

Testimony  
New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Housing  
Monday, January 31, 2022

Submitted by  
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Catholic Homes New York, Archdiocese of New York

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Catholic Homes New York, Archdiocese of New York - a developer of affordable, senior and supportive housing - on the policies and programs of the FY23 Executive Budget.

Catholic Homes New York develops affordable housing for families and seniors throughout the Archdiocese of New York, creates new affordable homes and preserves existing units, continuing decades of work building strong, sustainable communities through affordable housing. Since the 1970s, the Church has developed 2,777 units of low-income housing for families, 483 units for seniors, and 108 supportive housing units throughout the Archdiocese. An additional 168 units are currently under construction, 93 of which will be supportive Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative units. Today, in response to the tremendous need for affordable housing, Catholic Homes is working to ensure the preservation and development of affordable housing with a pipeline of new projects on church and affiliate owned sites.

Catholic Homes' housing efforts are part of a rich history of work to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable, to act on the belief that having a home is a sacred human right, and to affirm the right of people to live in dignity. While the need for affordable housing preceded the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting economic fallout, and environmental crises such as Hurricane Ida, these events form the context within which Catholic Homes will conduct its advocacy in 2022.

Within this context, we would like to bring your attention to the following items:

**Affordable Housing & Homelessness:**

The critical shortage of affordable housing and the disparity between incomes and rents forces more New York families to pay a very high proportion of their income for housing. Many previously affordable apartments have moved toward market level rents, and those with low incomes and special needs are particularly impacted by rising costs. State and local governments have important roles in addressing this crisis.

- **Affordable, Supportive, and Homeless Housing:** Catholic Charities is encouraged by the Executive Budget's inclusion of a \$4.5 billion, five-year housing plan that will support the development and preservation of 100,000 units of affordable housing and 10,000 units of supportive housing, and welcomes the State's continued support of the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) and Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP). As these funds are allocated, flexibility in the percentage of units dedicated to specific populations would help ensure a solid diversity of individuals and families in these new and preserved units.

- **Rental Assistance & Eviction Prevention:** Catholic Charities supports increased assistance and resources for rental assistance programs that help the unemployed, and for state and local support of similar programs that grant access to market rate housing and assist those, including immigrants, who are ineligible for federal assistance. The Executive Budget's increased allocation for the Legal Representation for Eviction Cases Program will help to provide much-needed aid for tenants struggling to remain in their homes. The establishment of a state refundable tax credit for individuals and families with under 80% Area Median income (AMI) for rent paid in excess of 30% of their Monthly Adjusted Income would provide further relief.

On behalf of New York's most vulnerable and Catholic Homes New York, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and thank you for continuing to serve this great State of New York. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional detail.