



Testimony of Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Submitted to the New York State Joint Housing Budget Hearing
February 25, 2026

Chair Krueger, Chair Pretlow, and Members of the Legislature:

My name is Ian Straughter, and I am the Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer of Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, the Weatherization provider serving the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Fiscal Year 27 Housing Budget.

We strongly support the joint testimony submitted by NYSWDA, the Association for Energy Affordability, and NYSCAA. We write to underscore the urgent need to restore and protect the 10 percent HEAP allocation to the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) in the Fiscal Year 27 Budget.

Weatherization Is Housing Stability and Energy Infrastructure

For decades, New York has funded Weatherization through the established federal-state framework allocating 10 percent of Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funds to WAP. That allocation is essential to delivering permanent energy cost reductions, health and safety improvements, and building performance upgrades for low-income households.

For our agency, diversion of these funds represents a 60 percent reduction in operating resources — a cut that would destabilize our program and dismantle long-standing workforce and contractor infrastructure.

Last year alone, we:

- Served **143 households**
- Leveraged **\$1.76 million** in federal and state funding
- Partnered with **6 local contractors**
- Delivered average annual household energy savings of **\$464.50**

These savings are permanent. They reduce arrears, lower shutoff risk, and improve housing quality for families already burdened by high utility costs.

Weatherization Reduces Grid Stress and Prevents Targeted Brownouts

Weatherization is not only a housing intervention — it is energy demand reduction infrastructure.

In Bedford-Stuyvesant and across Central Brooklyn, our communities disproportionately experience rolling and targeted brownouts when utilities must manage limited supply against peak demand. During



extreme heat or cold events, when the electric grid is strained, neighborhoods like ours are often the first to experience service disruptions.

Weatherization directly reduces peak demand by improving building efficiency, tightening envelopes, upgrading heating systems, and lowering overall consumption. Every unit weatherized reduces strain on the grid. In high-density neighborhoods like Central Brooklyn, this aggregated demand reduction meaningfully decreases the likelihood of utility-driven brownouts.

In this way, WAP:

- Strengthens grid reliability
- Reduces emergency infrastructure strain
- Advances climate goals through permanent efficiency gains
- Protects environmental justice communities from disproportionate energy disruption

Weatherization is one of the most cost-effective grid stabilization tools available to the State.

The Consequences of Eliminating the HEAP Set-Aside

Without restoration of the HEAP allocation to WAP, we will be forced to:

- Lay off highly trained building science and energy professionals
- Disrupt contractor networks built over decades
- Dramatically reduce services to low-income families
- Increase household energy burden and arrears
- Undermine grid resilience in high-demand communities

This funding represents the majority of our weatherization operating capacity. These cuts would not be temporary — they would dismantle infrastructure that has taken decades to build and cannot be quickly reconstituted.

Legislative Request

We respectfully urge the Legislature to:

Restore and protect the 10 percent HEAP Weatherization Assistance Program allocation through Social Services Law § 97(5) in the Fiscal Year 27 Budget.

Weatherization permanently lowers utility costs, reduces displacement risk, supports local jobs, strengthens contractor ecosystems, and enhances grid reliability in vulnerable communities.

For Bedford-Stuyvesant and Central Brooklyn, this is not theoretical policy. It is the difference between stability and disruption during periods of extreme demand.



We respectfully urge restoration of the 10 percent HEAP weatherization set-aside in the final Fiscal Year 27 State Budget.

Thank you for your continued leadership on housing stability, energy equity, and community resilience.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian Straughter
Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer
Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
1368 Fulton Street
Brooklyn, New York 11216
718-636-6906
istraughter@restorationplaza.org