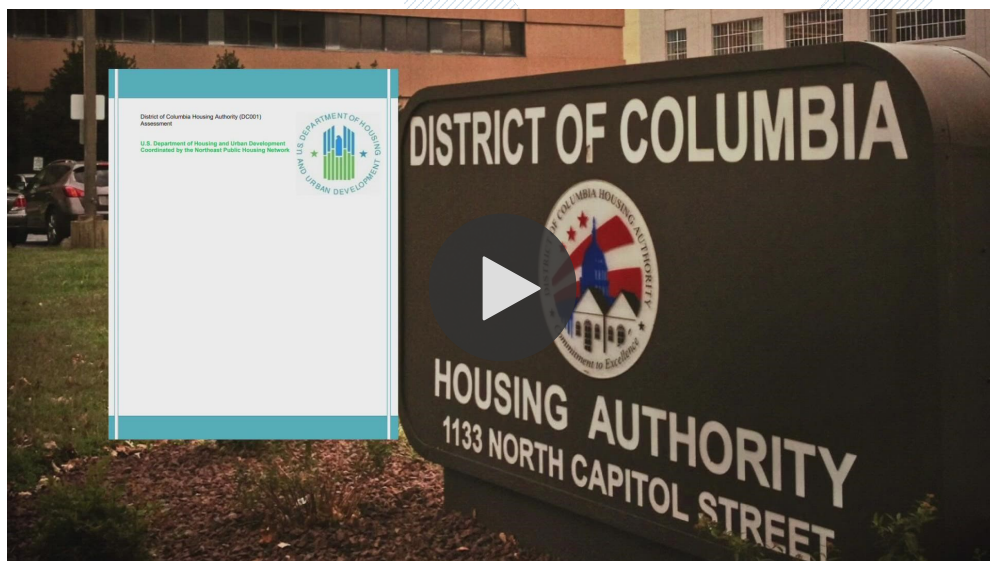


DC

Scathing federal government audit shows DCHA failed to provide safe and sanitary public housing

The 72-page report confirmed the DC Housing Authority has inadequate management, lack of compliance with federal law and poor oversight.



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Published: **11:25 PM EDT October 9, 2022**
Updated: **12:25 AM EDT October 10, 2022**



WASHINGTON — A new, scathing report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development highlights the [filthy and dangerous living conditions](#) in D.C. public housing exposed in WUSA9 reports months ago.

The 72-page report confirms the DC Housing Authority has inadequate management, lack of compliance with federal law and poor oversight.

Now, D.C. leaders have three months to fix the 82 total violations cited by auditors. Officials must first respond to the report by Nov. 30.

D.C. Housing Director Brenda Donald said the agency has received the report and is in the process of putting together responses.

WUSA9's [initial investigations](#) into DC Housing in May led to immediate action by some D.C. agencies. When reporter Delia Goncalves showed up to [Potomac Gardens](#) on Capitol Hill to cover the public housing development, residents were quick to point out multiple dangerous and unsanitary conditions including mold, bugs, rodents and padlocks on gates that the DC Fire Department later deemed a fire hazard.

RELATED: [DC Leaders react to poor housing conditions at Potomac Gardens](#)

Because of that reporting, repairs were made and are still happening. But then WUSA9 started hearing from other people about the conditions in public housing complexes all across the city -- buildings the D.C. government is responsible for maintaining.

Goncalves sat down with the Executive Director of the [DC Housing Authority](#), Brenda Donald just two weeks ago to ask what's being done to fix the problems.

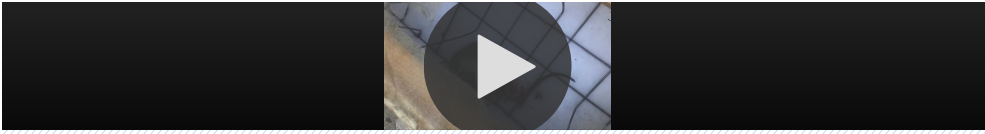
Donald took on the job at DCHA the summer of 2021 after the former housing director was ousted following allegations that millions of dollars were misused.

"I discovered a lot of things from a management standpoint that needs to be improved; they need to be completely overhauled," Donald explained.

But it appears new leadership alone will not repair the 82 areas of deficiencies found at DC Housing. According to the audit, DC Housing received more than 76 million dollars in federal funds to maintain over 8,000 units. However, only 76% of their housing stock is occupied -- the lowest public housing rate in the country.



While Donald showed WUSA9 the agency's plan to renovate vacant units, HUD inspectors found some of those empty units covered with mold and moss on the floors and walls, while some units where families live are still in filthy conditions overrun by bugs, mice and rats.



The audit found the agency is not maintaining tenant files, it's housing voucher waiting list has been closed since 2013, the public housing waiting list hasn't been updated in 10 years, it's failing to protect victims of domestic violence and it's not screening for registered sex offenders.

RELATED: [New DC housing director answers to filthy, dangerous conditions inside some public housing units](#)

Councilmember at large Elissa Silverman who's running for re-election sits on the DC Housing Committee and shared her thoughts with WUSA9 Sunday.

"We got here because we're not doing the proper oversight. We lost the mission of housing our lowest income families and helping them get to homeownership," she said. "Now what HUD is saying is, 'no, you have to pay us this money back because you broke the rule and that is unacceptable.'"

Donald will now answer to HUD, which calls DC Housing Authority among the worst in the country.

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