



Testimony for the
Joint Legislative Hearing on the
State Fiscal Year 2026-27 Executive Budget Proposal

Housing

Testimony of Juan Diaz

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Children’s Defense Fund – New York (CDF-NY) thanks Chair Weinstein and Chair Krueger, as well as Chair Hevesi, Chair Brisport, Chair Persaud, Chair Davila, Chair Rosenthal, Chair Kavanagh, and all the members of the Assembly Ways and Means, Senate Finance, Assembly and Senate Children and Families, and Assembly and Senate Housing Committees for holding today’s Joint Hearing today to respond to Governor Hochul’s FY27 Executive Budget.

About the Children’s Defense Fund

Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) is the only national, multi-issue advocacy organization working at the intersection of child well-being and racial justice by wielding the moral authority of programmatic proximity and community organizing to inform public policy. CDF serves and advocates for the largest, most diverse generation in America: the 74 million children and youth under the age of 18 and 30 million young adults under the age of 25, with particular attention to those living in poverty and communities of color. We partner with policymakers, aligned organizations, and funders to serve children, youth, and young adults. As the New York State office of the Children’s Defense Fund, we focus our statewide movement-building and policy work on economic mobility, health equity, child welfare, youth justice, and racial justice/immigrant rights.

The Impact of Housing Insecurity in New York State

New York State is in the midst of a housing crisis that severely impacts families with children. In January 2025, a report by the New York State Comptroller found that there were 158,019 people experiencing homelessness across New York State, including more than 50,000 children.¹ It is not just unhoused New Yorkers who are experiencing housing instability; in 2025, there were a total of 192,156 housing court eviction filings.² Moreover, a report from 2024 found that more than half (2.9 million households) of all renter households statewide are rent-burdened and 20 percent are severely rent burdened, paying 50 percent or more of their income on rent.³ If we consider the proposal to deny Section 8 assistance to mixed-status families that would leave close to 6,000 children at risk of homelessness in New Yorks State,⁴ the housing crisis will only worsen without significant and timely State government action.

Call to Action

Federal disinvestments, eligibility restrictions,⁵ and the high cost of living, are having damaging effects on children and youth statewide. As such, the New York State government has the moral obligation to uplift the most vulnerable families with children facing housing insecurity. One of the

¹ See <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/new-yorkers-in-need-homelessness-nys.pdf>

Microsoft Power BI

³ See “New Yorkers in Need – The Housing Insecurity Crisis,” The Office of Budget and Policy Analysis, New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, February 2024, [New Yorkers in Need: The Housing Insecurity Crisis | Office of the New York State Comptroller](#)

⁴ See “HUD Struck a Data-Sharing Agreement With Immigration Enforcement. What Does it Mean for NYC?” Daniel Parra. April 4, 2025 [HUD Struck a Data-Sharing Agreement With Immigration Enforcement. What Does it Mean for NYC? - City Limits](#)

⁵ See “Hud Moves to End Assistance for Families with Mixed Immigration Status” Politico. 2/19/2026. [HUD moves to end assistance for families with mixed immigration status - POLITICO](#)

main tools to reduce homelessness and housing insecurity is housing vouchers. Research shows rental vouchers reduce homelessness and housing instability, improve outcomes for children, and promote beneficial outcomes for family well-being.⁶ Despite the wealth of evidence about the positive effects of rental assistance, there are not nearly enough federal and local vouchers to meet the needs in New York. Only one in four eligible households receive Housing Choice Vouchers, and localities outside of New York City do not have their own local voucher programs, leaving households with little to no options to help them afford Federal Housing Choice Vouchers reduce the poverty rate for recipients by 43%^{viii} and provide long-term benefits to households that previously experienced homelessness.⁷

The Legislature and Governor made an important investment in addressing family homelessness in the FY2026 Budget by investing \$50 million per year for a four-year housing voucher program pilot.

- **However, we urge the Legislature to support the allocation of \$250 million to fully fund the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP).** To support low-income New Yorkers at risk of homelessness or eviction. The current \$50 million funding allocation is a first step in the right direction; however, the current housing crisis calls for an investment that can significantly reduce homelessness statewide. Children’s Defense Fund – New York, joins the Housing Access New York and New York Can End Child Poverty coalitions in urging the Legislature and Governor to expand HAVP to \$250 million and establish the program’s permanency in the FY27 budget.
- **We also urge the Legislature to address rental arrears in localities outside New York City by increasing funding for the Shelter Arrears Eviction Forestallment (SAEF) Program.**

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and look forward to collaborating to improve the overall well-being of New York’s children and youth.

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⁶ See Douglas Rice, Major Study: Housing Vouchers Most Effective Tool to End Family Homelessness, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 2015, [Major Study: Housing Vouchers Most Effective Tool to End Family Homelessness | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

⁷ See 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 [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 on Poverty and Social Policy](#)