

**TESTIMONY OF THE NEW YORK STATE
CATHOLIC CONFERENCE**

**REGARDING THE 2014-2015
HOUSING BUDGET**

**PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF
THE COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIRECTORS
BY
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is that it is administered by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the agency that also administers funding for many of the services in supportive housing. This connection is effective and important in ensuring that necessary services and housing go hand in hand.

We are grateful for the Governor's continued commitment to the Homes for Working Families program, as evidenced by the recommendation for an additional \$12 million in funding for that program. The program is another important source of funding for the development of affordable housing in our State. We also wish to note that we are pleased that the Governor is continuing to recommend funding support for housing development for people, including seniors, who have significant health conditions and are receiving Medicaid. The MRT housing initiatives, recommended to be funded at \$100 million, which we believe to be sufficient both to continue existing promising initiative and to fund new ones, are also an important part of addressing the homelessness problem. Further, these initiatives recognize that effective management of health issues is virtually impossible if not coupled with stable housing.

We at Catholic Charities have a continuing concern that even while we seek to address the housing needs of those who are poor with these programs that support affordable housing development, many other working people we serve cannot afford the rent without help. Many of the people who come to Catholic Charities with housing crises are working at minimum wage jobs. Also, our growing population of seniors in this state includes many who are dangerously poor. Without rental subsidies many are unable to pay even the reduced rent charged by affordable housing projects. This is a continuing need throughout the State and one that the State budget needs to address. A comprehensive approach to addressing the affordable housing needs of many New Yorkers must include both funding support for housing development and rental subsidies for people who need that help to make their housing affordable.

The Neighborhood Preservation Program and the Rural Preservation Program are used throughout the State to address the affordable housing needs in many communities through a variety of approaches. We are once again concerned that the Executive Budget recommended appropriation for these programs do not recognize their value and work. The recommended funding levels for both programs are below the final appropriation levels enacted in the 2013-2014 budget. And clearly the demands on these programs have grown since last year.

Conclusion

The affordable housing crisis in our state is not a crisis that affects only one area of the State or population group. So it is important that we continue to have a

comprehensive approach to the issue that includes developing affordable housing for people who are homeless, creating supportive homes for people who need some help to live independently, and providing the opportunity for low-income people to have housing stability. This is essential in order for people to have that most basic of human needs met, the need to have a place to call "home." Whether we are living in an apartment or a house, the stability and security of a home is one of the things that helps to give us the ability to meet each day with energy and commitment. As you continue to deliberate and make the tough decisions with which you are faced, we urge you to protect and preserve essential housing development and housing support programs. These programs not only provide our brothers and sisters with housing, they provide men, women and children throughout the state with the opportunity to have a home and the stability that comes with it.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We would be happy to discuss our concerns and recommendations and the good work Catholic Charities' housing and related programs do throughout the state.