

## **New York State Budget Hearing Wednesday, February 12, 2025**

Good afternoon. I am Barbara Baer, Program Director at New York Foundation for Senior Citizens, the only non-profit, non-sectarian organization serving older adults throughout New York City's five boroughs.

We are truly grateful for your past, present and, hopefully, ongoing support of our city-wide Home Sharing and Respite Care Program. The program provides the only services of their types in New York City. These services enable the City's older adults to age in place in their own homes and, thereby, respond to the City's housing crisis, prevent institutionalization in nursing homes and homeless shelters and provide significant annual savings to the State in Medicaid and other expenses.

Our free home sharing service is implemented by Social Workers who use their professional skills to successfully match older adult "hosts" with extra space in their apartments or houses to share with responsible, compatible "guests" in need of affordable housing. One of the "matchmates" must be age 60 or over. The cost of matching each host and guest during the last 2024 fiscal year was only \$3,993.

Since its inception in 1981, our home sharing service has served as a model for other programs throughout the country and the world.

Our respite care service is also implemented by professional Social

Workers. They arrange affordable, short-term, in-home care at the low cost of \$19.10 per hour, paid directly to the home care workers by the frail elderly, who are attempting to manage at home alone or with the help of others, and, thereby, prevent their need for nursing home care.

Although the cost of private agency home care is \$30 per hour, our respite care service provides the lowest cost, highest quality home care at \$19.10 per hour and free of charge under emergency circumstances.

During the past 44 years, we have provided over 12,150 frail older adults and many more thousands of their caregivers with respite care services plus jobs for hundreds of Certified Home Health Aides. The cost of providing respite care services during the last 2024 fiscal year was only \$537 per person.

During this inflationary economy and housing crisis, older New Yorkers need these New York Foundation for Senior Citizens' Home Sharing and Respite Care services more than ever.

It is our hope that you will recognize the importance of our program's services and help us ensure that its funding needs are met through the Assembly's inclusion of \$250,000 and the Senate's inclusion of \$250,000 toward New York Foundation for Senior Citizens' Home Sharing and Respite Care Program within the State's 2025-2026 Budget.

Thank you very much, in advance, for hopefully providing these desperately needed funds.