

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT'S

RESEARCH & POLICY INITIATIVE  
ANNUAL REVIEW, 2015

URBAN  
JUSTICE  
CENTER



COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT



RESEARCH  
FOR  
ORGANIZING



## WHAT OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS SAY ABOUT OUR WORK

“Working with the Community Development Project allowed CAAAV to use research as a tool to build our base at Queensbridge Houses, where we are organizing immigrant Bangladeshi, Chinese, and Korean tenants. CDP’s extensive experience with research and policy has helped us set the framework in which we have been able to develop and navigate our language access campaign. They have been flexible, diligent, and incredibly supportive of CAAAV as we planned out the project together. We look forward to our next research project with CDP in the future!”

**Cathy Dang, Executive Director, CAAAV**

“2015 was a pretty incredible year of collaboration with CDP and CASA. We worked on and released two reports together, which is in itself a pretty impressive undertaking. As we confront a major change in the heart of our neighborhood, a 4 mile rezoning, we are grateful to have gone through such an extensive research and visioning process to be armed with a comprehensive and sophisticated policy platform that not only outlines community members demands but creates a roadmap for how to achieve them. As we begin the campaign planning, the platform has been the guiding force, both in terms of the policies it lays out and the research it commands. Most importantly, our members are more prepared to lead the campaign planning process because they were leading every stage of the research process.”

**Susanna Blankley, Director, CASA: Community Action for Safe Apartments**

“The Stand for Tenant Safety report by the Community Development Project provided us with an invaluable tool for the Stand for Tenant Safety and its Department of Building Reform Campaign. The community research assistance from CDP is an invaluable tool for the work of local community organizations.”

**Rolando Guzman, Deputy Director Community Preservation, St Nick’s Alliance**

“The Council is proud that more New Yorkers than ever are taking the opportunity to be involved in participatory budgeting,” said Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. “Thanks to the great work of the Community Development Project, we’re able to see that participatory budgeting is working for communities all across the five boroughs. I thank UJC and CDP for their commitment to documenting this process for the benefit of our entire city.”

**New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**

## RECENT RESEARCH & POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This has been another exciting and productive year for the Research and Policy Initiative at the Community Development Project. This year, we released six reports in partnership with community groups and are currently providing support for a variety of emerging research projects. We have continued our groundbreaking work on Participatory Budgeting in New York City and have also expanded and deepened our commitment to building power in communities that are slated for rezoning. We are also excited that we were able to expand our team and welcome Zarin Ahmed as our new Research and Policy Associate.

As a result of our research support, our community partners have been able to further their campaigns for social and economic justice and strengthen tenant safety, language access, and housing affordability in communities across NYC. CDP's research has allowed our partner groups to build up their organizational capacities and magnify their calls for justice in New York City and beyond.

In this update, you will find information about our recently published reports as well as information about some of our current and upcoming projects and initiatives. You will also hear from some of our community partners about their experiences working with CDP.

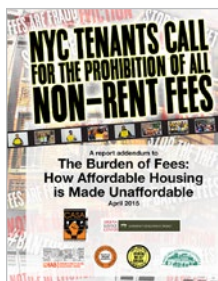
For more information about our reports and current projects, feel free to contact Alexa Kasdan, Director of Research & Policy, at [akasdan@urbanjustice.org](mailto:akasdan@urbanjustice.org).

Thank you for your continued support of the Community Development Project and the Research & Policy team!

Alexa Kasdan  
Director of Research & Policy

## NEW REPORTS

### NYC TENANTS CALL FOR THE PROHIBITION OF ALL NON-RENT FEES



On April 30, 2015, CDP and the Fees are Fraud Coalition (CASA-New Settlement, Flatbush Tenant Coalition, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, Pratt Area Community Council, and the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board) released new findings about how landlords are using non-rent fees—charges added to monthly rent statements—as a way to push residents out of rent-stabilized apartments.

This work expands the findings of CDP and CASA's September 2013 report, "[The Burden of Fees: How Affordable Housing is Made Unaffordable](#)," which showed the extent to which non-rent fees were increasing the rent burdens of rent-stabilized tenants in the Bronx.

The new data indicate that non-rent fees are pervasive, have a real economic impact on tenants, and are often unclear or hard to understand. Research demonstrates that fees are often challenged successfully in court, but that filing overcharge complaints is time- and resource-intensive, and systemic reform is needed.

In May, following the release of this report, the State's Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) released a factsheet regarding the legality of fees that can be charged to tenants. This served as an administrative change that clarified how and when certain fees can be charged.

Read the report here: [https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Report\\_CitywideNonrentFeesData\\_20150430.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Report_CitywideNonrentFeesData_20150430.pdf)

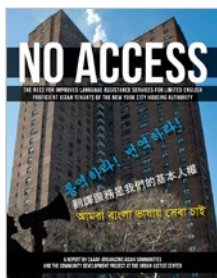
## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITIES ORGANIZE?



CDP worked with the New York Foundation to produce this report to explore types of strategies used by different kinds of organizing groups to achieve wins and lasting change. Drawing from in-depth interviews with 38 established and start-up community organizing groups, the report found that wins and accomplishments fell across a wide spectrum; groups used multiple, sophisticated strategies to achieve policy wins and accomplishments; and that each win or accomplishment had its own distinctive and instructive story with a strong human element.

Read the report here: [https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Report\\_WhenCommunitiesOrganize\\_20150514.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Report_WhenCommunitiesOrganize_20150514.pdf)

## NO ACCESS: THE NEED FOR IMPROVED LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT ASIAN TENANTS OF NYCHA



On September 15, 2015, CDP, in partnership with CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, released this report which reveals significant gaps in the provision of language access services to limited English proficient (LEP) Asian tenants of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Tenants are not connected with NYCHA to receive interpretation or translation for crucial housing matters, are unable to request repairs or navigate the repairs process in the languages they speak, and must turn to family and friends for the assistance they should be receiving from NYCHA.

The report details recommendations to reform NYCHA's systems and services to give LEP Asian tenants genuine, meaningful access to critical information about their housing, and to allow them to participate more fully in the broader NYCHA community.

Read the report here: <https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/cdp-reports/noaccess>

## STAND FOR TENANT SAFETY (STS): SUMMARY OF DATA TO DOCUMENT CONSTRUCTION AS HARASSMENT IN RENT STABILIZED BUILDINGS & THE STS LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION



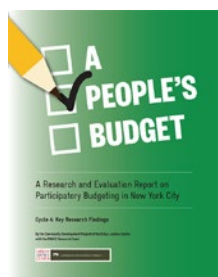
The Community Development Project in partnership with the Stand for Tenant Safety coalition released this report on September 30, 2015, documenting aggressive construction in occupied buildings and how it is used as a tool to displace rent-regulated New York City tenants. The report is based on 150 surveys and records from the Department of Buildings and includes a set of legislative priorities of the STS Coalition.

The report's release coincided with the introduction of 12 City Council bills that aim to reform the Department of Buildings, the agency tasked with issuing permits to developers and responding to tenants who report violations. Bill sponsors include Council members Chin, Espinal, Garodnick, Johnson, Kallos, Levin, Levine, Mendez, Menchaca, Reynoso, and Rosenthal and data from the report was referenced by Council Members in introducing the bills.

The STS coalition has continued its efforts to protect tenants through legislative advocacy for the bills. Utilizing data from this report, members of the STS coalition recently provided testimony for two of the bills at a City Council hearing.

Read the report here: [https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Report\\_STS\\_20150930.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Report_STS_20150930.pdf)

## A PEOPLE'S BUDGET: A RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT ON PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN NEW YORK CITY. CYCLE 4 KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS



On October 20, 2015, CDP and the PBNYC Research Board released “A People’s Budget: A Research and Evaluation Report on Participatory Budgeting in New York City. Cycle 4 Key Research Findings.” This report shares key findings about the fourth cycle of the New York City Participatory Budgeting process, as well as recommendations for future PB cycles, drawing on data from thousands of voter surveys as well as new PB implementation surveys completed by Council district staff and delegate committee facilitators. Four years ago, in 2011-12, a pilot process in four City Council districts brought PB to New York City. Since then the process has expanded significantly. The fourth cycle of PB (2014-15) saw more than 50,000 New Yorkers turn out to vote to determine the allocation of more than \$30 million of City Council funds. It also continues to grow as the fifth cycle of PB with 28 Council

members engaged in the process.

Read the report here: [https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Report\\_PBNYC\\_cycle4findings\\_20151021.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Report_PBNYC_cycle4findings_20151021.pdf)

## BRONX COALITION FOR A COMMUNITY VISION - POLICY PLATFORM



On October 21, 2015, CDP and the Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision released this report to an audience of more than 700 at a town hall meeting in the Bronx. The report includes a set of policy recommendations, which emerged from five community visioning sessions and over 500 surveys, focused on four principles for the development of Jerome Avenue: Real Affordable Housing, Good Jobs and Local Hire, Strong Anti-Harassment and Anti-Displacement Policies, and Real Community Participation.

The report is a culmination of this community-visioning process and a documentation of the community’s needs and priorities, resulting from collaboration with CDP and other technical assistance partners: Hester Street Collaborative, Pratt Institute, ANHD, and the Center

for Urban Pedagogy. CDP will continue to provide support to the coalition throughout the rezoning and ULURP process.

Read the report here: [https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Report\\_BXCmtyVision\\_20151021.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Report_BXCmtyVision_20151021.pdf)

## OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### “BY THE PEOPLE” DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE AND NORTH AMERICAN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING RESEARCH BOARD



In December 2015, CDP’s Erin Markman was an invited speaker at “By the People: Participatory Democracy, Civic Engagement and Citizenship Education,” an international conference convened at Arizona State University. Her presentation highlighted the ways in which CDP’s community-based Participatory Action Research framework has informed our research on Participatory Budgeting. Following the conference, Erin also represented the Community Development Project at a meeting of the North American Participatory Budgeting Research Board.

## CDP RECEIVES AWARD FROM PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROJECT



In June 2015, CDP was honored by the Participatory Budgeting Project for our research and evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in New York City. CDP has played an important role in the NYC PB process by conducting surveys, researching community issues, publishing reports on each voting cycle, promoting PB in the community and informing policy initiatives by Council members. CDP's Alexa Kasdan and Erin Markman received the award at PBP's benefit event, attended by PB supporters and stakeholders, including New York City Council members.

## CDP EXPANDS OUR RESEARCH AND POLICY TEAM



CDP is excited to welcome the newest addition to our team, Zarin Ahmed. Zarin worked for several years at CDP's partner organization Chhaya CDC, on issues of housing, economic development, and civic engagement with New Yorkers of South Asian descent. She graduated from Barnard College in 2012 with a B.A. in Neuroscience and Behavior, and is excited to combine her love of research with her passion for improving the lives of New Yorkers.

# CURRENT PROJECTS

## LAUNDRY WORKERS CENTER



The Laundry Workers Center conducts worker organizing and community-based leadership development geared toward improving the living and working conditions of workers in the laundry and food service industries, as well as their families. The commercial laundromat industry has

long flown under the radar of labor organizers, seeming to enjoy minimal regulations and little oversight. At the same time, laundromats are inherently social spaces that bring together diverse community members for the basic need of laundry services. Laundromats contain a huge potential for fostering community and worker dialogue, as well as growing the awareness of workers' rights and how they are inextricably linked with community struggles. CDP is working with the Laundry Workers Center to conduct participatory research to document the working conditions and health and safety issues for workers in retail laundromats and dry cleaners.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS RESEARCH WITH CIDADÃO GLOBAL



Cidadão Global (CG) is a community-based organization dedicated to promoting and defending the human rights of Brazilian immigrants and strengthening citizen participation and political visibility through leadership development, community organizing, and civic engagement. CG has witnessed an increase in problems with access to vital services from New York City agencies. These problems are often experienced by low-income, monolingual Portuguese-speaking immigrants who seek public assistance from the Human Resources Administration or who seek assistance from the Department of Education for their children in public schools. This research will explore how language barriers impact access to crucial services for low-income, monolingual, Portuguese speakers that are interacting with NYC's Human Resources Administration and the Department of Education.

## REZONING COLLABORATIVE

### COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS



CDP continues to provide research, policy development and legal assistance in support of community engagement in the rezoning process of neighborhoods slated for rezoning by the Department of City Planning. Currently CDP is working with community partners in Jerome Avenue in the Bronx, East Harlem in Manhattan, and East New York in Brooklyn. CDP will continue to provide any needed technical assistance to these areas, and also focus on new areas around the city where community-based organizations are working to increase community input into the rezoning process.

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING, CYCLE 5



The 5th cycle of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in New York City is likely to be the largest the city, and the country, has seen. Twenty-eight Council members are participating in PB, the first time a majority of members have participated in this unique civic engagement process.

CDP will continue to provide research and evaluation support to the PB process, with a focus on surveying PB voters. CDP will also support additional research efforts undertaken by the City by providing model research instruments and consulting on research efforts. CDP continues to participate actively in the New York City Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee, and will represent New York City on the North American Participatory Budgeting Research Board.

## SPOTLIGHT: TURNING RESEARCH PROJECTS INTO POLICY CAMPAIGNS

### FIGHTING DISPLACEMENT AND HAZARDOUS CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS WITH STS



Capitalizing on the release of “**Stand for Tenant Safety (STS): Summary of Data to Document Construction as Harassment in Rent Stabilized Buildings & the STS Legislative Solution,**” the STS coalition has been fighting for reform within the Department of Buildings. Working closely with Council members, the coalition introduced 12 bills. Utilizing legislative advocacy and strategic communications strategies, the coalition continues to push for the passage of the bills and raise awareness of the issue of construction as harassment.

### BUILDING POWER AND MOMENTUM IN THE JEROME AVENUE REZONING PROCESS WITH CASA



Following the release of the **Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision - Policy Platform**, CASA and the Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision have launched a campaign to ensure that the priorities outlined by community members in the platform are included in the Department of City planning’s official zoning proposals and community plan. This organizing work will ensure that the proposals developed by community members focusing on real affordable housing, anti-displacement, good jobs, and real community engagement are concretely turned into City policy.

## RESEARCH & POLICY IN THE NEWS



**"A Call to Ban Landlords' Non-Rent Fees to Tenants"** (Op-ed by Erin Markman and Joseph Cepeda)

City Limits, May 11, 2015

[https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Media\\_citylimits\\_20150511.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Media_citylimits_20150511.pdf)



**Asian immigrant NYCHA tenants struggle to get translation aid for basic repair request**

NY Daily News, September 15, 2015

[https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Media\\_nydailynews\\_20150915.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Media_nydailynews_20150915.pdf)



**Bills Aim to Protect Renters During Construction Work**

New York Times, September 29, 2015

[https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Media\\_nytimes\\_20150929.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Media_nytimes_20150929.pdf)



**Participatory Budgeting Grows in NYC - Why Isn't Every Council Member Doing It?**

Gotham Gazette, October 23, 2015

[https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Media\\_gothamgazette\\_20151023.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Media_gothamgazette_20151023.pdf)



**Rezoning Worries in South Bronx**

Wall Street Journal, October 20, 2015

[https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc\\_Media\\_wsj\\_20151020.pdf](https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/sites/default/files/CDP.WEB.doc_Media_wsj_20151020.pdf)

## URBAN JUSTICE CENTER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, RESEARCH & POLICY INITIATIVE

CDP's Research and Policy Initiative partners with and provides strategic support to grassroots community organizations to build the power of their organizing and advocacy work. We utilize a "participatory action research" model in which low-income and excluded communities are central to the design and development of research and policy. Our work consists of the following:

**Participatory Action Research Reports:** From start to finish, we work with our community partners to design, administer, analyze and write participatory action research reports. These reports are used by our partners to educate community members, engage elected officials, garner media attention and advocate for socially just policies.

**Grassroots Policymaking:** With community organizations, we research and develop ground-up policy solutions to problems they identify and document.

**Popular-Education Curriculum Design and Research Training:** Our trainings and tools assist communities in designing and conducting their own research. We also conduct trainings on a variety of research topics to build the capacity of our partner organizations.

**Strategic Campaign Research:** We conduct background research and develop fact sheets to provide strategic data in support of organizing campaigns. Our partners use these materials in leadership development and base-building and to educate elected and government officials about specific issues and campaigns.

For more information, please contact

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