



D.C. Council Committee on Housing-DCHA Budget Oversight Hearing- FY 2026

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Since 1987 the Legal Clinic has worked towards a just and inclusive community for all residents of the District of Columbia--where housing is a human right and where every individual and family has equal access to the resources that they need to thrive.

The District of Columbia is currently facing unprecedented challenges; however, D.C. public housing residents have had to endure deplorable and dangerous conditions for decades, despite their longstanding advocacy for change. D.C. Housing Authority is now executing plans for a large-scale public housing demolition and renovation of many of its properties. We are pleased to see that the mayor has invested \$52.4 million in public housing repairs in the FY26 Budget, but residents need more. We, along with our Fair Budget Coalition, ask D.C. Council to add to that investment for a recurring \$60 million commitment to DCHA's public housing preservation, renovation, and rehabilitation process. DCHA needs to dramatically improve operations, its delivery of services, and develop accountability mechanisms for the benefit of its residents. The D.C. Council should also require DCHA to issue a quarterly report that demonstrates how these funds are utilized and how the funds result in positive outcomes for residents and to DCHA properties. It is also critical to the success of DCHA's repositioning plan that the D.C. Council utilize its authority to codify residents' right to return and reintroduce and

passing the *Public Housing Preservation and Tenant Protection Amendment Act of 2020* and includes its language in the BSA.

Additionally, to develop the agency that D.C. residents truly deserve, D.C. Council must develop a board structure that is focused on the agency's mission and avoids undue mayoral influence and control. While the Board should have knowledge of affordable housing development, it must also prioritize a concern for and understanding of the people who actually live in the properties. It is crucial that the Board's structure supports independent, critical, and transparent analysis in its decision making-- especially when DCHA is conducting a massive redevelopment and rehabilitation process for multiple housing units that will impact thousands of D.C. residents and applicants. The Board must also include voting resident members, as resident expertise and direct decision-making authority is crucial for the success of DCHA overall and to achieve its reformative goals. D.C.'s rental market is unique. [UPO reported](#) in 2022 that 44,000 D.C. households spend at least half of their income on rent. A March 2025 [report](#) showed D.C.'s average rent rose 3.3% since 2024 despite a downward trend nation-wide. Evictions rose to a 10-year high. It is more vital than ever that the D.C. Council makes safe, affordable housing a nonnegotiable priority.

DCHA must aggressively lower its vacancy rate in its public housing properties. D.C. Council also needs to fund a greater number and greater diversity of housing vouchers, especially since so many are losing vital resources. The Mayor's proposed FY26 budget only makes a small investment in new Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) vouchers administered by DHS. The mayor's budget proposal neglects to invest in housing voucher resources for families and individuals that do not receive intensive services from DHS. We need voucher availability through Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP) tenant vouchers directly from DCHA *and* DHS-based vouchers. Last budget season, D.C. Council funded some PSH and LRSP vouchers, but DHS' lack of transparency reduced this number to less than D.C. Council

intended. D.C. Council must fund more vouchers and make sure that agency misappropriation does not happen again.

Additionally, the mayor has included major and harmful proposed changes to the HSRA in her Budget Support Act. In it, her administration attempts to restrict eligibility to shelter, remove the right of non-congregate shelter from families, and further eliminate rights to Rapid Re-Housing and other programs. These substantive changes are not germane to the budget. D.C. Council must reject and remove the entire subtitle from the Budget Support Act.

This is not the time for D.C. Council to abandon its values and fail to invest in its residents and the most fundamental of human needs: housing. The WLCH is hopeful that the D.C. Council accepts our budgetary and policy recommendations and use its budgetary authority to ensure DCHA becomes an agency that D.C. residents can rely on to provide safe, healthy, and affordable housing for the most vulnerable.