

# Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition 2019 Annual Report



LOOKING BACK  
FIGHTING FORWARD  
45 YEARS



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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members, allies, friends, and supporters,

In 2019 we celebrated 45 years of community organizing and winning the people's demands with over 200 of our members at our Anniversary Gala "**Looking Back, Fighting Forward.**" As we reflect on our history of tremendous struggle, victory, and lessons learned, we honor that we are standing on the shoulders of generations of Bronx leaders who have gone before us. We give thanks that we are stronger than ever. And we are clear that the future asks more of us.

We unveiled a **bold and audacious vision** for the the Bronx: A future where our people have all that is essential for our community to thrive, including housing, education and work with dignity, as well as personal and environmental health. A community that is rooted in collective ownership and decision-making over our political, economic and social systems, in order to build a just, equitable and sustainable world.

This vision is not just aspirational. It calls us to strategize for the long haul and to build that future now. It requires that we **fight back** harder and smarter against the oppressive systems that displace us and degrade our dignity. It also requires that we **fight forward** for the alternative models of shared ownership and collective decision making that will transform the Bronx.

Fighting back and fighting forward simultaneously is no easy task. But our strategies have delivered powerful accomplishments this year.

## **FIGHT BACK!**

- Our **Housing Justice Committee** joined with grassroots organizations across the state to win sweeping tenant protections for universal rent control in New York.
- **Sistas and Brothas United** secured new investment in restorative justice in school and major changes to New York City's School Discipline Code to limit suspensions, arrests and summons that put Black and Latinx youth on a path to prison.
- Our **Economic Development Committee** passed two pieces of legislation to defend commercial tenants from displacement.
- Our **Health Justice Committee** built a community-labor alliance that brings us closer to establishing single-payer, universal healthcare in our state.

## **FIGHT FORWARD!**

- In partnership with our **Weatherization Assistance Program**, we expanded our Bronx Healthy Buildings Program to address asthma and poor conditions in public housing while investing in local contractors and Bronx residents as holistic pest managers, worker owners, and innovators in the field.
- Our **Community Development Committee** launched a Bronx Community Land Trust as a strategy to end displacement and establish true self-determination for our people over land in the Bronx.
- Our **Voter Power Committee** is working with our members and partners across the borough to democratically develop a Bronx People's





*Bronxites gather at our monthly Community Meeting to develop action plans for our issue committees.*


Platform to call on candidates and elected officials to co-govern with our community.

Our staff, leadership, and membership saw immense growth in 2019. Our Housing Justice, Health Justice, Economic Development, and Community Development teams hired an additional **six** full-time organizers and **two** part-time organizers to meet new challenges with greater collective strength and talent. Monthly Community Meetings regularly drew around 100 attendees to build shared analysis, vision and strategy together. Through deep leadership development, core leaders are analyzing political landscape and processes, preparing for candidacy and co-governance, shifting public

narrative, designing systemic solutions, and imagining possibilities for owning and stewarding the Bronx together.

You are invited to rise with us—into greater leadership and the most powerful evolution of our organization yet. **Whose Bronx? Our Bronx.** Help us fight back against oppression and fight forward for the future of our Bronx.

Sincerely,

  
Juan Esteban Nuñez  
Board President

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Housing Committee, **Juan Nuñez, President**

Mekong NYC, **Chhaya Chhoum, Vice President**

Manhattan College, **Margaret Groarke, Treasurer**

Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative / MIT CoLab, **Yorman Nuñez, Secretary**

Fordham University, **Jeannine Hill Fletcher**

Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association, **Jack Marth**

God's Fellowship Temple, **Pastor Edwin Pierce**

Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association, **Elizabeth Thompson**

Mary Mitchell Family & Youth Center, **Wanda Salaman**

NYCHA Bailey Houses, **Helene Redd**

Our Lady of Angels Parish, **Brad Hinze**

Sistas and Brothas United, **Geovanny Ayala & Wesley Guzman**

## **Additional Affiliate Members**

New Day Methodist Church

St. Nicholas of Tolentine

St. Simon Stock

Fordham Manor

# HISTORY, MISSION AND VALUES

The Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) is a grassroots, member-led organization that has worked to transform the communities in the Bronx since 1974.

## ***Our Mission:***

*We unite diverse people and institutions to work for economic democracy and racial justice through intergenerational community organizing.*

## ***Our Vision:***

*We envision a Bronx where our people have all that is essential for our community to thrive including housing, education and work with dignity, as well as personal and environmental health, and is rooted in collective ownership and decision-making over our political, economic and social systems, in order to build a just, equitable and sustainable world.*

For 45 years, the NWBCCC has supported Bronx residents to develop visionary leadership, build community power, and address issues that are important to our neighborhoods.

Local clergy, lay, and community leaders founded our organization in response to the wave of disinvestment, arson, and abandonment that threatened to destroy the Bronx in the early 1970s. We take direct action to confront injustice and win concrete victories that change material conditions, giving people a sense of the power of our community. We invest in our members' capacity to realize a shared vision for a Bronx where our people collectively own and govern the assets and political processes in our community.

Our organization has joined with other grassroots groups to found and participate in an array of coalitions to build a movement for justice on city, state, and national levels. Our membership guides our work around issues that deeply impact their lives and are aligned with our mission. Over the years we have fought for safe, affordable, and energy-efficient housing; healthy communities with green space; high-quality public schools where students can learn with dignity; community-led economic development; living wage green jobs, immigrant rights; and many other issues.

In all areas, we organize to win local victories and broader policy change that address the root causes of structural injustice around these issues. Where the private and public sector has failed our people, we build new institutions in our community and develop alternative models that put residents at the center of decision-making and ownership.



***Voter Power leader Helene Redd facilitates a Community Meeting to launch our planning process for the Bronx People's Platform.***





**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & VOTER POWER**



# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & VOTER POWER

Voter engagement and empowerment are critical tools for community organizing that transforms our political system. Our Voter Power Committee mobilizes our base and collaborates with partners across the borough to maximize participation in the electoral process and hold elected representatives accountable to advance racial and economic justice in the Bronx and beyond. Through integrated voter engagement, we increase voter turnout while building a base, leadership, and infrastructure to extend organizing beyond the electoral cycle. Elections are crucial opportunities to shape the political landscape of our organizing campaigns—not the totality of our organization’s life. They are one of many tools within our overall strategy to build and shift power so that our people are at the center of decision making.

As we build the skills of members to engage candidates and mobilize their community in individual elections, we also have a ten-year vision to increase Bronx voter turnout in primary elections to 70% of registered voters and to win the right to vote in local elections for non-citizens.

## TRAINING ON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE NEW YORK STATE OF PLAY

In preparation for this year’s legislative session, Voter Power leaders facilitated a training on the political landscape of our State Legislature for members from across the organization. A majority of our campaigns for the 2019 legislative session aimed to shift State-level policy around education, health, and housing. We broke down the key processes and players involved in passing policy and budgets in order to strategize around how we could influence them to win on our issues. We reflected on how NWBCCC and groups across New York powerfully organized to hold elected officials accountable to their constituents leading up to the 2018 elections, which led to a significant leadership shift and the passage of sweeping rent law reforms. NWBCCC members applied their knowledge in their campaigns to secure major victories and commitments for the next legislative session in 2020.

Elections, elected office, and civic leadership are opportunities to build deep democracy

***“It’s simple. Voting power is civil rights.”***

***— Corine Ombongo-Golden,  
Voter Power leader***



*Voter Power leader Corine Ombongo-Golden (second from right) requests a meeting with State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.*



*The Voter Power Committee developed a questionnaire to survey the 17 candidates for NYC Public Advocate on key issues. We displayed the answers of the 6 respondents at our Annual Meeting.*

and shared power between government and community. The NWBCCC collaborated with 13 Bronx partner organizations on a Bronx Leaders training for residents interested in pursuing a career as a political candidate, working on political campaigns or for government, or taking on new leadership within civic life. Over 40 Bronxites attended the day-long training, which covered models for co-governance with the community; successful fundraising, messaging, and field strategies to run for office; key roles and skills of campaign staff; and an orientation to roles in all levels of government, community boards, and civic associations. Participants developed proposals for how government institutions could establish shared decision-making with community and received coaching around their stump speeches.

## **VOTER AND CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT**

This year, we prioritized voter education and engagement around the special election for New York City Public Advocate in February. The Bronx has some of the lowest turnout rates in the city, and special elections typically draw even fewer voters to the polls. The Voter Power Committee decided to use our Annual Meeting, three days before the special election, to elevate the importance of this race for community members, educate them about the candidates' platforms, and mobilize them to the polls.

Voter Power leaders worked with our organization's other committees to develop questions for the Public Advocate candidates on housing for rent-stabilized and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) tenants, education,

***“It is important for the community to know that their voices can influence their elected officials.”***

***—Roberta Todd, Voter Power Leader***

health, and economic development and showcased their answers to over 200 community members at our Annual Meeting.

New York State made historic changes to its voting laws for the first time in over a century during the 2019 legislative session. Piloted in the fall, these reforms established early voting, pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds, consolidated primaries for federal and state elections, and modern voter registration systems. At our June Community Meeting, Voter Power leaders educated NWBCCC members on how these important changes will impact our civic engagement work going forward. They also worked with young people from the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to conduct street outreach to ensure our community is ready to take full advantage of these expanded voting rights.

### **BRONX PEOPLE’S PLATFORM FOR THE 2020 ELECTIONS**

Voter Power leaders laid critical groundwork for a 2020 election calendar packed with the Presidential Primary and General Election, Census 2020, and elections for Federal and State Representatives. As we planned for electoral process, we developed a bold vision for a Bronx People’s Platform for the 2020 elections. In preparation for June 23rd, 2020—election day for Congressional, State Senate, and State Assembly seats—Voter Power leaders created a process for community members to develop a borough-wide platform to engage candidates on issues that matter most. We identified local faith-based institutions, community centers, and

other vital constituencies to engage in these conversations. Together with organizations across the Bronx, we will hold a 2020 Candidates Forum to ask Federal and State candidates to pledge their support for our platform in order to inform voters’ decisions and hold the victors accountable.

At our November Community Meeting, we sourced ideas from close to 100 NWBCCC members. Grounded in our mission and values, we visioned, identified systemic solutions around the issues that matter most, and crafted strategic policy and investment proposals.

We are not alone in this work. NWBCCC has been organizing with our South Bronx partner, The Point CDC, to ensure that organizations across the Bronx are engaging their members to create a platform that is truly for and by the people of the Bronx. Come 2020, we will stand united before candidates to declare what the Bronx expects from the people we elect.



*SYEP Youth conduct outreach to community members around Early Voting.*





*Voter Power leaders educate members on the historic electoral and voting reforms passed in Albany during the 2019 legislative session.*



*NWBCCC members brainstorm ideas around systemic solutions to key issues to include in our Bronx People's Platform.*





*Rent Strikers from 3425 Gates Place Tenants Association hold a press conference and banner drop in front of their building to announce their rent strike.*





# HOUSING JUSTICE



# HOUSING JUSTICE

***After years of organizing, tenants won landmark legislation to dramatically strengthen New York State's rent laws and establish the most robust tenant protections in a generation.***

The Housing Justice Committee builds tenant leadership and power to take collective action to end landlord harassment, win repairs, and live together in dignity. In collaboration with other organizations and advocates, we wage campaigns to strengthen protections and housing for tenants across our borough, city, and state. Our work includes:

**1. Education and Legal Services:** Educate tenants on their rights and connect low-income tenants to free legal representation in housing court;

**2. Tenant Organizing:** Work with tenants to form and sustain tenant associations to hold their landlords accountable for repairs and fight back against landlord harassment and evictions; and

**3. Policy Advocacy:** Build coalitions to pass legislation to secure quality housing conditions and affordability and curb displacement and gentrification through predatory investment in the Bronx and beyond.

This year, we transitioned a number of tenants associations to be self-run, grew our Housing



*At the No More MCIs Town Hall in February, Housing Justice leader Leyda Reynolds of 135-145 West Kingsbridge Road shares how her tenants association successfully blocked The Morgan Group from charging a Major Capital Improvement rent increase.*

Steering Committee, passed a historic package of tenant protections into law, and launched a new campaign for Justice in Bronx Housing Court! Through intentional leadership development and expansive basebuilding, we galvanized a new wave of tenants to take action to improve their buildings, preserve their place in the Bronx, and build a movement to end New York’s housing crisis.

### **HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL**

After years of organizing, tenants won landmark legislation to dramatically strengthen New York State’s rent laws and establish the most robust tenant protections in a generation. This victory is a testament to the power of the state-wide Housing Justice for All coalition that we built through the Upstate Downstate Housing Alliance. At a time when our city has seen rents hit an all-time high and our state with the largest homeless population in the country—our members were clear: This was our moment to pass universal rent control.

We engaged in constant mobilization in Albany throughout 2019 to build support for our Housing Justice for All Platform—a package of 14 bills to close loopholes in state law that have favored the real estate industry for far too long. At our lobby day in April, Housing Justice leaders asked Bronx Senators and Assembly Members to sign on to our platform. In May, we returned with a busload of NWBCCC members to press them to commit to pass the legislative package in its entirety. In June, we returned yet again with another busload of Bronx residents to occupy the State Capitol, blocking hallways and doorways with tenants from across New York.

Our organizing efforts came to fruition when on June 14th, the State Legislature passed the



*Housing Justice leader Silvia Estudillo speaks with Bronx Assembly Member Victor Pichardo at a lobby visit in Albany.*

Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which includes the following protections:

- The Rent Regulation system is now permanent, and will no longer have to be renewed every four years.
- Rent Stabilization—which gives tenants the right to a renewal lease and protects against sudden rent hikes and retaliatory evictions—now covers the entire state.
- Rent stabilized apartments will remain regulated, even after the rent reaches \$2,775 a month.
- The 20% “vacancy bonus” to the legally registered rent in between tenancies has been eliminated.
- “Preferential rents” are now permanent for the duration of a tenant’s tenure in an apartment, and can no longer be revoked at lease renewal.
- Building-wide and individual apartment increases to tenants based on renovations are now limited, keeping rents affordable.
- Tenants have stronger protections against evictions, exorbitant security deposits, and burdensome fees.



*Hundreds of tenants from across the state gather outside the Capitol at a Housing Justice for All rally.*

After this historic win, our Housing Justice and Community Development Committees collaborated to host a Rent Laws Town Hall at Saint Margaret of Mary School, educating over 100 participants on the new protections, how we won them through organizing, and the next phase of our campaign. This victory will secure affordability, codify protections permanently, close loopholes landlords exploit to displace tenants and gentrify neighborhoods, and provide tenants with new tools to win changes in their buildings. It will also enable us to be more bold in our organizing. In 2020, we are committed to passing a New York Homes Guarantee to fully realize universal rent control, invest in permanently affordable and democratically controlled housing, and tax the rich to help solve our housing crisis.

### **RIGHT TO COUNSEL**

In 2017, the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition won legislation to ensure the right to an attorney for every low-income tenant facing eviction. As the City stages the implementation of Right to Counsel in zip codes with the highest eviction rates, our coalition has continued to build tenant power, challenge landlord harassment, and fight back against gentrification and displacement. As a member of the citywide Right to Counsel Coalition, we are committed to changing the narrative around evictions. Evictions are not normal. They are immoral. We won't stop fighting for an #EvictionFreeNYC.

In May, the Right to Counsel Coalition announced [NYC's Worst Evictors](#) in the neighborhoods protected by Right to Counsel. In 2018, landlords evicted around 20,000 families from their homes in New York City.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/civiljustice/OCJ\\_UA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/civiljustice/OCJ_UA_Annual_Report_2019.pdf)





*NWBCCC Housing Justice leaders Dominga Payano and Inalda Aguilar share their testimonies at the Moral March for Housing at Convent Avenue Baptist Church in Harlem. Afterwards, tenants marched to the State Office Building and staged a rally outside.*



***“If there’s one person that’s homeless in New York, then we’re all homeless. Until every person in this state and in this city has a place to live, I’m not going to stop fighting.”***

***—Juan Nuñez, Housing Justice Leader and NWBCCC Board Member***



## ***Evictions are not normal. They are immoral. We won't stop fighting for an #EvictionFreeNYC.***

Our coalition website [worstevictorsnyc.org](http://worstevictorsnyc.org) aggregates information about the practices of landlords who evict tenants at the highest rates, who they bank with, and what tenants can do to fight back. It hosts an interactive map that overlays evictions with other demographic data. The NWBCCC is currently organizing buildings owned by Steven Finkelstein and The Morgan Group, ranked #3 and #7 on the Bronx Worst Evictors List.

As a member of the Right to Counsel Coalition we participated in a Worst Evictors Week of Action to show the Worst Evictors that tenants are organizing in their buildings. Tenants in each borough organized rallies and press conferences to publicize their landlord's abuses and how they are fighting back. This prompted The Morgan Group and Moshe Piller to request meetings with tenants.

In October, we joined with over 250 tenants and advocates to put NYC's worst evictors on trial at the People's Tribunal on Evictions—the first of its kind in three decades. We followed in the tradition

of the Young Lords and the Black Panther Party, who organized People's Tribunals to hold bad actors accountable where the government failed to serve justice to Black and Brown communities. A five-member jury of experts listened to over three hours of tenant testimony against landlords, the Office of Court Administration, and City and State officials for perpetuating a cycle of abuse of tenants and people who are unhoused. The jury issued sweeping indictments of landlord and government abuses, and made statements of support for [our demands](#).

Our members denounced the many faces of landlord harassment to displace tenants— unjust permanent rent increases, frivolous court cases, shoddy work, lack of repairs, and verbal intimidation. NWBCCC Housing Justice leaders from 124 East 176th Street and 3425 Gates Place testified against landlords David Kleiner (David David) and The Morgan Group and shared how tenants have embarked on rent strikes to show the worst evictors it won't pay to put profits over people.



*Tenant leaders from 3425 Gates Place testify against their landlord, The Morgan Group, at the People's Tribunal on Evictions.*

# Demands to Make NYC Eviction Free

## 1. Expand Right to Counsel

The city should pass and fund Intro 1104 & Intro 1529.

## 2. Recognize Housing as a Human Right

The city should pass a resolution in support of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, recognizing that Housing is a Human Right.

## 3. Moratorium on Evictions

The state should place a Moratorium on Evictions in the Winter (Oct. 1-May 30).

## 4. Investigate Worst Evictors

The city should investigate everyone on the worst evictors list, including investigating the firms that represent the landlords.

While under investigation, the city should seek injunctions against the landlords, barring them from bringing eviction cases while under investigation and their buildings should be put on the Certificate of No Harassment List.

## 5. Education and Awareness

The city should immediately implement a robust public awareness campaign about tenants' Right to Counsel, and all of the new rights passed on the state level, using all of the best practices we've outlined like language access, public spaces, etc.

## 6. Pass Good Cause Legislation

The state should pass S2892A/A5030, legislation that would provide tenants' the right to renew their lease, limit rent increases, and ensure that tenants have the right to organize without the fear of retaliation.

## 7. Make Eviction Case Filing Data Public

The state should make this data public, in a way that protects tenants' identity and information, so that we can have better data about landlords' actions.

## 8. Outlaw the Tenant Blacklist

The state should fully enforce the new law outlawing the tenant blacklist, including a right for tenants to sue.

## 9. Review Judges' Eviction Statistics

The state should require the Housing Court Advisory Council to review the number of evictions by each judge/year, as a part of the review process. In addition, the council should hold public hearings during the review process in order to obtain feedback from tenants and others.

## 10. Ensure the OCA Adequately Informs Tenants

The state should ensure that OCA adequately informs tenants of their new tenants' rights, including right to counsel, such as updating the power points, signage throughout the courts, ensuring that tenants can access their rental histories in housing court, etc.

## 11. Pass "Clean Hands" Legislation

The state should pass "clean hands" legislation barring landlords from being able to bring an eviction case if they have open violations.

## 12. Pass Home Stability Support

The state should pass Home Stability Support, creating a new statewide rent supplement for New Yorkers facing homelessness.



*Tenant leaders from NWBCCC and CASA stand together at a press action to demand changes from the OCA in Bronx Housing Court.*

Landlords continue to evict poor and working class people of color without legal representation at critically high rates and our members decided to step up our resistance. We organized trainings on eviction blockades and formed a legal support team. In November, we held our first orientation session to launch our Eviction Defense Network to prepare volunteers to join a First-Responders Committee when a household is interested in participating in an eviction blockade. We are ready to move into bold action to disrupt evictions in 2020.

Right to Counsel has already demonstrated tremendous success. In the first year of its five-year phase-in, 84% of the tenants who had a lawyer under the law remained in their homes. Evictions declined more than five times faster in zip codes where Right to Counsel was in effect than in similar zip codes where it was not.<sup>2</sup>

Other cities with Right to Counsel laws have demonstrated that there are several ways we can expand it in NYC. We launched the Right to Counsel Power to Organize Campaign to demand new legislation—Intros 1104 and 1529—that would ensure nearly all tenants facing an eviction have and are informed of the right to counsel.

We are calling for an expansion of:

- Right to Counsel’s income eligibility level from 200% to 400% of the federal poverty level;
- City funding of tenant organizing to ensure Right to Counsel’s success; and
- Coverage of eviction cases, including Housing Preservation and Development administrative hearings for Mitchell-Lama residents, Supreme Court ejection cases, Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) cases, and appeals.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/civiljustice/OCJ\\_UA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/civiljustice/OCJ_UA_Annual_Report_2019.pdf)



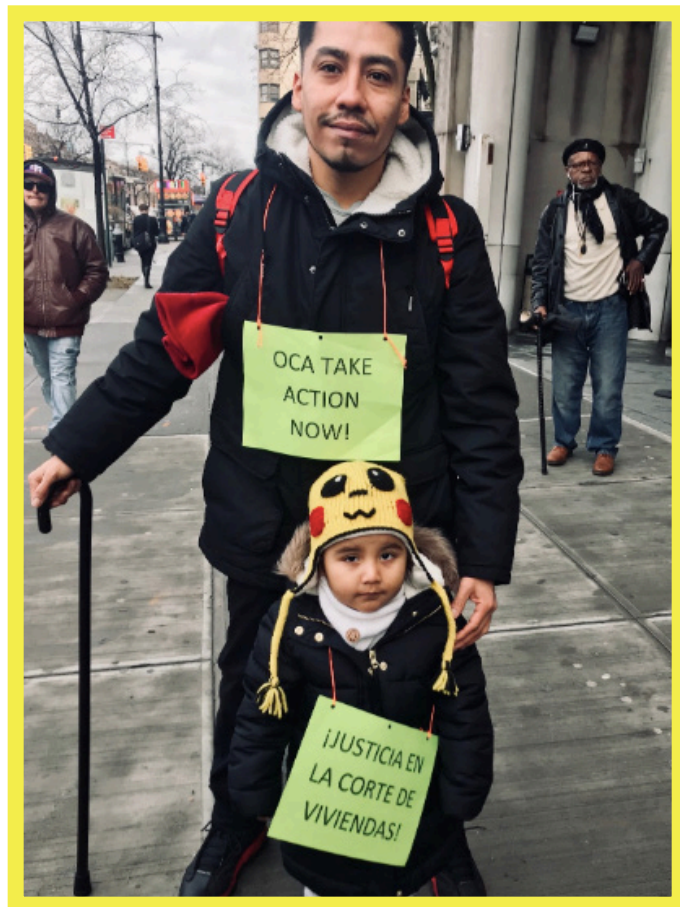
We are just one Council Member away from a veto-proof majority as we build towards the New York City Council Hearing for the two bills in 2020.

### JUSTICE IN HOUSING COURT

Every week, landlords evict an average of 66 households in the Bronx. This year, we joined Bronx housing justice partner, CASA, to take the fight against homelessness to Bronx Housing Court.

We conducted a three-month Court Watch of Bronx Housing Court to monitor the implementation of the Right to Counsel initiative. During that time, we met regularly with Bronx housing attorneys to share our observations. In October, our coalition released *Tipping the Scales*<sup>3</sup>, a report compiling our findings and calling on the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to use Right to Counsel to transform Housing Court to serve justice for tenants. Tenants requested meetings with OCA to discuss our findings and proposals to address ongoing issues. Receiving no response, tenants escalated tactics.

In December, we staged a silent protest in courtrooms on every floor of Bronx Housing Court and delivered a letter to the supervising judge, demanding a meeting. Outside, we held a press conference to detail the hostile environment for tenants that OCA has failed to address despite years of organizing, including long security lines, insufficient tenant resources, language inaccessibility, no formal complaint process, and a ban on food that means families go hungry amidst excessive waits.



*Tenant leader of 2285 Morris Avenue, Ignacio Acevedo and his daughter join the Press Action demanding OCA make changes in Bronx Housing Court.*

<sup>3</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2021c5e5dd5b3a4dda00d4/t/5e27c3eaf2fd0e4c3de-7af5f/1579664387267/Report-Tipping-the-Scales-Right-to-Counsel-is-the-Moment-for-The-Office-of-Court-Administration-to-Transform-Housing-Courts.pdf>

### **3425 GATES PLACE: STRIKING TO STOP RENT HIKES AND HARASSMENT**

Tenants from 3425 Gates Place have shown tremendous leadership in our citywide and statewide coalitions while going all in to stop rent hikes and harassment in their building. In 2018, over 30 tenants began withholding the MCI portion of their rent after their landlord, The Morgan Group, charged MCI rent increases of up to \$81.33 per room for shoddy work including bathroom and kitchen renovations. Tenants suffered six months of excessive dust and dangerous construction conditions in which 61 households shared two bathrooms and had no kitchen, only to be left with new problems, such as thinner walls, smaller kitchens and bathrooms, along with defective toilets.

In September 2019, tenants of 3425 Gates Place escalated to a full rent strike. Despite tenants holding a press conference at housing court, testifying at the Bronx MCI Town Hall or testifying against the Morgan Group at our People's Tribunal on Evictions, and meeting with management and The Morgan's Group lawyers—their landlord refused to remove the rent hike. When tenants sent a third letter requesting that the MCI rent charge be removed before Christmas, the Morgan Group took four households on rent strike to Housing Court.

In December, tenant leaders from 3425 Gates Place Tenant Association dropped a banner in front of their building and held a press conference to announce their full rent strike. They demanded their landlord eliminate the unjust MCI rent hike and stop all housing court

proceedings. City Council Member Andrew Cohen attended and pledged his support to their cause. Tenant leaders of 3425 Gates Place have shown dedication and courage on behalf of their neighbors and continue to fight forward for a New York where everyone lives with dignity.

MCI rent increases like these take money from household and medical expenses critical for the survival of poor, working-class, and immigrant families. They also threaten to force many from their homes. Last year, The Morgan Group evicted 22 families in only four zip codes, making them the #7 Worst Evictor in the Bronx. If the Morgan Group is allowed to continue these displacement business practices in the 49 buildings they own in the Bronx, we will lose hundreds of our neighbors. In 2020, we will continue the fight to abolish MCIs and win a moratorium on evictions during winter months.



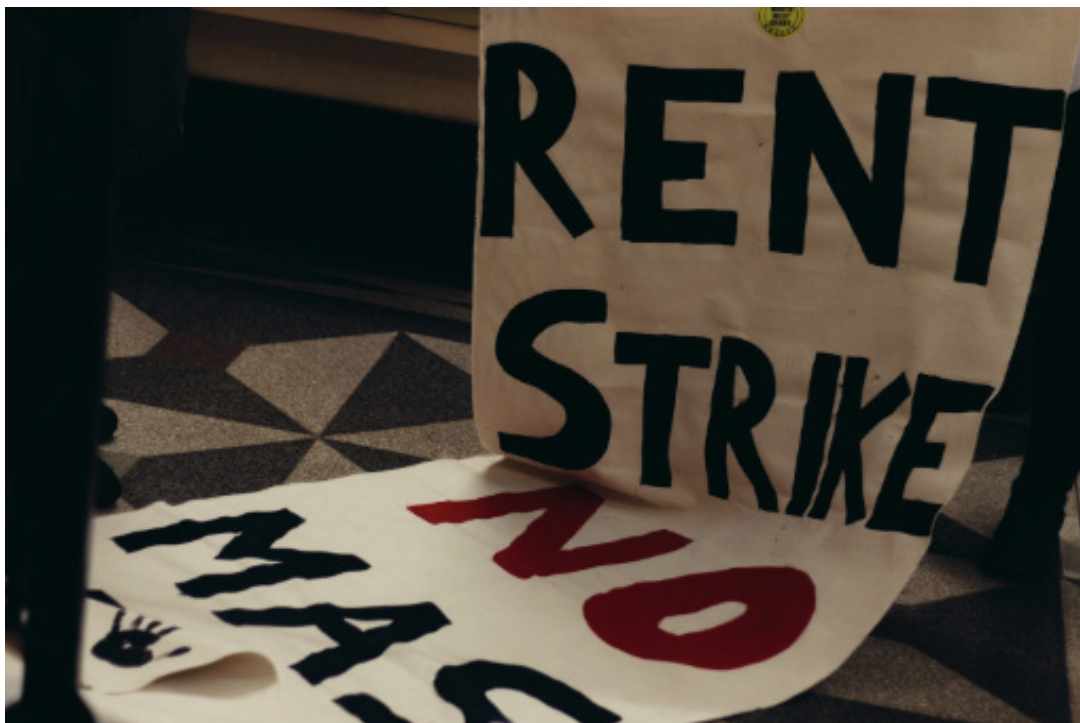
*Rent Strikers from 3425 Gates Place Tenants Association hold a press conference and banner drop in front of their building to demand an end to The Morgan Group's harassment.*





***“We know as the rich get richer they discriminate against the working class... In many apartments instead of fixing things, they did more damage. Now we have to pay for something that we never asked for.”***

***—Evodio Rosas, Rent Striker of 3425 Gates Place  
Tenants Association***

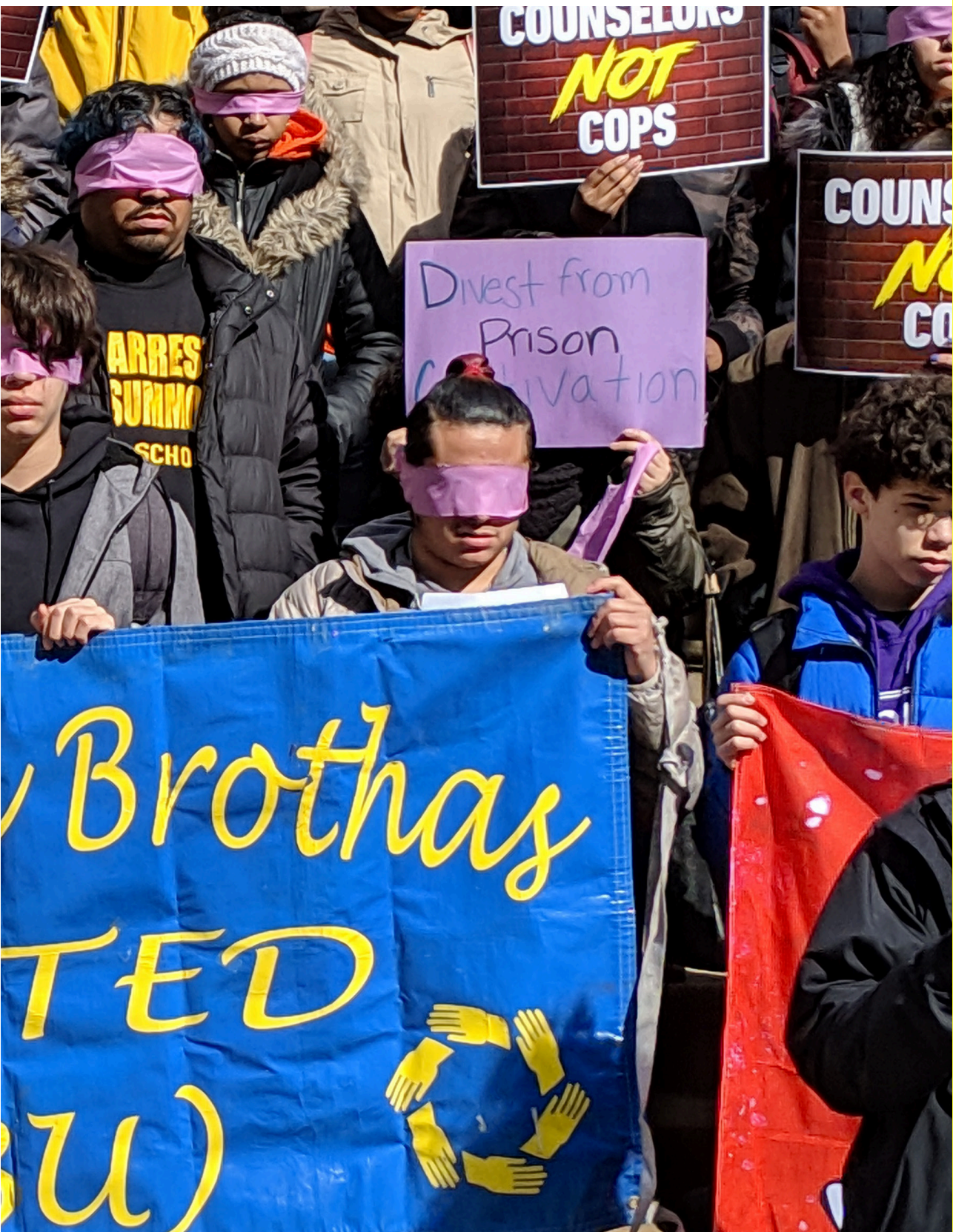






***SBU youth leaders wear blindfolds to call out Mayor DeBlasio's turning a blind eye to youth of color with the use of punitive discipline practices that push them out of schools.***





**EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE /  
SISTAS AND BROTHAS UNITED (SBU)**



# EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE / SBU



*Youth and adults from SBU and NWBCCC are an intergenerational force against the criminalization of young people of color in schools.*

Sistas and Brothas United (SBU) engages in holistic youth development and organizes campaigns on the local, state, and national level to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, which pushes students out of school and on a pathway to prison through:

- harsh school discipline policies that use suspension and expulsion for minor offenses,
- increased policing and surveillance that create prison-like environments in schools, and
- over-reliance on referrals to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.

SBU had a powerful year of policy wins and deep youth development. We fulfilled all of our 2019 priorities:

- reduce punitive disciplinary actions in New York City's School Discipline Code;
- expand resource allocation for restorative justice programs that invest in holistic mental health support, foster a culture of empathy, and empower young people to repair harm when conflict occurs; and
- activate more youth leaders in the Bronx to organize their communities and collectively develop meaningful responses to conflict.

## **POLICY CHANGE FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

SBU and partner organizations of the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) won major changes to the school discipline code in 2019. These include a cap on out-of-school suspensions from **180 to 20 days** and implementation of restorative justice in over **100 middle and high schools**.

Leading up to their victory, SBU leaders worked tirelessly to amplify the voices of Bronx youth and escalate pressure on key decision makers. With our partner organizations within the Urban Youth Collaborative, we launched a petition calling on NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio, Chancellor of NYC Department of Education Richard Carranza, and NYC Police Commissioner Dermont F. Shea to end arrests and summonses for minor infractions in schools.

By March, SBU youth leaders collected more than 2,500 petitions from students at the Dodge, Roosevelt, and Walton Campuses and from members of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, New Day, Our Lady of Angels, and St. Simon Stock Churches. Together, UYC youth leaders delivered 10,000 petitions to Mayor DeBlasio's office, sending the message that NYC wants an end to the criminalization of youth of color in schools.



*SBU youth leader Rikya Kee speaks on behalf of the Urban Youth Collaborative at a press conference with New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio to celebrate a cap on suspensions and expansion of restorative justice in school.*

**Research shows that police do not make schools safer. They criminalize minor infractions and push Black and Latinx students out of school and on a path to prison.**

**According to NYPD's data from the the 2017-2018 school year:**

Nearly 85 percent of all arrests, summonses, and NYPD juvenile reports of young people in NYC schools were for misdemeanors and violations

•  
Black and Latinx students account for 92% of all summons and 89% of all arrests

•  
Black girls are 10.4 times more likely to be arrested and 6.3 times more likely to be issued a summons than their White peers.

•  
Black boys are 5.6 times more likely to be arrested and 9 times more likely to receive a summons than White boys.

•  
Experiencing an arrest for the first time in high school nearly doubles the odds of the student dropping out, and a court appearance nearly quadruples those odds.



*SBU youth leader Jordany Badillo testifies at a press conference hosted by the Urban Youth Collaborative to demand more counselors instead of cops in NYC schools.*

In April, SBU youth leader Rikya Kee called in to the #AsktheMayor segment of the Brian Lehrer Radio Show to issue a direct request to Mayor DeBlasio to end arrests and summonses and invest in restorative justice alternatives. His response: “We are not doing an across-the-board end of arrests or summons.” Undeterred, youth leaders escalated tactics in June, traveling to Iowa to confront Mayor DeBlasio at the launch of his tour for presidential candidacy. Later that month, the Department of Education announced it would sharply limit school-based arrests and summonses, cap the maximum amount of time for suspensions, and expand restorative justice programs in schools. At the Mayor’s public briefing, SBU youth leader Bryan Aju shared her enthusiasm for these critical shifts given

her experience with harsh school discipline practices.

Building on our citywide victory, we continued to lobby on the state level for The Safe and Supportive Schools Act to eliminate suspensions for students in Kindergarten through third grade and increase the use of practices of restorative justice in schools as alternatives to suspensions. Through press actions and lobby visits with legislators, we built unprecedented support for it in the State Assembly and Senate as well as from the NYC Deputy Chancellor of School Climate and Wellness. We will continue to organize to bring the act to the floor for a vote in 2020—and we expect to win.





*SBU youth leader Bryan Aju (second from the left) and UYC Leaders deliver over 10,000 petitions to end arrests and summons to Mayor DeBlasio's office.*



***I do not want my younger brother to go through the route that I've been through, which is the bullying, the prison system, the [Student Safety Agents] and metal detectors in schools when there is no reason for them to be there. I've been in the juvenile system before, wrongfully. But I didn't have the necessary resources. If I'm a part of this work and I help move this movement forward, I can make the change for other young people that I needed then.***

***—Bryan Aju, SBU Youth Leader***



*SBU Youth Leaders Eliana Martinez and Ayisha Jade Entien facilitate a Know Your Rights workshop on the school discipline code for Dignity in Schools National Week of Action.*

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

This year, we invested deeply in SBU’s core youth leaders around restorative justice practices, facilitation, and relationship building. Through intensive trainings, youth leaders developed a sophisticated understanding of how to apply different kinds of restorative justice practices to different issues and scenarios. This led them to develop models and plans for long-term support to schools seeking to implement programs. Youth curated a series of restorative justice trainings to present, tailor, and replicate in three schools in the coming year with the city’s expansion of restorative justice programs.

Youth leaders attended a train-the-trainers series from February to June that honed their skills around base building and alliance building as part of a larger organizing strategy. As an intergenerational training space, youth and adults built stronger allyship to disrupt common narratives around punishment in schools and

developed an analysis around how other social issues impact students. As a result, youth leaders created the All Tea No Sugar episode “Crisis in the Bronx” to dig deep around how tenant harassment and displacement intersects with the school-to-prison pipeline. Youth and tenant leaders discussed the impact of punitive practices that push Black and Latinx youth out of school in the context of the city’s homelessness crisis. As we look to 2020, we aim to hire a public housing youth organizer to build a base of youth leaders connecting the fight for justice at home and school.

Bridging across generations and issues, youth leaders worked with the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI) to facilitate a workshop on economic democracy for 20 educators at a Bronx Academy for Software Engineering (BASE) conference. They walked away with a deeper analysis around the need to build shared ownership and democratic decision





*SBU Youth Leader Aricelis Oliveras testifies for the Solutions Not Suspensions bill on the steps of the State Capitol.*



*SBU youth leaders Wesley Guzman and Geovanny Alaya facilitate an economic democracy training for teachers at Bronx Academy of Software Engineering.*

making in our schools, homes, and land. In April, youth leaders received training on participatory budgeting as a vehicle to expand democratic decision making over the investment of public dollars. They engaged more than 200 students, some as young as 11, to vote on proposals for how to spend a portion of the budget for City Council District 11.

SBU youth leaders developed and ran a six-week summer leadership program, engaging over 30 Bronx youth in workshops around narrative shift, community organizing and political education.

These new youth members hosted a Bronx Got Talent event that drew over 100 young people to celebrate the strengths of our community through culture sharing and community building. Attendees showcased their gifts and identified assets of the Bronx they want to preserve, expand, and uplift. In the new school year, these young people initiated two leadership development groups in local schools to explore current issues and develop campaigns through a restorative justice lens.

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***“Teachers and staff can use methods that don’t push students out of school but instead actually address the problem.”***

***—Amber Schillaci, SBU Youth Leader***

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## STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

The ratio of full-time guidance counselors to students in NYC schools is 1:407, according to UYC's 2017 policy brief, *Young People's Vision for Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Schools*. While we organize to demand that our schools fully serve students, our Student Success Center prepares young people for academic success today and their future career paths. Through one-on-one counseling, workshops, and field trips, we orient students and their families to highschool and college selection and application processes and offer holistic academic and career support.

This year, our After-School Academic Support Program provided ongoing, one-on-one tutoring to more than 20 students on homework, Regents prep, and deepening their understanding of core subjects. Our tutors met regularly with our young people to create individual academic success plans and to provide the guidance to excel.

Our College Readiness Program ran over 15 workshops for more than 100 students and parents to prepare them for college and career paths. Freshmen and sophomores learned about college fundamentals and explored potential career paths. Juniors developed their resumes. Rising seniors began the college search, learned how to apply to college and financial aid, and honed their essay-writing skills. We helped families create Federal Student Aid IDs and complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

We expanded our college and career offerings for young people interested in the fields of technology, design, and innovation. In partnership with BCDI, five youth leaders participated in



weekly workshops at their Bronx Innovation Factory to design innovative solutions to community issues. Over the course of the series, they developed Bluetooth-enabled air quality monitors that capture and upload various data to a crowdsourced map created by [Habitat Map](#). This open-source database is a tool for communities to leverage health and environmental data from buildings to map air pollution and inform public policy for environmental justice.

Inspired by this experience, young people pursued college trips to schools that offer programs around innovation and social impact. In April, 23 young people travelled with BCDI to Massachusetts Institute for Technology and the South End Technology Center in Boston where they learned about new technologies, the global Fab Lab network, and connected with current students of color. Youth also visited Manhattan College to learn about their Collegiate Science and Technology Program (CSTEP).





*SBU youth leaders learn skills in digital fabrication at the Bronx Innovation Factory.*



*SBU youth leaders visit Massachusetts Institute for Technology and the South End Technology Center in Boston. Photos by Maggie Tishman*



***NWBCCC leaders Juan Esteban and D'Andre Penn rally for Medicare for All in Washington, D.C.***

***Photo by Jeff Mikkelson***





**HEALTH JUSTICE**

# HEALTH JUSTICE



*Health Justice leaders discuss the New York Health Act with lead sponsor State Senator Gustavo Rivera.*

The Bronx consistently ranks New York's sickest county. We know this inequity is rooted in a history of redlining and disinvestment in our communities as well as a healthcare system that determines access to care based on ability to pay. Our Health Justice Committee builds democratic community power to shift policy and investment to ensure access to quality healthcare for all and builds models for preventative, community-based care that address root causes of health inequity and promote holistic wellness.

In 2019, our Health Justice Committee worked with partners across the state to build the community leadership, partnerships, and political will to win Universal Health Care in New York.

## **HEALTHCARE FOR ALL**

In 2018, NWBCCC Health Justice leaders joined the Campaign for New York Health, a state-wide coalition to pass legislation for universal healthcare in New York. In February, Health

Justice leaders joined nurses, doctors, home care workers, and advocates in Albany for the re-introduction of the New York Health Act (NYHA) to the New York State Legislature under the lead sponsorship of Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblyman Richard Gottfried. The NYHA will establish a single-payer healthcare system that will guarantee comprehensive and affordable health coverage for all New Yorkers. It includes long-term care to ensure that elders and folks with disabilities get the care they need while their caregivers are compensated for their labor.

Our leaders became fierce and sophisticated advocates for the NYHA. Health Justice leaders organized four NYHA info sessions to educate our community and build strategic partnerships across the Bronx. In collaboration with Senator Rivera, the New York State Nurse Association, and the Caring Majority, our leaders hosted panel discussions to engage community



members around the urgent needs around health coverage for Bronxites and the different provisions of the NYHA. Panelists discussed how the NYHA will revolutionize the way we experience healthcare, the financial implications of the bill, as well as the intersections of universal healthcare and racial justice. We also co-hosted the Healthcare for All Roundtable with Mekong NYC, inviting racial and immigrant justice organizations, labor unions, and service providers to build collective power.

Health Justice leader Helen Krim deepened our partnership with Bronx Health Reach while addressing challenging questions around care and cost at their May monthly meeting. Nationwide, medical debt is the single leading cause of personal bankruptcy. Helen discussed how the NYHA will save money for health systems, keep hospitals open, and advance

affordable quality care. She shared how her personal healthcare costs would decrease under the NYHA and explained complicated tax law to demonstrate how New York State could finance a single-payer healthcare system.

In October, NWBCCC leaders, healthcare workers, and health justice advocates spoke with one voice to demand universal healthcare at the Bronx Public Hearing on the NYHA hosted by New York Senate and Assembly. Nearly 100 members of NWBCCC, 1199 Service Employees International Union, New York State Nurses Association, and Mekong NYC rallied outside the hearing and packed the 150-seat auditorium to testify for healthcare as a human right. NWBCCC leaders boldly shared stories about how the current health system has failed them and their families and called on legislators to pass the NYHA now.



*Health Justice leaders and community partners gathered for the Healthcare for All Roundtable.*

***“As a physician, I’m trained to interpret symptoms and diagnose disease. When I hear that 50% of New Yorkers with private insurance delayed or skipped care due to cost, that tells me that our healthcare system is sick.”***

***—Dr. Chanelle Diaz, Health Justice leader***



*Health Justice leader Dr. Chanelle Diaz speaks to the press about the urgent need to pass the NYHA given the crisis of our healthcare system and health outcomes in the Bronx.*



*Pastor Tabatha Holley of New Day Church speaks on the moral responsibility to pass the New York Health Act. Photo by Jeff Mikkelson*

***“In a land where there is an abundance of medicine and medical care, it would be a crying shame if we continued to allow some folks to die when we have the resources that they need to live.”***

***—Pastor Tabatha Holley, New Day Church***



## NWBCCC IN SOLIDARITY WITH HEALTHCARE WORKERS

The Health Justice Committee strived to embody just partnership with our labor partners this year. In February, NWBCCC Health Justice leaders and staff joined the New York State Nurse Association rally for safe staff-to-patient ratios and a fair contract with Montefiore Medical Center. We joined them in their rallying cry: “When nurses win, patients win.”

The cold winter months did not stop us from showing our solidarity with 1199. Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Health Justice leaders joined 1199 SEIU in taking a strong stand against the proposed \$1 billion cut for Medicaid and Medicare in New York State at the beginning of the year. We deeply value all workers who labor arduously to care for our community members at their most vulnerable. And we celebrate that we are stronger together.

## BRONX HEALTH JUSTICE TASK FORCE

This year, the Health Justice Committee worked with key stakeholders to develop a proposal to address the quality of care in our local hospitals through community-centered solutions. In May, Senators Gustavo Rivera and Jamaal Bailey hosted the first Bronx Health Justice Task Force meeting. Through ongoing strategic conversations, Health Justice leaders worked with elected officials and hospital administrators to inform plans for the merger between North Central Bronx Hospital (NCBH) and Jacobi Hospital and address concerns with overcrowding and understaffing at Montefiore Medical Center’s Emergency Department. Health Justice leaders also participated in the NCBH/ Jacobi Community Health Needs Assessment to advance community-led solutions with our health systems.

## NYC CARE ROLLS OUT IN THE BRONX

Last January, Mayor Bill De Blasio announced the NYC Care initiative, a health care access program that guarantees low-cost and no-cost services provided through New York City Health and Hospitals to those who do not qualify for or cannot afford health insurance. The City selected NWBCCC as one of the community organizations to coordinate outreach, education, and enrollment in the Bronx.

As we rolled out the NYC Care initiative, we have been in deep conversation with our community about the need for affordable, quality care in the Bronx. From July to November, we reached a total of 4,202 Bronxites at 38 community events. We expect to reach 7,000 community residents by the end of February 2020.



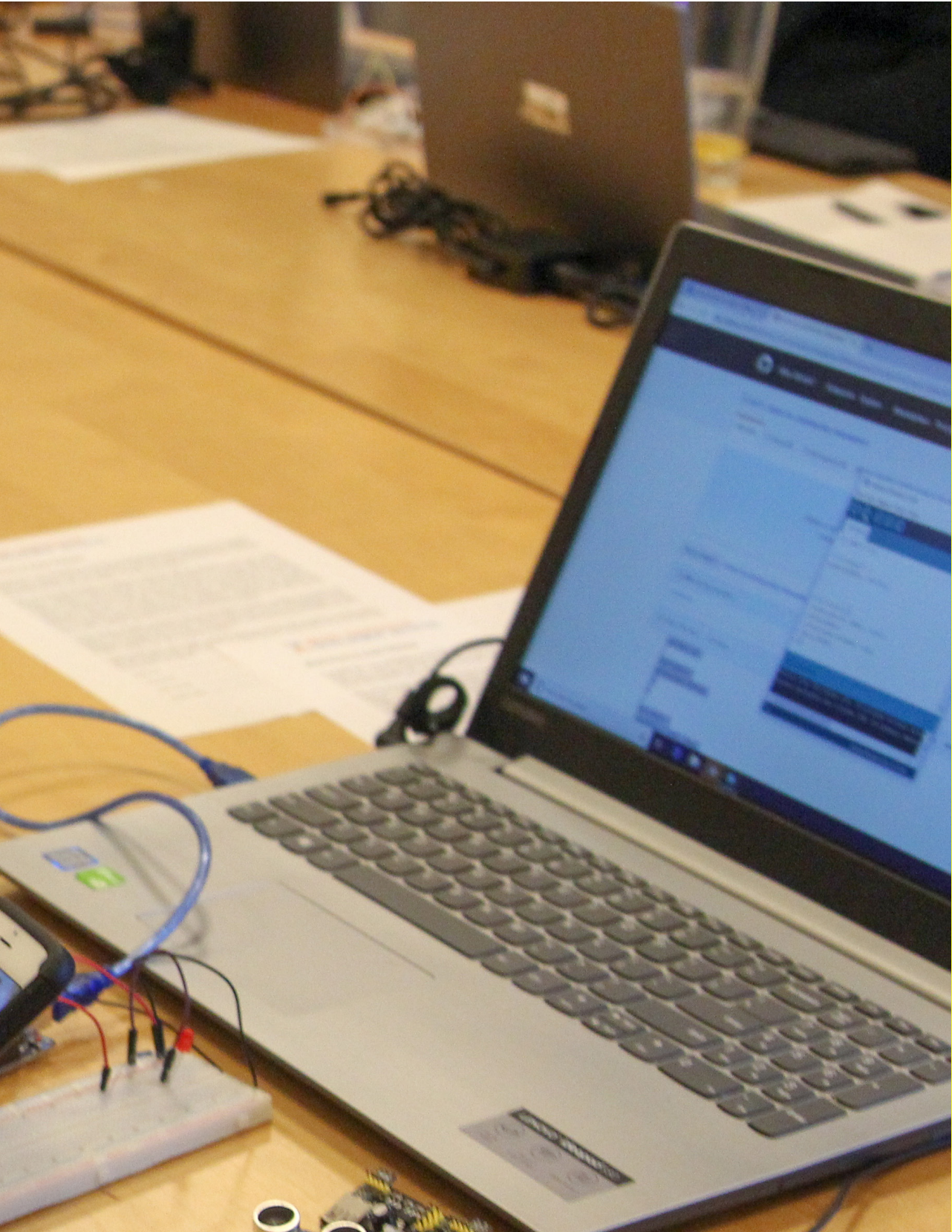
*Health Justice leaders and staff joined nurses to demand #SafeStaffing in front of Montefiore Medical Center.*





***Joanis Martinez, graduate of our Integrated Pest Management job training program, receives training on electronics and 3D modeling at BCDI's Bronx Innovation Factory.  
Photo by Maggie Tishman***





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At NWBCCC, we believe our community has the talent and expertise to build a Bronx where all can thrive. Our Economic Development Committee designs and carries out policies and tools to make that a reality. We mobilize and build leadership within our community to vision, plan, and demand development that reinvests in our people holistically. Through cross-sector partnerships between our community, government, business, workforce development, legal advocacy, and anchor institutions, we coalesce the expertise and political will to implement innovative initiatives that set a new standard for development that puts our people and planet first.

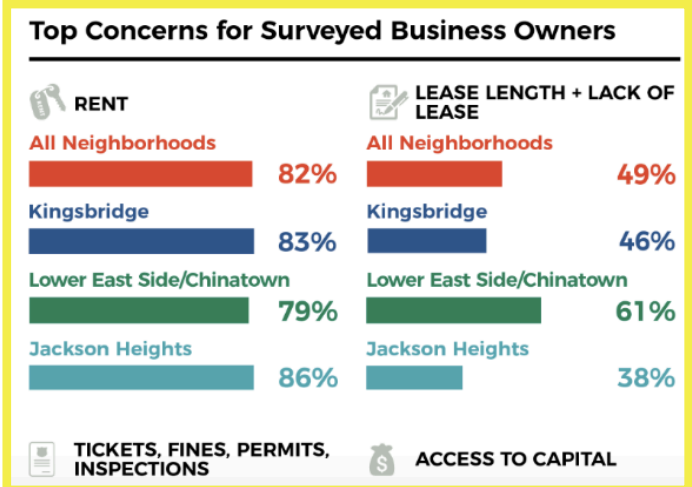
This year, our Economic Development Committee worked with small business owners in the Bronx and citywide to pass two critical pieces of legislation to defend against landlord harassment and speculation. Our Bronx Healthy Buildings Program expanded its work in public housing to reduce asthma triggers in the home, train and employ Bronx residents, and organize tenants for long-term improvements of their buildings.

## SMALL BUSINESS ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

As part of United for Small Business NYC (USBNYC), our Economic Development Committee worked with community organizations across the city to accomplish key policy changes to defend small businesses against displacement.

We conducted a survey to assess the needs of commercial corridors that are dense in immigrant-owned small businesses. These businesses provide culturally-relevant products and spaces for neighbors to convene—but lack

sufficient protections from displacement and from the communities they serve. Through store-to-store outreach and community convenings, we engaged 40 immigrant small business owners in the Kingsbridge corridor around the urgent needs and pressures they face. We combined our findings with the testimonies of business owners from the Lower East Side, Chinatown, and Jackson Heights in USBNYC’s report *The Forgotten Tenants: New York City’s Immigrant Small Business Owners*. Across neighborhoods and demographics, we identified major issues that demand the City’s attention: rent burden, tenant harassment, barriers to access capital, and fines and access to city resources.



*USBNYC identified four critical concerns across immigrant-dense commercial corridors in our report, *The Forgotten Tenants: New York City’s Immigrant Small Business Owners*.*

After months of lobbying, public hearings, and negotiations with City Council members, we passed two bills in August to discourage commercial tenant harassment and commercial property owner speculation:



**Intro 1410 Commercial Certificate of No Harassment** establishes a \$10,000 to \$50,000 fine for landlords that harass or illegally evict a commercial tenant.

**Intro 1473 Vacant Storefront Registry** requires property owners to register when a storefront property becomes vacant for more than 90 days. Failure to register results in a civil penalty of \$1,000 per week.

Building off of the momentum of these victories, we will continue to work to pass Commercial Right to Counsel and Commercial Rent Stabilization bills in 2020.

As one of six organizations of the Six to Celebrate Program, we partnered with NYC's Historic District Council to identify, celebrate, and protect sites of historic and architectural significance in Kingsbridge as part of a broader effort to preserve the culture and character of the community for the future. The Northwest Bronx is home to architectural gems from multiple eras and in various styles, from the colossal Kingsbridge Armory to 19th century farmhouses to stunning 1930's Art-Deco apartment buildings.

We asked the over 200 attendees at our February Annual Meeting what areas they want to ensure are protected. Then we conducted research and mapping to understand which locations are eligible for landmark designation. We conducted a walking tour of the neighborhood with the Historic District Council to illuminate our community's histories and priorities. Now we are applying to landmark key sites to prevent their demolition or significant alteration through new development that could displace both the people and the places that are essential to our community's fabric.



*Business owners from across the city call for commercial tenant protections at a USBNYC press conference on the steps of City Hall.*

***“The Kingsbridge area is always busy, but there are stores closing down after 20 to 30 years. Many small business owners are immigrants, trying to support their families and holding our community together.”***

*—Christian Ramos, Vice President, Kingsbridge Merchants Association*

## BRONX HEALTHY BUILDINGS PROGRAM

The Bronx Healthy Buildings Program (Healthy Buildings) is a cross-sector initiative that promotes community health and development through addressing the root causes of asthma-related morbidity, hospitalizations, and emergency room visits in the Bronx. Our holistic approach eliminates asthma triggers in the home, builds tenant leadership to address poor building conditions, reduces energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, and invests in high road jobs and community-based contractors. As we connect landlords with capital investment for infrastructure improvements, we leverage financing tools and regulatory agreements that ensure building upgrades will not displace residents through rent increases.

### *Public Housing*

We take a data-informed approach to target “sick” buildings whose conditions repeatedly send residents to the hospital for asthma-related concerns. Last year, a state report found that 80% of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments had issues that could contribute to asthma in children, and we decided to pivot our focus to address this public health crisis. This year, we prioritized Monterey Houses, a 233-unit NYCHA development in the Belmont neighborhood referred to us by St. Barnabas Hospital due to the high rate of residents with asthma visiting the emergency room.



*Residents show their Northwest Bronx pride outside of Monterey Houses, a public housing development participating in our Bronx Healthy Buildings Program.*

We launched the project at the January Monterey Houses Resident Council meeting, where we oriented tenants to the program’s benefits, including free home-based asthma support from Community Health Workers as well as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) services to holistically pest-proof apartments. In March, we co-hosted a press conference with New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres and Resident Council President Gil Simmons in front of Monterey Houses. Council Member Torres announced that his office would invest \$50,000 in the project and allocate \$224,000 to remodel Monterey Houses playground according to designs selected by residents.

***“The cleaning and pest control crew went above and beyond and were very knowledgeable. Being that I am physically limited, I am very grateful for these services.”***

***—Danalia Copps, Monterey Houses Resident***



Throughout the initiative, we offer a variety of training opportunities to build tenants' skills and analysis to identify needed building upgrades and engage in meaningful solutions. In collaboration with our Health Justice Committee, we held a two-part Social Determinants of Health training series. Over 30 tenants analyzed connections between root causes of poor health, housing and environmental conditions and developed a framework for developing short- and long-term solutions to building-wide concerns.

We trained 12 Bronx residents to become certified, paid Community Health Surveyors to track and evaluate the progress and impact of the program. From March to May, we conducted extensive outreach through doorknocking, phonebanking and tabling to survey 150 tenants, or 60% of the development, to get an accurate assessment of the conditions facing individual tenants and the building as a whole.

Over the summer, we prioritized building community at the Monterey Houses Health and Wellness Day and Family Day. At both events, we built relationships with residents, offered them free legal services, fresh food bags, and celebrated with a DJ and face painting. Partners from Census 2020, St. Barnabas Hospital, and Housing Court Answers supported their success.

While Healthy Buildings has demonstrated impact, our initiative requires significantly greater investment to meet the demand in the Bronx. To address over \$31.8 billion in capital needs, NYCHA is considering solutions that would transfer land and management to private companies and jeopardize future sustainability of public housing.

This year, our Economic Development Committee joined ten other organizations in the NYCHA Land and Healthy Homes Coalition to



NWBCCC co-hosts a press conference with Council Member Ritchie Torres to announce investment in the Bronx Healthy Buildings Program at the Monterey Houses.

call for a citywide initiative to chart a different path for NYCHA's stabilization. We have requested \$1,000,000 of investment for the NYCHA Housing Preservation Initiative to fund technical assistance and organizing for NYCHA residents. This would offer critical support towards scaling our Healthy Buildings model for community sustainability and economic equity.

### *Privately-Owned Buildings*

In 2019, we completed post surveying at three buildings owned by landlord Kenny Nasab where we had successfully implemented the Healthy Buildings program. The post survey process is key to evaluating the success of the program and is a paid opportunity for tenants to receive training and experience in collecting feedback from their neighbors.

In addition, tenants from all the buildings continued to work with their landlord to shift how they do business to improve living conditions for tenants. They secured an IPM contract with a local Bronx enterprise, and Nasab signed a maintenance agreement for ongoing IPM services beyond the program to ensure the buildings remain pest-free.

## **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

This year, we expanded the impact and aspirations for our workforce development program to create jobs with dignity, health and wellness, and shared ownership for Bronxites. In partnership with Bronx Partners for Healthy Communities and Hostos Community College, we completed the second cycle of our program

to train community members as skilled Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technicians. IPM is a holistic, evidence-based, and environmentally-sensitive approach to pest control that offers a wide variety of tools and strategies to eliminate asthma triggers and reduce contact with pests and pesticides.

Our 125-hour, part-time course provides the training and State certification to prepare community members for a career in the Pest Management field. This year, our program included the opportunity for participants to complete Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) 30-hour certification to reduce safety and health hazards on the job—an added qualification and benefit to employers. In total, our program has certified 18 community members as IPM technicians and connected them to local employment. Of those, 14 participants received their OSHA 30-hour course completion card.

Our graduates are innovating IPM technology and considering opportunities to establish shared wealth enterprises. Working with BCDI's Bronx Innovation Factory and the worker-owned cooperative Skedaddle Pest Management, graduates participated in a series of workshops to prototype a new device that will house mouse traps and bait stations in crowded environments while keeping children and pets safe. They also began training around worker-owned cooperatives, as we support the formation and expansion of IPM worker-owned cooperatives through the Bronx Healthy Buildings Program.





***“The IPM program showed me to never settle, to keep striving, and that only you can hold yourself back. I have maintained employment for a year now, and I love what I do. This is really an amazing program for people in the Bronx.”***

***—Joanis Martinez, NWBCCC IPM program graduate***



*Graduates of our IPM training program engage in hands-on workshops on electronics and 3D modeling at BCDI’s Bronx Innovation Factory. Photo by Maggie Tishman*



***Community Development leader Pedro Ariel discusses strategies to establish and grow Community Land Trusts with other leaders from New York and Massachusetts.***



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

After decades of disinvestment, the Bronx is seeing an unprecedented wave of development that threatens to displace communities across the borough. NWBCCC is developing a Bronx-wide community land trust (CLT) and undertaking community-led, cross-sector planning to preserve long-term affordability through democratic control of land. A CLT is a nonprofit organization that owns land collectively and works to ensure the uses of the land benefit the community. By removing the land from the real estate market and leasing the structures it houses to tenants, homeowners, businesses, and other organizations, the CLT offers protection from the threats of the speculative market. The result is long-term deep affordability beyond what the market would allow and an effective means to keep communities rooted in place.

## THE BRONX COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

The mission of the Bronx CLT is to ensure safe, healthy and deeply affordable housing as well as commercial and industrial uses for our racially and economically diverse residents. We

achieve this through building strong community leadership, shared wealth, and collective governance over community land. The Bronx CLT will create sustainability, equitable planning, development, and land stewardship that is driven by community visions and goals rather than speculation and profit.

In March, we formally launched NWBCCC's Community Development Committee at the March Community Meeting and recruited members to join our work around the Bronx CLT. We invited founding members of the Cooper Square CLT to share their powerful history of acquiring and stewarding their land as well as the nuts and bolts of their governance structure.

### *Community Engagement and Education*

In addition to being a tool in the fight against displacement and gentrification, the CLT builds community leadership and self determination over our land and resources. Over a series of CLT 101 workshops over 200 community members shared their vision for what they would



***“Community Land Trusts have a long history in civil rights struggles as a way to keep people safe. CLTs are key for our safety, for our children’s safety, and for our futures.”***

***—Kazembe Balagun, Community Development leader***



want to build if we collectively owned our land. These workshops introduced residents to the purpose, history, and operation of CLTs and how communities have used them to fight for a future without displacement. Our members know the

Bronx is rich in assets, and so they discussed how CLTs could both protect and build on them. Participants also identified sites that might be empty, underutilized, abandoned or distressed that we might own collectively.

***We asked Bronxites to imagine what would be possible if we had collective ownership and governance of our assets. Our members are dreaming of:***

**Permanently and Deeply Affordable Housing**

**Food Coops**

**Community-centered Medical and Mental Health Services**

**Community Centers**

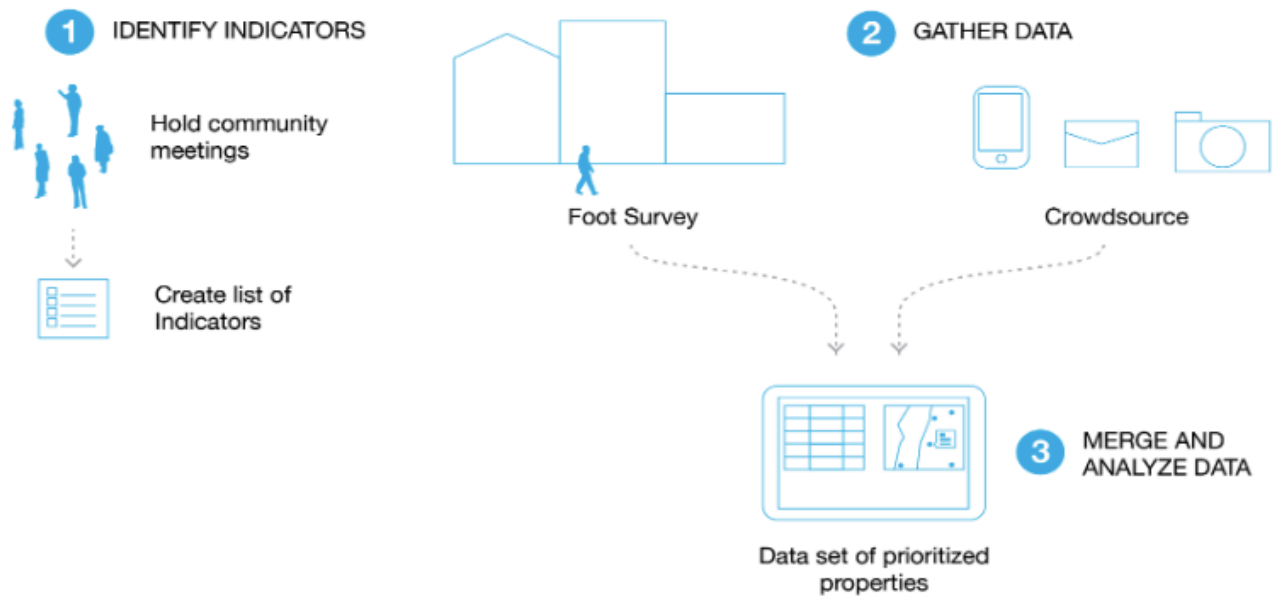
**Recreation and Entertainment Centers**

**Community Gardens**



*Residents discuss their vision for a Bronx collectively owned by the community at a CLT 101 workshop.*

## Process



*Our Community Development Committee created a process to collect and integrate data from a diversity of sources to identify potential properties for the Bronx CLT.*

While moving to incorporate the Bronx CLT, the Community Development Committee began developing a data-driven strategy to determine which properties to acquire. A large collection of publicly available datasets exists to inform our strategy, yet they can be unreliable or outdated. We worked with the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative and an MIT Participatory Action Research Class to design our own data collection method that accounts for the large physical size of the Bronx, the many ways the CLT could acquire a property, and unique indicators of potential sites that would afford our CLT a competitive advantage over other developmental interests. Through a ground survey and crowdsourcing method, we will filter through the existing data, identify potential properties, and grow a list of strategically attractive properties.

In order to build power for the future, we must understand where we have been. In March NWBCCC held a screening of the film *Decade of Fire*, which explores how the private and public sectors abandoned the Bronx in the 1970s, and the community organized to stop redlining and arson and found new institutions in their own vision. Over 150 community members attended the screening, panel discussion, and CLT presentation. Film director Vivian Vasquez, former NWBCCC President and urban farmer Karen Washington, and Banana Kelly Organizing Director Greg Jost shared personal experiences of the “Bronx Burning” and how organizing played a crucial role to forge a new path for community development. Attendees applied this history to the current crisis of gentrification in the Bronx and learned how our Bronx CLT is fighting forward for a different future.





SBU leader Bryan Aju moderates a panel discussion after the screening of Decade of Fire with former NWBCCC President and urban farmer Karen Washington, film director Vivian Vasquez, and Banana Kelly Organizing Director Greg Jost.



NWBCCC leaders of the Bronx CLT learn about the successes and struggles of CLTs in Boston.

### *Learning Exchanges with Other CLTs*

In November, NWBCCC members and other groups from the New York City Community Land Initiative attended the Greater Boston CLT Network convening to learn from their efforts to expand permanently affordable housing and mixed-use CLTs and establish a citywide CLT collaborative. We visited the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and the Urban Farming Institute CLTs to understand their models of mixed-use and non-residential CLTs as an anti-displacement and economic development strategy. Our members exchanged lessons learned with these movement-aligned CLTs to inform our CLT organizing, planning, advocacy, and narrative building. They also gathered first-hand information and research that will inform new popular education and training materials.

In 2020, we'll advance our CLT to the next level through full incorporation of the CLT, acquisition of three properties, and the launch of a basebuilding campaign around collective governance over land in the Bronx.

### **PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION**

This year, NWBCCC led the implementation of the Partners in Preservation program in Bronx Community Districts 4 and 5, where the rezoning of the Jerome Avenue corridor and ensuing landlord speculation have triggered a rise in displacement pressures. As part of this citywide pilot initiative, we partnered with CASA to:

1. create action plans for rent-regulated buildings with tenants at risk of landlord harassment and eviction,
2. strengthen tenant protection through forming tenant associations and educating tenants on their rights, and
3. coordinate local stakeholders to develop a comprehensive anti-displacement plan.

We developed a target list of buildings combining the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development's highest risk index—a data set that indicates a property's physical distress and other financial indicators



*Community Development leaders Pedro Ariel Dominguez and Joseph Ferdinand take a guided walking tour of CLTs in Boston. © 2019 Edwin Pagán*



*NWBCCC Community Development leaders discuss lessons from the field with leaders of CLTs from across Boston and New York City. © 2019 Edwin Pagán*



of tenant harassment—with tenant walk-ins, referrals from partners, and our own research. Our Partners in Preservation Organizers spoke to over 300 tenants in 30 rent-stabilized buildings in Community Board 5, assessing critical conditions in their buildings and informing them of their rights. Across the board, their landlords were engaging in various forms of harassment, including denial of lease renewals, pest infestations, lack of repairs, denial of heat and hot water, broken intercoms, unjust rent increases from MCIs, insufficient plumbing, faulty electrical wiring, and chronic leaks. A high number of tenants suffered from asthma, exacerbating the impact of these poor living conditions.

We convened 25 stakeholders to launch the Jerome Avenue Partners in Preservation

Stakeholder Network in October. Our partners include CASA, HPD, Northern Manhattan Immigration Coalition, Legal Services, Legal Aid, Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, WhedCo, Housing Court Answers, BCDI, and Take Root Justice. Together, we shared our roles and resources that we could leverage and established a foundation for coordination and communication for the success of this ambitious initiative.

In 2020, we aim to organize over 20 tenant associations in Community Board 5 and work with stakeholders to develop our comprehensive anti-displacement plan to present to the City. We will also launch a tenant coalition to hold landlord Robert Khomari accountable for his business model founded on unlawful tenant harassment.



*Tenants attend their first tenant association meeting in August at 253 East 181 Street.*



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LOOKING BACK  
LOOKING FORWARD  
5 YEARS

# WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Since 1976 the federal Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) has reduced energy and utility costs through the installation of energy efficiency measures in the homes of low-income people, especially those with children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. NY State Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) administers WAP with funds from the US Departments of Energy (DOE) & Health and Human Services. NWBCCC has been a provider of high-quality weatherization services since 1983 and is currently one of two subgrantees in the Bronx.

Weatherization significantly benefits our state and its residents through:

- lessening the impact of higher energy costs on low-income families;
- improving the health and safety of assisted households;
- reducing overall energy consumption and carbon emissions that contribute to climate change;
- contributing significantly to the State's economy and the well-being of assisted households: Each dollar invested in program activities saves about three dollars in energy costs over the life of the installed measures; and
- preserving safe and affordable housing for low-income Bronxites: Improvements in rental housing are not subject to MCI rent increases and building owners must contribute toward the weatherization work scope and maintain the property in good repair.

The NWBCCC Weatherization Program is in its 36th annual contract with New York State as a Weatherization Assistance Provider in the Northwest Bronx Service Area of Bronx County. This program year, we received \$2.39 million to



weatherize nearly 300 units in one-to-four-family homes and apartment buildings that meet eligibility requirements.

WAP prioritizes households that receive Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (HEAP), those with high fuel costs in relation to their household income. NWBCCC targets program funds for the most efficient and cost-effective measures, determined through a comprehensive on-site energy audit of the building. Under contract with HCR, NWBCCC performs outreach and intake, evaluates buildings to be weatherized, installs energy-saving measures, identifies and mitigates related health and safety concerns, supervises weatherization work performed by staff and subcontractors, maintains client and program files, and reports on production and expenditures.

Weatherization assistance can be invaluable for low-income households in New York where cold winters and hot, humid summers generate



a high demand for heating fuels and electricity. The program benefits the health, safety, and quality of life of assisted households through a variety of improvements including air sealing, insulation, heat distribution and monitoring equipment, heating system replacement, window replacement, LED lighting upgrades, refrigerator replacement, other water and energy conservation measures, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors and mechanical ventilation to reduce moisture and improve indoor air quality.

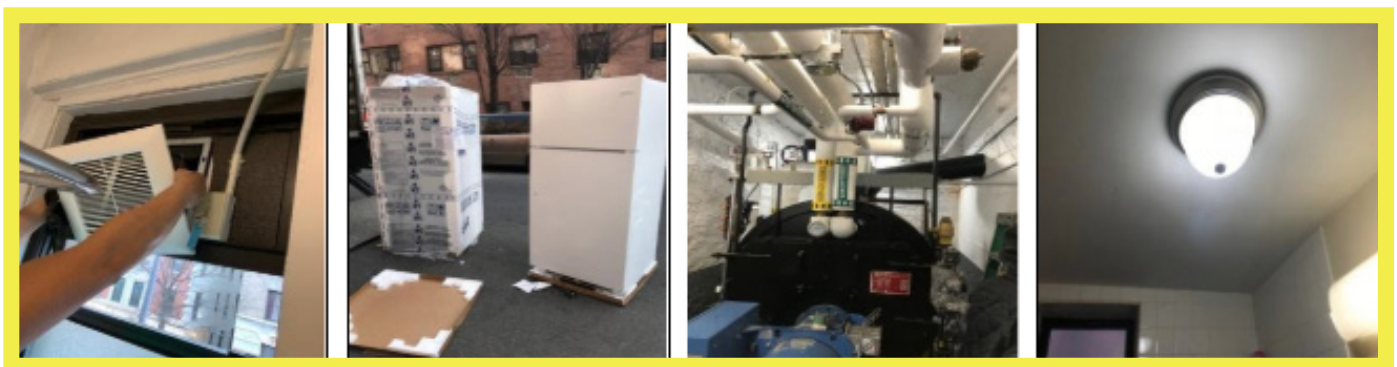
Our staff of trained Bronx residents provide comprehensive energy-efficiency services. We ensure skilled workmanship, high-quality materials, and timely production of units. We subcontract to qualified weatherization contractors, taking affirmative action to provide opportunities for state-certified Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and firms owned by service-disabled veterans.

### **MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS**

We weatherized three apartment buildings owned by not-for-profit HDFC's and managed by Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation (FBHC). **950 Jennings Street (84 units)** recently had their old, drafty windows replaced by FBHC with

new low-e, thermal windows which will make the apartments more comfortable and save on energy. Our scope of work included replacing the existing heating and hot water systems with a high efficiency boiler and domestic hot water maker. We also upgraded public area and apartment lighting with LED fixtures and bulbs to reduce electric consumption. Where eligible, apartments received new Energy Star refrigerators, water conservation devices, new smoke & CO alarms and smart strips. To address indoor air quality, the latest ASHRAE ventilation standards called for upgrading the rooftop fans as part of the building's mechanical ventilation system. As a health and safety measure, we cleaned years of build-up from the ventilation shafts and registers, adjusting them to properly ventilate indoor air to the outside.

Another FBHC property, **2323 Walton Avenue (66 units)**, called for a similar work scope. We replaced the existing hallway windows, made minor roof repairs, and added roof insulation. In common areas and all apartments, we installed LED light bulbs and, in some cases, new refrigerators to help lower electrical usage for the tenants.



*New mechanical ventilation, energy efficient refrigerators, new boiler, and LED light fixtures installed in multifamily homes.*



*Our WAP Team hard at work in the field.*

In the last FBHC project, **310 East 196 Street (27 units)**, apartment and hallway windows were eligible for replacement. We installed pipe insulation, LED lighting in some locations, roof insulation, and minor roof repairs, as called for in the energy audit. In this property, there is no existing mechanical ventilation system for indoor air quality. Because replacing old windows in an apartment may increase poor air or moisture issues in an apartment, ASHRAE Standards now require WAP to provide a “whole-apartment” ventilation fan in one of the rooms. These low-noise fans are individually calibrated to suit the

size of the apartment and the number of occupants to improve air quality. As of 2018, the ASHRAE 62.2 air quality standard implementation is the first opportunity for passively ventilated, older apartment buildings to receive mechanical ventilation to mitigate health and safety issues.

#### **ONE-TO-FOUR UNIT FAMILY HOMES**

WAP staff attended several outreach events to encourage renters and owners in one-to-four family homes to apply for Weatherization Assistance. In recent years, we have increased the number of small home projects. As in multi-

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***“I’m going on month number two, and I have no need for an oil fill up yet. I have 1,000 gallons and have been keeping the building at a constant 70-72 degrees. The windows are amazing!”***

***—Building owner of 2974 Valentine Avenue and WAP recipient***

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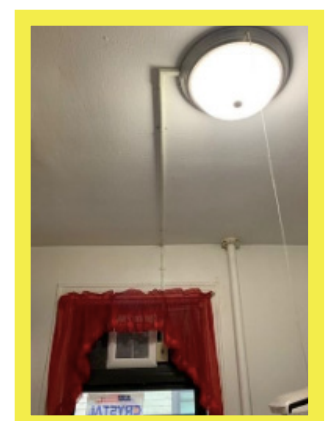
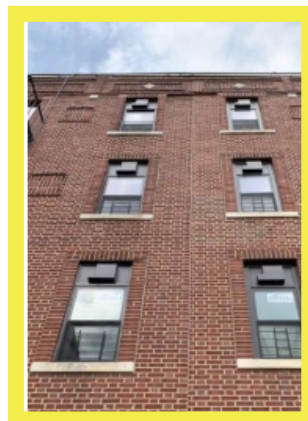
family buildings, we perform a comprehensive energy audit and fuel analysis to develop a work scope designed to save the most energy dollars for each project. One-to-four unit family homes in the Northwest Bronx are far more diverse in age, style, construction, and how the client has modified the home for their personal usage. Our auditors interview the occupants and search for clues that might indicate areas of energy waste or safety concerns that are not readily apparent. In a recent home, one of our auditors discovered a kitchen fan that was not ducted to the outside. The fan was sucking air out of the kitchen and into the cavity above the kitchen ceiling with no outdoor outlet. Years of constant vapor flow degraded the insulation and cooked dust particulates that had no place to go.

Work performed in homes may include attic and sidewall insulation, pipe insulation, air sealing, and weatherstripping. We install low-cost measures, like water conservation devices on faucets and showers, LED indoor or outdoor bulbs, air conditioner covers, door weatherstripping, thermostatic heating controls, and other site-appropriate items.

Health and safety preventative measures include smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, ASHRAE ventilation fan installation or upgrades, moisture mitigation, and testing and cleaning of combustion appliances.



*New boiler installation in progress.*



*New thermal windows installed in multifamily buildings.*

# TREASURER'S REPORT

As of the close of our 2019 fiscal year, NWBCCC was in a very healthy financial condition. Included here is our draft financial statement as of June 30, 2019, prepared by our Fiscal Comptroller, Trevor Mangaroo of Beckmang Consulting, and under review by our auditors, NCheng and Associates.

Our assets increased from \$1.74 million to \$1.92 million, while our liabilities declined. We received roughly 75% of our income from government sources—City, State and Federal. Another 20% came from foundation and corporate grants. We are working to diversify our financial sources, becoming more sustainable from individual member and supporter contributions and from our annual gala efforts. Last year's gala raised over \$100,000 and our membership structure which launched in 2019, increased our unrestricted funds that allowed us to invest in areas most important to our community.

We continue to eliminate our debt—we paid down \$100,000 of it during Fiscal Year 2019—and expect to be entirely paid off in 2020, positioning us to shift to create a board reserve fund. We have renewed and extended our line of credit with Spring Bank, which is available for use in the case of a cash flow shortfall, monitored closely by our board and executive leadership. This resource is important, as payments from funders are sometimes delayed for reasons out of our control. We are proud to do business with a bank that shares our commitment to equitable community development and is a designated B corporation.

We are working with a diverse set of funding partners that are helping to move our work forward and supporting us to be more sustainable and powerful. We have an exciting year ahead and look forward to working with all of our members to make NWBCCC stronger than ever.

**NORTHWEST BRONX COMMUNITY AND CLERGY COALITION, INC.**

**Statement of Financial Position**

**June 30,**

**DRAFT - these figures are not necessarily final**

	<u>Total</u> <u>2019</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>2018</u>
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
Cash	\$ 593,346	\$ 615,195
Accounts receivable	1,201,584	1,019,245
Other receivables	12,924	5,296
Inventory	39,595	24,410
Prepaid expenses	14,614	11,684
Security deposit	3,665	3,665
Fixed assets, at cost, net	52,093	60,403
Total assets	<u>\$ 1,917,821</u>	<u>\$ 1,739,898</u>
<b><u>Liabilities and net assets</u></b>		
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Accounts and accrued expenses payable	\$ 447,905	\$ 415,009
Loan(s) payable	64,377	164,506
Deferred revenue	99,518	37,450
Total liabilities	<u>611,800</u>	<u>616,965</u>
Contingency		
<b><u>Net assets</u></b>		
Unrestricted	926,021	640,682
Temporarily restricted	380,000	482,251
Total net assets	<u>1,306,021</u>	<u>1,122,933</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 1,917,821</u>	<u>\$ 1,739,898</u>



**NORTHWEST BRONX COMMUNITY AND CLERGY COALITION, INC.****Statement of Activities**

For the year ended June 30, 2019

DRAFT - these figures are not necessarily final

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total 2019	Total 2018
<b>Revenue</b>				
Government grants	\$ 2,810,716		\$ 2,810,716	\$ 2,916,893
Corporate / Foundation	310,170	\$ 455,000	765,170	788,165
Individual contribution	6,066		6,066	6,892
Special event	83,290		83,290	60,517
Less: Direct cost of special event	(22,344)		(22,344)	(14,201)
Program revenue	-		-	-
Interest and dividends	31		31	110
Other	99,559		99,559	46,896
	<u>3,287,489</u>	<u>455,000</u>	<u>3,742,489</u>	<u>3,805,272</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>557,250</u>	<u>(557,250)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue	<u>3,844,739</u>	<u>(102,250)</u>	<u>3,742,489</u>	<u>3,805,272</u>
<b>Expenses</b>				
<b>Program services</b>				
Community outreach and education	894,317		894,317	615,692
Weatherization	2,204,449		2,204,449	2,310,115
Youth	154,380		154,380	145,638
Total program services	<u>3,253,146</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,253,146</u>	<u>3,071,445</u>
<b>Supporting services</b>				
Management and general	283,622		283,622	271,343
Fund raising	22,588		22,588	23,709
Total supporting services	<u>306,210</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>306,210</u>	<u>295,052</u>
Total expenses	<u>3,559,356</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,559,356</u>	<u>3,366,497</u>
Change in net assets	285,383	(102,250)	183,133	438,775
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>640,638</u>	<u>482,250</u>	<u>1,122,888</u>	<u>684,158</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$ 926,021</u>	<u>\$ 380,000</u>	<u>\$ 1,306,021</u>	<u>\$ 1,122,888</u>

# OUR 2020 VISION: HOUSING AND HEALTHCARE FOR ALL



***We don't just want access. We want to redistribute and root wealth, ownership, and opportunity in poor and working-class Black and Brown communities in the Bronx and beyond.***

# OUR 2020 VISION

**Homes and Healthcare should not be privileges in New York State. They are human rights.**

**A New York Homes Guarantee** would transform housing from a vehicle for individual profit into a collective, democratically controlled good and work towards a future without homelessness. With at least 92,000 known people currently homeless in New York, we can't wait to fix the housing crisis.

The **New York Health Act** would provide guaranteed healthcare to EVERY New York resident regardless of income, health, employment, immigration or other statuses. It would ensure patients the freedom to make choices about their care, as well as fair funding—98% of New Yorkers would save on costs.

Our people should no longer have to choose between paying basic needs like medical care, rent, and food. ***This is not a radical proposition. It is a humane one. But our vision extends beyond survival.*** The New York Health Act would tax the rich to extend care to the most vulnerable and compensate caregivers while making the healthcare system truly accountable to the public's health. A New York Homes Guarantee would not only abolish unjust rent hikes and evictions, it would tax the rich to invest in public and community-controlled housing that is permanently affordable.

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***We don't just want access. We want to redistribute and root wealth, ownership, and opportunity in poor and working-class Black and Brown communities in the Bronx and beyond.***

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This will touch every one of our members' lives and every part of our work.

In 2020, NWBCCC will go all-in to enact healthcare and housing as human rights. We will mobilize monthly and disrupt business as usual in Albany until our State Senators and Assembly Members pass the New York Health Act and New York Homes Guarantee in full. Residents across our borough will uplift our vision for guaranteed housing and healthcare in our Bronx People's Platform and call on candidates to pledge their support. We will galvanize our neighbors in the primary elections to prove that the Bronx is a political powerhouse. Across these fights, young people will lead the way.

There is a place for you in our movement. Your contributions as a leader and a donor will sustain our fight forward into a future Our Bronx can believe in.





*NWBCCC members and staff rally for Universal Rent Control in Albany.*

The Housing Justice For All Coalition is fighting for a **New York Homes Guarantee** that will:

- fully realize Universal Rent Control by abolishing MCIs, eliminating evictions without good cause, and strengthening enforcement;
- invest in Social Housing—including public housing, supportive housing, and permanently-affordable, community-controlled housing; and
- tax the Rich to fund the New York Homes Guarantee

The New York Health Campaign is fighting for the **New York Health Act** to provide:

- comprehensive coverage for all residents,
- freedom to choose nurses and doctors,
- fairly-funded coverage for individuals and public hospitals,
- equality of care,
- decreased administrative costs, and
- reduced cost of drugs and devices

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