



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

**Testimony by Win for the New York State Budget Hearing on Housing Joint Legislative
Public Hearing on the FY26 Executive Budget: Topic Housing
Scheduled for 2/27/25**

Thank you to Chairs Kavanagh and Rosenthal and the esteemed members of the state legislature Committees on Housing for the chance to submit testimony. My name is Chris Mann, and I am the Assistant Vice President of Policy & Advocacy at Win. Win is the largest provider of shelter and supportive housing in New York City. We operate 16 shelters and nearly 500 supportive housing units across the five boroughs. Each night, more than 7,000 people call Win “home,” including 3,800 children.

The Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)

Win is also a proud member of Housing Access NY (HANY), a broad coalition of more than 70 organizations from across New York State. HANY brings together advocates for tenants’ rights, landlords, children, immigrants, criminal justice, and more who are all united around the common goal of passing the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP).

As the State grapples with the worst homelessness crisis in its history, we are urgently requesting that you pass and fund HAVP in this year’s budget at \$250 million. The desperate need for HAVP is clear. There are nearly 160,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in New York State, a staggering increase of more than 50% from the previous year, making up nearly 20% of the nation’s homeless population. Even more alarming, the number of homeless children has more than doubled since 2022, reaching over 50,000 in 2024. Families with children account for more than 60% of the State’s homeless population, something we are acutely aware of at Win. But the crisis is not just a New York City issue—regions across the state have seen significant increases in homelessness, including a 138% increase in Glens Falls and Saratoga Springs, 130% in Orange County, and 82% in Rensselaer County.ⁱ In addition to the staggering numbers of people currently experiencing homelessness, there are many more at risk of losing their homes. In 2024, there were a total of 195,795 eviction filings Statewide.ⁱⁱ Additionally, more than half of all renter households (2.9 million) statewide are rent-burdened and 20 percent are severely rent burdened, paying 50 percent or more of their income on rent.ⁱⁱⁱ

HAVP is a targeted, cost-effective solution that addresses both homelessness prevention and re-housing. Although similar to the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (also known as Section 8), HAVP is a more flexible state-level program that ensures rental assistance reaches those in need, regardless of immigration status or criminal justice system involvement.^{iv} It can provide stability for families at risk of eviction and a direct pathway out of homelessness for those already in shelter. In addition to stabilizing individuals and families, HAVP will provide financial stability to building owners, ensuring a steady stream of rental income from low-income tenants. We also know that housing vouchers reduce child poverty. For that reason, Governor Hochul’s own Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council (CPRAC), tasked with reducing child poverty by 50% in ten



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

years, voted on recommendations that include a statewide housing voucher program.

Research shows that housing vouchers reduce homelessness and housing instability,^v improve outcomes for children,^{vi} and promote beneficial outcomes for family well-being, including *halving* intimate partner violence.^{vii} Federal Housing Choice Vouchers reduce the poverty rate for recipients by 43%^{viii} and provide long-term benefits to households that previously experienced homelessness.^{ix} State and local rental assistance vouchers have a similarly stabilizing effect: in New York City, during FY23, 81% of families with children who exited shelter did so with subsidies – mostly the City’s local rental assistance voucher, CityFHEPS – and those that exited with subsidies were 53 times less likely to return to shelter in the subsequent year compared to families who exited without assistance.^x

From a fiscal standpoint, HAVP is a common sense investment that will save the state hundreds of millions in downstream costs. Research by both the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy^{xi} and Win,^{xii} found that a \$250 million investment in HAVP would provide close to 13,000 households with vouchers, helping thousands of New Yorkers and their families move out of and avoid homelessness. The savings are substantial—by moving families out of the costly shelter system, New York City alone would save approximately \$40,000 per household annually. In regions outside of New York City, annual savings per household in shelter would be around \$18,000.^{xiii} In total, the program is projected to save New York State nearly \$96 million in emergency shelter costs alone in its first year.^{xiv}

Beyond direct shelter savings, HAVP will reduce costly public expenditures related to homelessness and eviction. We need to be honest, ignoring the homelessness crisis is not free. In fact, evictions and homelessness have substantial associated costs on top of the immeasurable human cost caused by the trauma of homelessness. Studies show that housing instability leads to increased healthcare costs, child welfare interventions, and criminal justice involvement. Win’s analysis found that if implemented, HAVP could save New York an estimated \$39 million on indirect downstream healthcare, youth incarceration, and child welfare costs.^{xv} The impact is even more profound when considering long-term savings—over five years, HAVP will generate over \$1 billion in net savings for the state.^{xvi}

Regionally, HAVP’s benefits are transformative. Win’s analysis found that in Western New York, HAVP could reduce sheltered homelessness by 82%, in the North Country by 50%, and in the Mid-Hudson region by 47%. If allocated strategically, HAVP could potentially eliminate sheltered homelessness all together in some areas.^{xvii} These reductions would not only improve lives but also relieve pressure on emergency shelter systems and social services statewide.

HAVP is a necessary tool to address New York’s housing crisis and prevent further escalation of homelessness. Rental assistance programs are among the most effective means of keeping families stably housed, reducing evictions, and ensuring economic security for thousands of low-income New Yorkers. As New York continues to face record levels of homelessness, this New



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

York State has a crucial opportunity to invest in a proven solution that will save lives, stabilize communities, and generate significant cost savings.

Supportive Housing

Win deeply appreciates Governor Hochul’s proposed investments in supportive housing outlined in her 2025-26 Executive Budget. Supportive housing is a proven solution to homelessness, and the Governor’s commitment represents a crucial step forward. However, as homelessness continues to reach historic levels across New York, the state must go further to preserve existing units and expand access to these life-saving services. The Legislature must act to ensure the final budget fully meets the scale of the crisis.

A top priority must be securing funding to preserve 9,000 New York State Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP) units, which are at risk due to decades of stagnant funding. While the Governor’s proposed \$17.8 million is a step in the right direction, it falls short of the \$32 million needed to stabilize these units. Without adequate investment, thousands of households could lose their homes, exacerbating the very crisis the state is working to solve. We urge the Legislature to close this funding gap in budget negotiations and prevent the loss of critical housing resources.

We also commend the Governor for recognizing that the current Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) per-unit rate is insufficient, making it difficult to build new units. Her proposal to increase rates will help spur development, but the increase must also apply to existing units, where low funding levels threaten tenants with a return to homelessness. We call on the Legislature to ensure that all ESSHI units receive the necessary funding to remain viable.

We are thankful that the Governor included additional money for supportive housing in her budget proposal and call on the Legislature to ensure the final budget makes the investments necessary to preserve and expand these critical programs.

Preparation for Potential Federal Cuts

The Trump administration has been moving quickly to implement many of the policies laid out in Project 2025. Project 2025 calls for systematic cutting of funding and limiting the reach of housing programs that are vital for low-income individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Specifically, federal programs that help individuals achieve housing stability—such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8), Public Housing (NYCHA), Continuum of Care (CoC), and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) programs—are at great risk of loss of funding. Furthermore, Project 2025 calls for draconian legislative reforms to Section 8 vouchers that would increase work requirements, limit the period during which households are eligible for rental subsidies, and “prohibit noncitizens, including all mixed-status families, from living in all federally assisted housing,”^{xviii} which will cause many struggling New York households to lose vital assistance. It also calls for the sale of our current public housing stock to the private market and banning



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

noncitizens and mixed-status households from receiving federally assisted housing.^{xix}

During his first term, the Trump administration proposed cutting HUD's budget by \$9.6 billion.^{xx} This included massive cuts to Section 8, which serves 123,000 New York City households,^{xxi} and could have led to a net loss of 10,000 vouchers for NYC residents.^{xxiixxiii} These policy proposals, if successful, will ultimately lead to a loss of benefits that will exacerbate financial insecurity and homelessness for tens of thousands of low-income families with children in New York City and State. To prevent low-income households from losing their housing and to help more individuals gain access to safe, stable, and affordable housing, *New York State should:*

Direct all funding from New York's Rental Supplement Program to rental assistance programs for homeless families traditionally ineligible for public benefits. In the FY25 budget, the State allocated \$100 million to its Rental Supplement Program (RSP), which was designed to provide rental assistance "to individuals and families, both with and without children, who are experiencing homelessness or are facing an imminent loss of housing, regardless of immigration status."^{xxiv} To alleviate shelter capacity, the NYC Department of Social Services developed the SHARE program, which utilizes funding from New York State's Rental Supplement Program to provide rental assistance to the longest-term stayers, many of whom are undocumented immigrants, in the DHS system who are not eligible for other housing subsidies.^{xxv}

Despite the purported goals of RSP, in the last budget cycle, the State mandated New York City to use a portion of RSP funding to pay for NYS FHEPS increases. The State should ensure that 100% of the \$68 million in RSP funding to New York City goes to the SHARE program, which will begin to support 950 households experiencing homelessness in 2025 and find another source of funding to pay for FHEPS increases. The City needs this funding to immediately implement this program, so more households and long-term stayers in shelter can access housing resources and exit shelter sooner.

Pass legislation to empower New York City to extend housing benefits to New York residents regardless of immigration status ([S1631](#)– Kavanagh / [A5513](#)– Rosenthal). Many immigrant households are ineligible for most housing subsidies, due to their immigration status, a denial that is exacerbating the historically high shelter census and trapping noncitizens in shelters for incredibly long periods of time. [S1631/A5513](#) would empower the City to expand housing vouchers, including CityFHEPS, to these households in need, regardless of their immigration status. This expansion could save hundreds of millions of dollars annually, while helping the newest New Yorkers exit shelter, and freeing up space in our homelessness response system.^{xxvi}

Allocate an additional \$900 million in funding for the FY26 budget for NYCHA to address major capital improvements. Federal divestment and disrepair of NYCHA buildings has led to thousands of vacant apartments considered too inhabitable to rent. According to the Community Service Society of New York, it would cost \$4.5 billion over the next 5 years (or \$900 million



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

annually) to preserve 15,000 NYCHA units and 25,000 units of public housing outside of NYC, as well as build 8,000 new units across the state.^{xxvii} The State Legislature should increase annual capital funding for NYCHA by at least \$900 million, only 20% of the State’s last \$25 billion housing plan, to meet the increasing capital gaps left behind by the federal government.

Conclusion

Although New York is in a difficult position as it faces down the likelihood of significant federal cuts, the homelessness crisis necessitates action. New York must step up and lead the nation by passing HAVP, investing in Affordable and Supportive Housing, and ensuring that our immigrant communities also have access to housing supports. With strong leadership and bold action, New York can make real progress in addressing homelessness and ensuring that every family has a safe, stable place to call home. Thank you for your time and commitment to ensuring all New Yorkers have access to dignified housing.

ⁱ New Yorkers in Need: Homelessness in New York State Report: Office of the New York State Comptroller. *New Yorkers in Need: Homelessness in New York State*. Albany, NY: Office of Budget and Policy Analysis, January 2025.

ⁱⁱ NYS Unified Court System “*State Wide Eviction Information*,” January 2025
<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiZGE3NzljYmItYTBMZC00OGI2LTliYTgtYzY5ZjI0N2U0MWYxIiwidCI6IjMONTZmZTkYLNWZDEtNDA2ZC1iNWZzLTUzNjRiZWwYTgzMyJ9>

ⁱⁱⁱ “New Yorkers in Need – The Housing Insecurity Crisis,” *The Office of Budget and Policy Analysis, New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli*, February 2024, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/new-yorkers-need-housing-insecurity-crisis>

^{iv} The Housing Access Voucher Program Report: Tager, Hannah, Martin Gamboa, and Chris Mann. *The Housing Access Voucher Program: Saving New York State \$200 Million and Preventing Homelessness for Tens of Thousands of New Yorkers Every Year*. New York: Win, February 2024.

^v Ingrid Ellen Gould, “What Do We Know About Housing Choice Vouchers?,” *The NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy*, July 2018, https://furmancenter.org/files/fact-sheets/HousingChoiceVouchers_ige.pdf

^{vi} <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20150572>

^{vii} Douglas Rice, Major Study: Housing Vouchers Most Effective Tool to End Family Homelessness, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 2015, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/major-study-housing-vouchers-most-effective-tool-to-end-family-homelessness#:~:text=Major%20Study:%20Housing%20Vouchers%20Most%20Effective%20Tool,to%20report%20incidents%20of%20domestic%20violence;%20and>.

^{viii} Sophie Collyer, et. Housing Vouchers and Tax Credits: Pairing the Proposal to Transform Section 8 with Expansions to the EITC and the Child Tax Credit Could Cut the National Poverty Rate by Half,” Center for Poverty and Social Policy, Columbia University Population Research Center, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5743308460b5e922a25a6dc7/t/5f7dd00e12dfe51e169a7e83/1602080783936/Housing-Vouchers-Proposal-Poverty-Impacts-CPSP-2020.pdf>

^{ix} Family Options Study: 3-Year Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families,” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/family-options-study-full-report.pdf>.

^x Analysis of data from Mayor’s Management Report 2023, NYC.gov. Page 242, (https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2023/2023_mmr.pdf)

^{xi} Hayley Raetz, Jiaqi Dong, Matthew Murphy, Vicki Been, “A State-Level Rent Voucher Program,” *The NYU*



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, https://furmancenter.org/files/publications/2_A_State-Level_Rent_Voucher_Program_Final.pdf

^{xii}The Housing Access Voucher Program Report: Tager, Hannah, Martin Gamboa, and Chris Mann. *The Housing Access Voucher Program: Saving New York State \$200 Million and Preventing Homelessness for Tens of Thousands of New Yorkers Every Year*. New York: Win, February 2024.

^{xiii} Ibid

^{xiv} Ibid

^{xv} Ibid

^{xvi} Ibid

^{xvii} Ibid

^{xviii} Project 2025: Presidential Transition Project, 511.

^{xix} Project 2025: Presidential Transition Project, 509.

^{xx} “President Trump Proposes Drastic Cuts to Affordable Housing Programs.” *National Low Income Housing Coalition*, March 11, 2019 <https://nlihc.org/resource/president-trump-proposes-drastic-cuts-affordable-housing-programs>.

^{xxi} The Use of Housing Choice Vouchers in New York City, *NYU Furman Center*, May 2024, <https://furmancenter.org/stateofthecity/view/the-use-of-housing-choice-vouchers-in-new-york-city#fn-18-a>

^{xxii} “Protecting New York City,” *Office of the New York City Comptroller Brad Lander*, November 2024, https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/protecting-new-york-city/#_edn25.

^{xxiii} “City Delegation Says Trump Budget Would Devastate NYC Housing,” *Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez*, February 25, 2020, <https://velazquez.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/city-delegation-says-trump-budget-would-devastate-nyc-housing>.

^{xxiv} Rental Supplement Program, *New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance*, <https://otda.ny.gov/resources/reports/Rental-Supplement-Program-Report.pdf>.

^{xxv} Commissioner Molly Park, Fiscal 2025 Executive Budget Testimony, *NYC Department of Social Services*, May 6, 2024, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/news/testimonies/2024/dss_executive_budget_fy25_hearing_presentation.pdf.

^{xxvi} “Permanently Housing Rather Than Just Sheltering Asylum Seekers Could Save the City Over \$3 Billion Annually,” *Win*, August 2023, <https://winnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Housing-Instead-of-Emergency-Shelter-for-Asylum-Seekersbriefv4.pdf>.

^{xxvii} “Preserving New York’s Public Housing,” *Community Service Society of New York*, <https://www.cssny.org/campaigns/entry/the-future-of-public-housing>.