



Testimony before the New York State Senate
Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2027 Executive Budget
Human Services
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Good morning. Thank you, Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair Pretlow, Senate Finance Committee Chair Krueger, Social Services Committee Chairs, Assembly Member Davila and Senator Persaud, and members of the State Legislature for the opportunity to testify at this hearing of Governor Hochul's Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Proposal.

My name is Cathy Batista, and I am the Chief Program Officer at Anthos | Home, a nonprofit that helps New Yorkers experiencing homelessness move out of shelter and into permanent housing as quickly as possible by bridging the gaps between voucher holders, property providers, and New York government agencies.

Last year, New York State invested \$50 million in the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP), a statewide voucher program, which will provide 2,500 vouchers across the entire state. This commitment will change countless lives – housing vouchers are a proven solution to homelessness, and through Anthos|Home's work, we see firsthand the safety, health, opportunity, and dignity they afford.

Unfortunately, New York's homelessness crisis continues to worsen. Currently, 150,000 New Yorkers are without homes, and between January 2023 and January 2024, homelessness in New York increased by 53.1% – more than four times the average rate in the rest of the country (New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, [New Yorkers in Need](#), January 2025). Though the initial investment in HAVP will make an enormous difference for families across the state, it is not nearly enough to address our current crisis.

With the full investment of \$250 million, HAVP would provide 13,000 vouchers and assist up to 30,000 New Yorkers across the state. This would not only allow those New Yorkers to move into stable, permanent homes but it would also reduce the burden on New York's shelter system. As you know, the shelter system is meant to be a short-term solution to a housing crisis. Instead, they have transformed into long-term transitional housing complexes.

Since Anthos|Home became operational in 2023, we have helped house over 1,000 New Yorkers with housing vouchers (and maintained 100% housing stability). Further, through our work supporting voucher holders with housing navigation and stability services, we see the impact vouchers have on the shelter system as a whole. Right now, the average shelter stay in New York City is over a year, and the shelter population is over 80,000 (The City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams, [*Mayor's Management Report*](#), September 2025). This does not have to be the case.

With full funding, HAVP can significantly reduce shelter populations and shelter stays in New York City and across the state. Further, since shelter stays can cost hundreds of dollars per person each day, New York State will achieve significant savings in shelter costs while redirecting spending towards a permanent solution to homelessness. HAVP makes sense economically, and it makes sense for New Yorkers. With full funding, its impact could do much to change countless lives.

We urge the State Legislature to vote to fully fund the Housing Access Voucher Program and build on the historic progress made last year. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to supporting New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address this joint legislative hearing.

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