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**New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Labor and Workforce Development**  
February 25, 2026

My name is Kristin Miller, and I am the Executive Director at Homeless Services United. Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition representing over 55 mission-driven, homeless service providers in New York City. HSU advocates for the expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. HSU promotes effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Over 150,000 New Yorkers are without a home, and 175,000 households are at risk of eviction.<sup>1</sup> Between January 2023 and January 2024, homelessness in New York State increased by 53.1% – more than four times the average rate in the rest of the country.<sup>2</sup> Not only has federal aid and eviction protections from the pandemic lapsed, but new risks exist as the federal administration makes cuts to the social safety net. HSU is urging the state to play a leading role in protecting New Yorkers from attacks from the federal government by making meaningful yet tactical investments to end homelessness.

**Include a 2.7% Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII) across the human services sector for FY27.**

The Governor’s Executive Budget only includes a 1.7% TII for human services program. However, a more comprehensive TII is needed to alleviate the financial strain workers are experiencing throughout the sector and reflect an increase in costs. New York State is experiencing a social services workforce crisis. In a sample survey of HSU members, we found that salary was the highest named reason as to why they were losing qualified shelter staff. What this high-turnover means is that homeless service provider organizations are short staffed due to contract-imposed low wages that do not reflect today’s cost of living. Ultimately, this leads to larger caseloads and staff-client ratios.

In addition, we must ensure that this TII applies to the entire human service sector – and not just certain sub-sectors. This can be accomplished by including S1580/A2590 in the enacted

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<sup>1</sup> Mann, Chris, and Hannah Tager. “HAVP (Housing Access Voucher Program).” *Win*, April 2025, <https://winnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/HAVP-One-Pager.pdf.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. *New Yorkers in Need: Homelessness in New York State*. January 2025, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/new-yorkers-in-need-homelessness-nys.pdf>.

budget. We thank the legislature for their previous support and hope the legislature will continue to champion human service workers who safeguard the wellbeing of our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

### **Workforce Development Ask**

We are glad to see money in the FY27 budget for universal pre-k and expanding NYC 3-k. Having access to free or affordable childcare is crucial for families experiencing homelessness have the resources they need to rebuild independence and move onto permanency. What we want to emphasize; however, is that expanded childcare programs also cater to New Yorkers who work nontraditional hours. Thousands of New Yorkers who keep the city running overnight need access to childcare as well.

Additionally, we hope to see the FY27 budget make investment in job-readiness programs and economic empowerment programming to help clients achieve financial wellness and maintain wellness. With the new ABAWD requirements in place for SNAP, workforce development programs will be a crucial method of benefit retention. Increased investments in workforce development will not only create a more resilient workforce but help NYS retain federal passthrough dollars and help New Yorkers keep money in their pockets.