



**Testimony for Chiquita D'Arbeau, CEO/Executive Director, Albany Housing Authority**

**New York State Public Housing Authority Directors Association (NYSPHADA) and Executive Director of the Syracuse Housing Authority**

**2026 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing**

**February 25, 2026**

Good afternoon. I come before you today to discuss NYSPHADA's budget request for this year.

NYSPHADA is very grateful to the legislature and executive for the incredible support in the 2025 budget cycle for setting aside \$75 million for public housing authorities outside of New York City, and for the past several budget cycles to help modernize and rehabilitate our aging facilities. We now find ourselves in a very difficult and precarious situation with the federal voucher program.

As we deal with the uncertainty of federal government support, public housing authorities in New York are dealing with potential shortfalls in the Section 8 voucher program and capital funding. On December 22, 2025, HUD sent a statement to housing authority executive directors warning of significant funding shortfalls in 2026. Rents are on the rise all over New York, and without an increase in voucher program funding, housing authorities will not be able to continue to support the same number of families with housing assistance payments. This is likely to result in many currently supported households becoming homeless.

To that end, NYSPHADA, in partnership with NYCHA and other housing coalition partners, calls for \$250 million to be included in the state budget for critical rental assistance through the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) as the budget process gets underway with Governor Kathy Hochul's FY 2026-2027 Executive Budget proposal. HAVP is a statewide rental assistance

program designed to help New Yorkers who are homeless or facing imminent loss of their housing to secure and maintain stable homes. Modeled after the federal Section 8 program, HAVP guarantees that participating households pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. This program could be utilized by families facing the ominous threat of homelessness in lieu of being terminated from federal assistance for lack of funding in the federal voucher program.

In addition to our budget request, we want to address an issue pertaining to the rising cost of insurance for public housing authorities. This is a major issue crippling our public housing authorities. Many of our authorities have seen a nearly 40 percent increase in insurance costs (please see graph below for summary). The rising cost of insurance has been a serious concern for our members in the last several years. We are speaking to members of the legislature on this issue; they have been very receptive and acknowledge the problem. The question now remains: how do we begin to implement legislative action to reverse the trend.

NYSFHADA is very supportive of Governor Hochul's initiative to allow affordable housing groups and PHAs to join captives and we are excited to learn more details. We are also very supportive of the governor's plan to mandate that insurance companies provide discounts to public and affordable housing partners as they meet certain mitigation criteria. We are partnering with NYSFAFH, Enterprise, and others to push for the following initiatives:

**REDUCE INSURANCE COSTS:** Support Governor Hochul's Executive Budget proposals to strengthen insurance transparency and accountability by requiring explanations for insurance premium hikes, provide discounts for risk-reducing measures, ensure faster claim payments with fraud reporting, and require annual multifamily insurance reporting by insurers.

**CREATE A SAFE HOUSING AND INSURANCE INCENTIVE PROGRAM (SHIIP):** Incentivize insurers to expand insurance products for affordable housing by offering regulatory and performance-based benefits while encouraging premium discounts for developments that implement tenant safety and risk-reduction training.

**CREATE A NEW YORK STATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING REINSURANCE TRUST:** Establish a state-administered reinsurance backstop to share catastrophic losses, stabilize insurance markets for affordable housing, attract more insurers, and help curb rising premiums.

As we continue the budget process over the next several weeks, NYSPHADA looks forward to engaging in more dialogue on the above-mentioned issues, and we look forward to the continued progress public housing authorities are making in New York State.

We thank you for your continued support.

## NYSPHADA Insurance Premiums by Year

