

Foreclosures on apartment buildings surge reducing living conditions for tenants

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More city apartment buildings are going into foreclosure - and low-income neighborhoods in [Brooklyn](#) are among the hardest hit.

The foreclosure crisis that engulfed individual homeowners has also hit larger buildings, with more getting slapped with foreclosures in the last two years than any time since the early 1990s, according to a new report by [New York University's Furman Center](#) for Real Estate and Urban Policy.

It's often tenants who pay the price when landlords can't pay the bills, with living conditions deteriorating when a building is foreclosed, the study said.



Eulogia Hevandez displays the bill for \$140 that she had to pay herself to pay to repair a broken lock on the front door of her Park Slope apartment.

There were 730 apartment building foreclosures in Brooklyn in 2009 and 2010 - up from 454 in the previous two years and the most in any borough.

"It was higher than we'd seen since back in the early '90s," said Furman Center legal research fellow [John Infranca](#).

Many of the foreclosed buildings were financed at the height of the real estate boom and then ended up worth less than the landlord owed, he said.

Central Brooklyn neighborhoods had the highest foreclosure rates in the city. In [Bedford-Stuyvesant](#), 12.5% of buildings have gotten a foreclosure notice some time in the last five years. In [Brownsville](#), it's 11.1%.

The researchers found that housing code violations surge 21% around the time a building is foreclosed - and the problem has even extended to some of the borough's more affluent neighborhoods.

At 294 Fifth Ave. in [Park Slope](#), which went into foreclosure two years ago, tenants are dealing with 131 open violations, from leaky roofs to broken locks.

"I'm here alone with these problems. Nobody helps me," said tenant Eulogia Hevandez, 73, who said her kitchen sink has been broken for a month. "I need somebody to fix it I use a bucket instead of my kitchen sink."

She pointed to numerous dark stains and chipped paint left on her apartment ceiling by leaks and showed a visitor a bill for \$140 that she had to pay herself to replace the broken lock on her apartment door.

"I have to spend my own money to fix this apartment," she said. "I live alone. I'm afraid. I need to lock my door."