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UNH State Fiscal Year 2019-20 Budget & Policy Priorities **NYCHA Community Spaces**

NYCHA Community Spaces – In addition to the 400,000 New Yorkers that live in housing developments managed by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), NYCHA also manages sites that are home to more than 250 non-profit run community centers, child care centers, and senior centers. Unfortunately, after years of Federal and State divestment, NYCHA has an immense capital improvement backlog, and as their building portfolio has deteriorated, the nonprofits that run programs out of these community spaces have faced increasing challenges partnering with NYCHA in order to maintain their centers. UNH represents 24 settlement houses that operate nearly 200 programs out of 125 different NYCHA-based sites, serving approximately 250,000 individuals who live in and around NYCHA housing. These centers are a critical lifeline for NYCHA residents and provide vital services that keep these communities affordable, allow older people to age in place, improve quality of life, and provide residents with services that connect them to jobs, healthcare, and community.

Challenge and Opportunity – These community spaces are at risk. NYCHA’s 2017 Physical Needs Assessment (PNA) projected \$31.8 billion in capital repair needs across their portfolio over the next five years to keep the authority’s decades-old buildings in good condition. Unfortunately, NYCHA does not have the necessary funds to make these repairs. As a result NYCHA has been forced to prioritize the most immediate needs, namely toxic lead and mold in residential apartments, leaving them unable to deal with larger infrastructural challenges and the needs of nonprofit-run community spaces. As such, the recently released *NYCHA 2.0* plan does not include any funding for repairs to community spaces that are embedded in their developments across the City, despite the PNA estimating \$500 million needed for vital repairs in those spaces.

In addition, as NYCHA has faced increasing financial challenges, it has been more difficult for them to respond to everyday maintenance needs, forcing the nonprofits that run these centers to divert scarce time and resources to maintenance work or risk facing an onslaught of fines and citations from the City’s regulatory agencies that regularly inspect these spaces. Everything from plumbing, fire extinguisher maintenance, repairs to kitchen equipment, and electrical work has become the de facto responsibility of the nonprofit human services contractor, all without any corresponding adjustment to City contracts that would allow them to be reimbursed for these new costs.

Capital Funding from the State – NYCHA’s 2017 PNA identified \$500 million in vital repairs for community spaces in NYCHA over the coming five years. Despite the State’s recent investment in New York’s nonprofit community through infrastructure funds including the Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program, NYCHA-based nonprofits were excluded, unable to access this or other State funding streams to address the infrastructural challenges they face in these community spaces. UNH is recommending that **New York State create a capital fund that is dedicated to nonprofits operating out of NYCHA-based sites**. These funds, applied for by the nonprofits based on their capital needs at individual sites, would fund necessary repairs that allow programs and services to continue operating uninterrupted.

UNH Recommendation: Establish a capital fund that is dedicated to nonprofits operating out of NYCHA-based sites in order to allow them to address pressing capital needs at their site.

For more information on this issue, please contact J.T. Falcone at (917) 484-9322 or jfalcone@unbny.org