

**TESTIMONY OF NEW DESTINY HOUSING
TO THE NEW YORK STATE JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET HEARING ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

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Thank you, Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair Pretlow, Senate Finance Committee Chair Krueger, Social Services Committee Chairs, Assemblywoman Davila and Senator Persaud, and members of the State Legislature for the opportunity to testify on behalf of New Destiny on Governor Hochul's Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Proposal.

My name is Gabriela Sandoval Requena, and I am the Vice President of External Affairs at New Destiny. I am here today to underscore that supportive housing is lifesaving for domestic violence survivors.

ABOUT NEW DESTINY

New Destiny is a New York City-based non-profit founded on the principle that survivors of domestic violence need safe, permanent homes to rebuild their lives. For over 30 years, New Destiny Housing has been creating homes for survivors as a developer and service provider, pioneering new models of housing assistance, and advocating for greater resources for a historically underserved population that is often hidden from view.

We are the only organization in the five boroughs solely dedicated to the solution of permanent housing for survivors of domestic violence. New Destiny is the largest provider of supportive housing for survivors in the state, and we operate the first and biggest HUD Continuum of Care funded rapid rehousing program for survivors in New York City. In 2025, we served more than 2,400 adults and children, helping them rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

New Destiny is a member of the Supportive Housing Network of New York and the Human Services Council.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

Domestic violence and homelessness are fundamentally connected. As New Destiny documented in its report: [*A Crisis Compounded: The Dual Crises of Domestic Violence and Homelessness*](#), more than 1 in 3 New Yorkers across the state will experience abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime. New York has the [highest demand for domestic violence services in the country](#), yet not all survivors are able to access resources and services, especially when it comes to permanent housing. In fact, most of the unmet requests from domestic violence survivors in New York State are [housing related](#).

Without a safe place to rebuild their lives, survivors may be forced to remain in abusive situations, putting their lives at risk. In 2022, [1 of every 6 homicides](#) across the state were domestic violence related, where the victim was either an intimate partner or a family member.

Survivors who can flee may spend years in shelter, or staying with friends or relatives, before securing appropriate housing and face a myriad of challenges to keep it. In New York City, where more families with children enter shelter due to domestic violence than evictions, survivors are [5 times more likely](#) to move from domestic violence emergency shelter to another shelter than to an apartment upon reaching the state- mandated limit of 180 days.

Permanent affordable housing, coupled with support services, is critical for domestic violence survivors to rebuild their lives and thrive. The Executive Budget includes additional investments for supportive housing programs and capital funding, but they do not meet the need to ensure the long-term housing stability of survivors and their families.

1. PROTECTING SURVIVORS IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

a. Invest \$62.1 million in NYSSHP

Supportive housing is one of the safest and most cost-effective housing solutions for survivors of domestic violence. The New York State Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP), on which thousands of survivors rely, is the oldest supportive housing program in the nation. NYSSHP had been virtually flat funded for nearly four decades until last year, when the state increased funding by 40% – the biggest investment ever.

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) administers NYSSHP to provide funding specifically for direct services tied to housing. More than 20,000 households across the state – all of whom are formerly homeless or at high risk – live in NYSSHP housing. As a result of nearly four decades of underfunding, NYSSHP nonprofits have been under tremendous financial stress. Since 2003, 33% of NYSSHP nonprofits have closed, left the program, or been absorbed by another agency.

New Destiny operates 5 NYSSHP buildings, with a total of 177 apartments where we house hundreds of children and adults impacted by domestic violence. The program is supposed to fund basic case management and security, but it has fallen tragically short. While the increased funding allocated in last year's budget allowed New Destiny to increase the level of case management support, we are still falling short as NYSSHP does not fully security for our buildings.

Governor Hochul included a 4% increase for NYSSHP in her FY 2027 budget proposal, which falls short from \$62.1 million increase the program needs as part of a five-year plan to bring this first-generation supportive housing up to modern standards.

b. Increase ESSHI funding for existing projects and index rates to inflation

The more recently created Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) is the engine for new supportive housing across the State. Unlike NYSSHP, ESSHI provides both operating and

service funding to support operating costs. While ESSHI rates are significantly higher than NYSSHP rates, ESSHI contracts deeply subsidize all the supportive housing apartments, which enables tenants to pay only 30% of their income in rent.

Last year, the state increased the annual per unit rate from \$25,000 to \$34,000 in New York City and \$31,000 elsewhere in the state for newly created projects, but existing ESSHI sites and those already in development did not benefit from this increase. This is particularly concerning for projects that received a lower award than the \$25,000 annual rate.

We call for the final budget to add enough funding to ensure that rates for current and upcoming units are increased to the new rates and are indexed to inflation moving forward.

2. Increase HHAP funding to \$281 million and modernize application and reporting

Since 1983, OTDA's Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) has provided capital for supportive housing and other projects. HHAP is a vital capital funding source for new construction and preservation, and the only one in many regions across the state. However, HHAP is flat funded at \$153 million in the Governor's proposal.

We are calling for a continuation of the \$25 million set-aside for supportive housing stabilization and a doubling of the \$128 million available for the main funding program, for a total of \$281 million. Additionally, we call on the administration to modernize the application process and eliminate redundant reporting.

3. A Targeted Inflationary Increase of 2.7% that includes OTDA and all human services contracts

As a member of the Human Services Council, New Destiny is one of the hundreds of supporters of the [Just Pay campaign](#), which is calling for a 2.7% targeted inflationary increase (TII) to bolster rates and contracts for human services workers, as well as Senator Persaud's [S3669B](#) to include programs that have been left out of typical budget increases in the past to ensure all State-contracted human services programs receive this increase. As New Destiny's Program Director, Thaiasia Johnson, wrote in a recent opinion piece, [domestic violence service workers have been excluded from state contract increases](#) and deserve a living wage.

The Governor's proposal only included a 1.7% TII for human services programs, falling short of the 2.7% investment needed to align funding with inflation. Additionally, domestic violence programs under OTDA were not included in the TII.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.