultant for Enterprise Community Partners. Enterprise creates opportunities for low- and moderate-income households by providing equity, grants and loans to help build or preserve affordable housing. We have a goal of ending generational housing insecurity, and areas like the District of Columbia, where the supply gap is growing, are a particular focus. Enterprise has invested more than \$16 billion nationally to support the preservation or production of over 320,000 homes. Some \$465 million of those investments have been in the District, where we have produced or preserved more than 11,000 affordable homes.

I want to focus my comments today on the Local Rent Supplement Program, administered by the DC Housing Authority. We join our partners from the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development and the Fair Budget Coalition in supporting the new investments in LRSP in the mayor's proposed budget, and urging the council to commit more resources – at least \$10 million – to this program this year. We support both tenant-based LRSP vouchers that go directly to residents to help them rent units on the market. These permanent rent subsidies can create a relatively fast track out of homelessness for families and individuals who are in shelter and/or otherwise housing insecure.

We also support the project-based vouchers, and particularly think that more LRSP funds are needed to pair with the Housing Production Trust Fund dollars in the proposed budget. The budget includes \$100 million in funding for the HPTF, of which at least \$40 million needs to be spent producing and preserving housing for households with income under 30 percent of AMI. There are too few tools that create housing at this income level, and we believe that we must maximize the ones we have. Using rough estimates, we anticipate that \$40 million could create 400 affordable units for extremely low-income households, yet the proposed budget only allocates enough project-based LRSP to support approximately half that number. We think project-based LRSP is a necessary companion to the HPTF for housing at that income level, and developers need to be able to pair them in order to do most of that housing successfully. Allocating the dollars to do the development of those units but not the companion rent subsidy creates the likelihood that we will not meet our targets for spending and creating units at that income level.

As a nonprofit financier of affordable housing, Enterprise's investments for this type of housing only work when the appropriate public investments are made as well. Specifically, when we are lending on projects we need to see that there is enough operating support through tools like rent

subsidies to operate the project long term. We appreciate the support at both the executive and legislative levels for adding \$100 million to the trust fund. We urge the council to consider increasing funding for LRSP in this budget cycle to allow us to fully leverage the trust fund dollars that are intended to support extremely low-income households.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Testimony of Mr. Jesse Lovell re: DC HA (April 15, 2015)

My name is Jesse Lovell. I am a concerned citizen who has followed the DC government's response to the affordable housing crisis fairly closely during the last 5 years or so. It's hard to dispute the criticism that the response has been inadequate, particularly as we've witnessed an explosion in homeless families during the last 3 years. We need significantly greater investment, both to house homeless families and to free up more space in the system (the housing waiting list, which may or may not have any validity at this point) to address the needs of homeless singles.

Given the scope of the problem today, after so many years of watching the stock of affordable housing decline, it is important that we invest our money in programs with a track record of success. Stated another way, it is important that we not shift more resources to programs with a more questionable track record.

Specifically, I am talking about the Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP), which both provides funding for the building of new affordable housing and provides vouchers to tenants directly, allowing them to find affordable housing on their own, often much more quickly than an agency could.

I generally support the Mayor's proposed investments in rental assistance, particularly for homeless families who are already long-term clients of the DHS system. I also strongly agree with advocates in the DC Fair Budget Coalition (FBC) who are calling for an investment of \$5 million specifically for LRSP tenant-based vouchers.

On the other hand, I have concerns about some other affordable housing programs, in particular, Rapid Rehousing, which I believe has been badly mishandled for some years now. An insightful article in the Washington Citypaper recently noted that Rapid Rehousing "is the city's main way of moving families from shelter to housing" and "one [program] the government is trying to beef up" with additional administrative staff and resources. Yet because of Rapid Rehousing's temporary nature, 4-month rental subsidies can be extended (at present) up to a year only. The article cites Taylor Healy, an attorney with Bread for the City, who says that "the 'vast majority' of Rapid Rehousing clients she sees are at the end of their subsidy and facing eviction," and that "most of the others are nearing the end and trying to stave off evictions."

I recall testimony before the Council last year from Rapid Rehousing clients who told stories of being placed in market-rate apartments (\$1,200-\$1,500/month) and finding themselves having to give the apartments up less than a year later. One of the most famous cases of this came from a young woman who was heralded by DC Government as a Rapid Rehousing success story in 2013 but then found herself couch surfing by 2014. The Washington Post's Petula Dvorak profiled this woman last year in her column. The Citypaper notes that many of the city's homeless are wary of Rapid Rehousing at this point. "It's common knowledge at the shelters that you're coming back if you do it," said one former Rapid Rehousing client who returned to homelessness. Rapid Rehousing must not be Temporary Housing.

I do believe that Rapid Rehousing, which is a fairly new program, can be reworked into a successful one. But until the District makes those changes, I think we should be careful not to shift even more of the burden of housing placements to Rapid Rehousing. I

therefore believe LRSP must be supported robustly in order to ensure that more truly affordable housing is built and that clients (particularly low-income families relying on TANF and other assistance) can make choices that will provide them with long-term housing and allow them to exit the shelter system.

Thank you.

Mr. Jesse Lovell
Forest Hills (Ward 3)

**Council of the District of Columbia
DCHA Budget Hearing
Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
April 15, 2015**

Thank you Councilmembers for this opportunity to share my experiences of services I have received from DCHA Staff. My daughter and I moved into a new renovated one bedroom unit many years ago, little did I know as a young single mother, that our unit received no type of real inspection from Consumer and Regulatory Affairs or DCHA Housing Inspectors. There was a big hole in the wall behind the stove; no corking was done around the frames of the doors or the baseboards. Squirrels and birds lived in our walls scratching on the inner wall every night as we slept this was uncommon but little did I know, until I realize this should not be happening. I called DCHA for a control number the hole was patched, but that didn't stop the mice's from continuing to enter our unit. There were other holes I did not know of, and the scratching of the squirrels and birds continued, by the time my second child was born. I found baby birds on my back steps dead, there were more and more every day. My son and I had to use the back door to enter and exit due to DCHA entering our unit with no documents to support their entries on any given day. So I protected the inside of my front door with metal poles so DCHA could not enter my unit unlawfully anymore, my son and I live like this for a long time.

I kept after DCHA to do something about the holes; squirrels; and birds. Finally DCHA Emergency Team was sent to my unit to fix the problem concerning the squirrels and birds. The lady in charge of the DCHA Emergency Department was a joy to work with, she died of cancer some years later.

Has time past by calling for a control number was a waste of time because maintenance staff on the property made excuses for not showing up to provide the services needed this was common practice for DCHA maintenance. My yearly inspections consist of just DCHA staff recording the serial numbers off the stove and refrigerator, DCHA Staff should have been writing in their yearly report maintenance services needed has I informed them of the maintenance problems

during the yearly inspections. February 13, 2015; was my first complete DCHA inspection according to DCHA policies. HUD yearly random inspections, my unit has never been chosen.

Even through there still is a number residents can call to report maintenance services needed the maintenance services are not adequate nor effective. So I learned how to do some of the work needed in my unit myself and I had male family members who worked in construction patch the holes in my unit to stop the mice's from entering.

Then I experienced being over charged for my monthly rent for many years and being overlooked for a two bedroom by now my first child is 13yrs old. So I sent her to live with her father at the age of 15. In 1995 I had a son and filed once again for a two bedroom, still being over charge on my monthly rent and my unit still is not up to housing code standards according to DCHA policies. Filing grievances and meeting with the Manager of the property to resolve my housing issues went nowhere. But I kept a copy of every document I provided to DCHA and the documents they provided me. It wasn't until I received what would be my last notice to vacate the unit and a Landlord and Tenant Court document to appear in Landlord and Tenant Court. That's when I contacted an Attorney to represent me, a court order was issued for me to pay my rent to the court register every month until this case was settled.

The amount DCHA stated I owed seem to be the same amount every time I attend Landlord and Tenant Court. I had been in court at least twice since my first child. I obtained an Attorney to address outstanding housing code violations and me being under housed for many years. I went over all my DCHA documents like a fine tooth comb finding so many code violations.

With me having an on-going Civil Case in Landlord and Tenant Court, this didn't stop the manager from posting and handing my 8yr old son vacate notices, it didn't stop there I was violated in my home by the Property Manager; the Manager came within inches of hitting me and my son with her vehicle, as we were crossing the street on our way to work and school one morning; the Manager had DCHA Maintenance Staff cut down a Cherry Blossom Bush in my front yard for no reason taking away the beautification on the front of my unit;

and she had a DCHA maintenance employee enter my home with no document to support his entry.

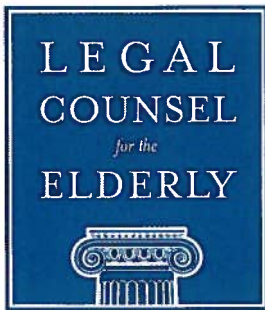
The end result my Attorney drop my case, but it did not stop me. I represented myself receiving a restraining order against DCHA Staff on the unlawful entries and the Intent to enter illegal documents used. The Intent to Enter language is still being used on many properties today just for routine inspections. In addition to me obtaining the restraining order, I had to post it on my front door. Because the rental office removed it from my file in there office.

Also I requested for the two bedroom and relocation to a New Property in the settlement agreement, since this was a Civil Action Landlord and Tenant Case that needed closure in my best interest. The settlement was not honored by DCHA in a timely fashion, the same Manager who violated my housing rights showed me a two bedroom four doors from the rental office that had not received any type of maintenance services since the pervious tenant moved out. Of course I refused the unit. I spoke to a Councilmember; other law firms; and filed another grievance with DCHA. I received written support to my settlement from DCHA grievasnce process.

It wasn't until five years after the settlement and all my networking the New Director of DCHA came aboard permanently, I requested a meeting with the Director Adrianna Todman. By now my son is 15yrs old.

The neglectful manager was transferred to another DCHA Property before I was assigned a two bedroom on the same property my nightmares begin. That two bedroom had pretty much the same problems has my one bedroom. I knew I had to find some home improvement guys who could help me turn my unit into a home, and that's just what I did. My determination; motivation; and knowledge helped me. I have flash backs and nightmares from this ordeal, I am very protective of my unit. DCHA has caused me so much mental anguish it is not in my best interest to attend this hearing, to see some of the same DCHA faces that caused me and my children turmoil.

Sincerely,
DCHA Resident



FY 2016 DCHA Budget Hearings
April 15, 2015
Committee on Housing and Community Development
Councilmember Anita Bonds, Chairperson

Written Testimony of Adrienne Lyon Buenavista, Esq.,
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Chairperson Bonds and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Adrienne Lyon Buenavista and I am a staff attorney at AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly. Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) defends, protects, and empowers District residents age 60 and over in the areas of housing, public benefits, and consumer protection. I work in LCE's Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court for the Elderly Project (Alternatives Project). The Alternatives Project combines social work, legal, and volunteer services to help prevent eviction of District elders.

I am writing to testify on the proposed 2016 local budget for the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA). DCHA plays a critical and positive role in LCE's work by providing affordable housing to many of Washington's low income seniors. Additionally, we receive numerous case referrals each year from DCHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP). DCHA often asks us to intervene in cases where seniors face voucher terminations for violations of tenant obligations. These early referrals enable LCE to help the client address the issue prior to losing his or her voucher which could ultimately lead to an eviction action for nonpayment of rent. DCHA's voucher program's willingness to refer to and work with LCE has enabled countless seniors age-in-place. Likewise, DCHA's ADA/504 Program strives to accommodate the special needs of our clients so they can continue to receive DCHA subsidies.

LCE makes the following FY 2016 budget recommendations regarding DCHA:

Prioritize Funding for the Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP).

First, the DC City Council should prioritize funding the Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP). Specifically, we ask that the Council expand, or at least approve, the proposed \$6.1 million increase in LRSP funds. Of the proposed new LRSP funds, \$3.7 million will go toward tenant-based subsidies and \$2.4 million will go toward project- and sponsor-based subsidies. LCE supports both tenant-based and project- or sponsor-based subsidies, and we believe the proposed division of LRSP between these two

types of subsidies is appropriate. The tenant-based LRSP subsidies can provide quick rental assistance to very low income DC residents, and the project- or sponsor-based LRSP subsidies, because they are tied to physical units, can create long-term affordability of buildings.

We ask the City Council to devote the LRSP subsidies to the most vulnerable communities in DC, which include seniors and individuals with disabilities who are either homeless or who are essentially homeless because they are returning to independent living after living in a Community Residence Facility (CRF) or nursing home. Setting aside some LRSP subsidies specifically for unstably-housed seniors is important because many seniors are ill-equipped physically and mentally to deal with the harsh realities of being homeless. Research has shown that homeless seniors are significantly more likely to utilize expensive Emergency Rooms, hospitals, and nursing homes than their securely-housed counterparts.¹ Many seniors live in long-term care facilities, even if no longer medically necessary, simply because few affordable housing options exist, precluding a safe discharge from the facility.

LCE has seen first-hand how LRSP subsidies have enabled our clients to age-in-place in the least restrictive environment. For example, prior to becoming my client, one of my clients had been evicted from her rent-controlled apartment for non-payment of rent during an extended hospital stay. After a few weeks, the hospital told the client that she was fit for discharge, but she had nowhere to go. The client tried to find affordable housing, but she was simply unable to find any apartment within her low income budget. Luckily, the client had a case worker through the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), who was able to help the client receive a sponsor-based LRSP subsidy. If the client had not been able to receive the LRSP subsidy, it is very possible that she would have ended up either homeless or inappropriately placed in a long-term care facility. In another case, a LCE client was living in a Community Residential Facility (CRF, through DBH), and the client had been deemed capable of independent living. The client was eager to move back into the community, but the client's income was too low to pay for any rent at market rate. Through LCE's and DBH's advocacy, the client was able to receive a tenant-based LRSP subsidy.

These client stories provide just a couple of examples of how LRSP provides permanent supportive housing to individuals, enabling DC to save money that would be otherwise used in shelters, hospitals, or nursing homes. Affordable housing is critical for LCE's client base as well as all vulnerable groups in DC, so please make funding LRSP a priority.

Add Funding for DCHA's ADA/504 Program.

Second, DC City Council should add funding for DHCA's ADA/504 Program. LCE's Alternatives Project often relies on reasonable accommodations to policies or rules to prevent evictions (in either private or public housing) and to prevent voucher terminations for individuals with disabilities. DCHA's ADA/504 Program Coordinator is an excellent advocate for individuals with disabilities, and she has been a wonderful community partner for LCE. She does everything in her power to grant and approve even the most unusual accommodations. However, LCE has found that two types of accommodation requests prove problematic, and we believe they represent a funding issue.

First, accommodation requests are denied sometimes when they involve a request for DCHA to absorb costs. For instance, one of LCE's clients, prior to my representation of her on another matter, requested that, as a reasonable accommodation, a bathroom be installed on the ground level of her public housing town house because she has trouble ascending and descending stairs. According to the client, the specific request was denied. The client was offered a transfer to a single-level unit instead. The client has lived in her home for decades, and she cannot contemplate leaving her home to transfer to another unit, so she has decided to remain in her unaltered unit and "make do."

Second, accommodation requests for additional services, such as housing search assistance, are often limited. One of my clients is a voucher participant facing an incredibly sad situation. My client and both of her adult sons suffer from disabling conditions, and my client has recently been admitted to in-home hospice care for congestive heart failure. Last year, DCHA failed the family's apartment during inspections because the housing provider allegedly failed to make timely repairs. Because the landlord paid \$75 for a second re-inspection two weeks late, DCHA terminated the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract. This meant that DCHA stopped paying the subsidy to the client's housing provider, so the housing provider sued to evict the client for nonpayment of rent. My client has a transfer voucher, and she needs to move into an accessible, three- or four-bedroom unit as soon as possible.

My client has been working with multiple social workers to try to find appropriate housing, but she has not been able to locate an appropriate unit yet. DCHA's ADA/504 Program has been very accommodating in extending the expiration date of my client's transfer voucher, even going so far as to do a home visit to give my client her extended transfer voucher. But, when it comes to housing search assistance, DCHA lacks resources to fully help individuals like my client. Through the ADA/504 Program, my client was approved to receive assistance locating housing with the help of

DCHA's voucher program staff, but when she requested help she only received a list of available properties, most of which were not accessible units. Finding accessible housing, especially accessible housing with more than one-bedroom, is undoubtedly difficult. DCHA is in the unique position to identify good housing providers who have participated in the voucher program and perhaps have tenants who are moving from their units. This is precisely why my client and other individuals with disabilities in her similar position need more assistance in locating accessible housing.

LCE believes that if the ADA/504 Program at DCHA had additional funding aimed specifically at providing reasonable accommodations, these cases might have turned out differently. Thus, we would like to advocate for additional DCHA funding to be specifically set aside for making reasonable accommodations.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony on behalf of Legal Counsel for the Elderly. Please contact me at (202) 434-2204 or abuнавista@aarp.org if you have questions about this testimony.

Sincerely,



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¹ National HCH Council, *Aging and Housing Instability: Homelessness among Older and Elderly Adults*, In Focus (Sept. 2013), http://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/infocus_september2013.pdf.