

February 15, 2022

Honorable Governor Kathy Hochul

Honorable Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Honorable Speaker Carl H. Heastie
NYS Capitol Building, Albany, NY 12224

Housing Access Voucher Program is the Tool We Need to Grapple With Record Homelessness in the 2022

With dangerous overcrowding and understaffing at state shelters, and thousands now facing evictions, HAVP is desperately needed to get folks housed

To Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Carl Heastie,

We, the undersigned, submit this memo in strong support of The Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) ([S2804A/A3701A](#)), which could put our state on a pathway to end the affordable housing crisis in our state. Despite State Leaders claiming that housing is a priority, the legislature has failed to create one of the most deeply needed resources; a rental assistance program, available to people of low income, regardless of immigration status or where they live in the state.

New York State is in the midst of the worst homelessness crisis since the Great Depression. On any given night, 92,000 people live in shelters and on the streets. Thousands more are uncounted and doubled- or tripled-up in apartments. This represents a 150 percent increase since 2009.

For the first time in New York City's history, over 20,000 single adults are living in homeless shelters.¹ This trend is not unique to New York City. The crisis of homelessness has brought many communities to a breaking point in localities that have far fewer resources than New York City with which to manage the homelessness crisis. COVID-19 has swept through local homeless shelters, forcing some facilities to reduce capacity or close their doors entirely.² Many have worked tirelessly to continue to provide high quality services in all our shelters, but we are stretched too thin.

Yet despite the historic nature and scale of this crisis, state leaders have failed to fully support the most inclusive rental assistance program proposed in last year's legislative session: **The**

¹ <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/press/record-high-homeless-adults/>

²

<https://www.rochestercitynewspaper.com/rochester/house-of-mercy-homeless-shelter-reopens-with-limited-capacity/Content?oid=12769239>

Housing Access Voucher Program (S2804/A3701). HAVP is a permanent, statewide Section 8-like rental assistance program. At least fifty percent of the program will be dedicated to help homeless New Yorkers across the state find stable housing. The rest will go towards eviction prevention for households at risk of becoming homeless. HAVP is designed to be maximally accessible, flexible, and non-discriminatory, making it the most effective program for moving homeless households into stable, permanent housing. A state Section 8-like program would reach those New Yorkers left out by the federal program.

In order for us to reduce the number of people without housing in our state, we must offer people a pathway out of the shelters and off of the streets. HAVP works to do this by offering immediate rental assistance to New Yorkers, both helping people secure permanent housing and preventing others from losing it in the first place.

We, the undersigned, urge Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, to pass these essential pieces of legislation, and put our state on a path to end our housing crisis.

Signed,

Supportive Housing Network of NY

Win

New York Housing Conference

Urban Pathways

Osborne Association

Citizens' Committee for Children

Housing Rights Initiative

Homeless Services United

Gateway Housing

Barrier Free Living

NYSFAFH

NYCCOC

Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center

New York State Council of Churches

Safety Net Activists

New York Legal Assistance Group
New Destiny Housing Corporation
Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)
Volunteers of America-Greater New York
The Partnership for the Homeless
Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation
Care For the Homeless
The Legal Aid Society
Phipps Houses
Safe Horizon
Providence House, Inc.
West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing
Project Hospitality
Henry Street Settlement
Open Hearts Initiative
Emergency Shelter Network
Divine Chaplancy
Now we Rise !
Poor Peoples Campaign
Fifth Avenuem Committee
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Charles Ryu
Riverdale Presbyterian Church and myself
All organizations
Enterprise Community Partners
the Center of the Independence for the Disabled, New York
Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc.
Better Housing for Tompkins County, Inc.
Violence Intervention Program
Samaritan Daytop Village
ERASE Racism

Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)

Monadnock Development

City Relief

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

NMIC

Peace Action Bay Ridge

Westchester Residential Opportunities

Greater Syracuse Tenants Network

Community Preservation Corporation

We Are Not Afraid

Citizens' Committee for Children

we are not afraid community resource center

Housing Opportunities Made Equal

Mirtha Santana

Mount Vernon United Tenants

Neighbors Together

VOCAL-NY

University Neighborhood Housing Program

NYSPHADA

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest