

For Immediate Release



HOUSING ADVOCATES, TENANT LEADERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS TO WASHINGTON, D.C.: #HANDSOFFHOUSING!

*600+ Rally at City Hall in Lower Manhattan Against Proposed Federal Actions
Threatening the Affordability & Stability of Housing for 1 Million+ New Yorkers*

NEW YORK CITY, NY (March 21, 2025) – A diverse coalition of more than 600 housing advocates, providers, and tenants today joined with lawmaker allies at City Hall in Lower Manhattan for a #HandsOffHousing rally.

Participants at the rally, spearheaded by the [Supportive Housing Network of New York](#) (the Network), highlighted how ongoing efforts at the federal level to slash staff and funding at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) jeopardize critical housing and support systems that enable more than 1 million New Yorkers to remain stably housed.

The Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is proposing to eliminate half of all HUD staff. Some offices, such as the Office of Community Planning and Development, face cuts of up to 84%. Reductions of this size would cause many HUD operations to grind to a halt, threatening a wide range of affordable housing programs and disaster recovery efforts and likely leaving the agency with no local presence in New York City.

Significant uncertainty surrounds the future of HUD's Continuum of Care Program (CoC), which provides \$327 million in funding to New York - \$174 million to New York City alone – to provide direct assistance to thousands of homeless and formerly homeless households and coordinate community responses to homelessness.

Months overdue, CoC contracts arrived last week but were quickly retracted due to DEI requirements that violated a preliminary injunction against the administration. After months of no funding, local nonprofits are just weeks away from being forced to end rental assistance payments to landlords, jeopardizing tenants' housing.

In addition, HUD's announcement that it will end future Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Assistance Payment funds means that 7,000 New York City households will lose their housing assistance in 2026. Two-thirds of nonprofits providing fair housing assistance and enforcement have seen their grants cut by HUD, and the recently signed Continuing Resolution that keeps the federal government running through the rest of the fiscal year slashed 32,000 Housing Choice vouchers as well as \$3.29 billion from HUD's Community Development Fund.

Rally attendees and supporters were unified in their demand that federal, state, and city lawmakers take action to protect HUD programs and ensure housing security for millions of Americans.

"DOGE's attacks on HUD, public housing, and essential federal housing programs are not just budget cuts, they are direct assaults on over 1 million households in NY: families, seniors, veterans, neighbors with disabilities, our loved ones living with HIV, those seeking safety from abusive exes, our neighbors who have overcome homelessness, our families, our children," **said Pascale Leone, Executive Director, Supportive Housing Network of New York (the Network).** "When the federal government comes for housing, it's coming for people's lives. Those most marginalized among us will feel it the fastest and most severely. We refuse to let unelected billionaires and reckless politicians decide the fate of our homes."

"Housing is essential to sustaining a city as vital and diverse as New York, but we can't do this alone," **said Ahmed Tigani, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development Acting Commissioner.** Together with our partners, we've successfully negotiated, innovated, and launched a multitude of tools — pushing the envelope so that we can produce more housing than ever before, faster and more efficiently. Cutting essential housing programs for vulnerable New Yorkers and crucial payments to building owners who rent to subsidized tenants risks destabilizing our housing market and increasing homelessness at a time that requires predictability. We will continue to engage with our federal partners and advocate for keeping these crucial investments."

"Any attack on the city's safety net of resources will have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable New Yorkers and the people we serve," **said New York City Department of Social Services Commissioner Molly Wasow Park.** "In a high-cost city with a 1.4 percent vacancy rate, we need every tool at our disposal to combat the threat of

homelessness and to prevent a humanitarian housing emergency involving thousands of households from overwhelming this city.”

“We’re demanding the Trump Administration right this wrong and guarantee this funding will be restored immediately,” **said Congressman Pat Ryan (D-Hudson Valley)**. “This is a fundamental question of who we are as a country. Because I know the country that I risked my life to defend wouldn’t kick kids and veterans out of their homes. We need everyone in the community to raise their voices and join the fight. Our New York Community cannot and will not let this stand.”

"Housing is a human right, and we must do everything in our power to protect the stability and affordability of housing for millions of New Yorkers," said **Congressman Ritchie Torres (D-Bronx)**. "The recent federal actions targeting HUD programs, slashing critical housing assistance, and dismantling key agencies amount to a direct attack on our most vulnerable communities. Cutting rental assistance, defunding fair housing enforcement, and forcing nonprofits to suspend essential services will push thousands closer to eviction and homelessness."

"I cannot and will not stand by while these devastating cuts threaten our communities," **Torres added**. "We must continue to fight back against these reckless policies and ensure that every person has access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. I stand in support of the Hands Off Housing movement and the advocates, tenants, and elected officials working to protect housing rights."

"I don't know of any community in this state that wants us to focus less on the affordability crisis that we're experiencing in housing," **said Senator Brian Kavanagh (D- Manhattan), chair of the Senate Committee on Housing, Construction, and Community Development**. "I don't know of any community that thinks they elected Donald Trump, or they elected Republican members of Congress from this team to have the federal government withdraw from the work of making sure everybody has a decent, affordable home to live in."

"An unelected billionaire is taking a chainsaw to HUD," **said Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan), chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing**. "Eliminating 50% of HUD staff will undoubtedly hobble the agency's ability to process Section 8 vouchers, review fair housing complaints, assist communities during disaster relief efforts and distribute affordable housing grants. However, Trump 2.0 isn't satisfied with just slashing staff. Elon Musk's outrageous decision to cancel \$1 billion in affordable housing contracts is a harbinger of what's to come. These cuts are not just abstract figures on a spreadsheet, which is why we must forcefully fight back for all New Yorkers. Together with the Supportive Housing Network of NY, I will continue to fight against these harmful cuts, which will dismantle affordable housing as we know it."

"When the federal government comes for housing, it's coming for people's lives," **Assemblymember Emily Gallagher (D-Brooklyn)** said. "It is shameful and unacceptable that an unelected billionaire goon and his cadre of DOGE bros have the audacity to cut essential funding that keeps people housed and safe. Stable housing goes hand in hand with a stable society, and I will fight to ensure as many people as possible are able to stay in their homes and live with dignity."

"Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk are hellbent on hollowing out federal government and stripping away the services that everyday Americans rely on," **said Assemblymember Harvey Epstein (D – Manhattan)**. "Their latest attack on HUD programs is threatening over a million New Yorkers who rely on public housing, Section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers, and supportive housing assistance. We won't stand by while billionaire businessmen wage war against New Yorkers. We are fighting back, and we will win."

"Regardless of one's own feelings, HUD is not a DEI program; HUD is a lifeline for so many families," **said Assemblymember Brian Cunningham (D - Brooklyn)**. "Musk is gutting agencies and programs that he believes only impact communities of color. In reality, slashing HUD affects all families in need, regardless of color. The federal government is not a startup company. Elon's lack of transparency and understanding of how many of these agencies operate should scare every American."

"Let's be clear: the only way to end street homelessness for those with serious mental illness is through a Housing First approach," **said New York City Comptroller Brad Lander**. "Donald Trump is trying to force 'housing last' policies on New York City, and by playing political games with federal funding, he is telling us that he doesn't care if street homelessness worsens or if our subways are less efficient, accessible, and safe—so long as it benefits him and his agenda. We must stand up to federal overreach by Donald Trump and Elon Musk and expand the evidence-based, housing-first policies that will create a stronger, safer New York."

"If we come down on housing, if we make cuts, everything will get worse," **said New York City Council Member Carlina Rivera (D/WF – Manhattan, District 2)**. "It will exacerbate the healthcare crisis; it will worsen our education crisis and all roads lead to a cruel and reckless federal government who is right now implementing and proposing cuts that are going to devastate low-income and moderate-income families. It is unacceptable."

"Federal funding for housing vouchers, homeless services, and the financing of affordable housing help millions of Americans access opportunities to build a better life and thriving communities," **said Brenda Rosen, President and CEO of Breaking Ground**. "The vast majority of New Yorkers who receive federal housing supports are

seniors, children, and people with disabilities. Cuts to funding of these programs would devastate families and communities most in need of assistance to make ends meet. The Federal government cannot abandon the critical role it plays in ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens have a share in American prosperity."

"Instead of cuts, DOGE needs to appropriate enough funding to address the national backlog of public housing repairs," said **Ramona Ferreyra, Public Housing Tenant and Founder, Save Section 9**. "Public housing should be at the top of the list as it is the only housing program that locks your rent to your income, provides social resources and includes the most robust tenant protections in the country."

As a Veteran speaking on behalf of other Veterans and service members, we serve to secure our rights and liberties, not have them taken away, to live safely on our varied pursuits to happiness, which every person deserves," said **Kenny Alvarez, Tenant Advocate**. "It's sad day if we put politics over survival."

"It is time for the United States to recognize *housing is a human right* guaranteed under international human rights law," said **Rob Robinson, Special Advisor, Partners for Dignity and Rights**. "Many residents in this city rely on support of rental subsidies from the federal government to ensure they have an affordable, dignified and a safe place to live."

"The federal government's reckless assault on HUD is already causing real harm – destabilizing renters, delaying affordable housing projects, and undermining programs that have enjoyed bipartisan support for decades," said **Rachel Fee, Executive Director, New York Housing Conference**. "Slashing HUD's budget and workforce won't just hurt low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities – it will also stall lending, disrupt private investment, and worsen the housing crisis at a time when affordability is at a breaking point. We are proud to stand with affordable housing advocates and providers to call on Congress to reject these cuts, fully fund HUD programs, and take immediate action to lower housing costs for struggling Americans."

"ANHD stands united with tenant advocates, housing providers, and coalition partners in opposing federal housing cuts," **Barika Williams, Executive Director, Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development (ANHD)**. "We call for this Administration to end its attempts to gut HUD and roll back critical housing protections—actions that will only worsen the NYC and nationwide housing and homelessness crisis while undermining essential support services for nonprofits and municipalities. Our commitment remains clear: we will fight to safeguard the for stability and security of housing for all New Yorkers."

"Federal housing programs, such as HUD are a lifeline for millions of individuals and families, providing the foundation for stable housing and stronger communities," said **Michelle Jackson, Executive Director, Human Services Council**. "These critical programs ensure that older adults, people with disabilities, low-income families, and those who are unhoused have a place to call home. Cutting funding or reducing staff isn't just an attack on these essential services; it's a deliberate attempt to destabilize our communities. The Human Services Council stands in solidarity with housing advocates and tenant leaders to say: Hands off our housing!"

"The Health & Housing Consortium stands hand in hand with our fellow organizers, advocates, and people with lived experience as we advocate for the essential housing and support systems that keep us *all* safe and thriving" said **Bonnie Mohan, Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Health & Housing Consortium**. "Cutting funding doesn't just remove critical services for New Yorkers/Americans – it threatens the livelihoods of staff who keep our city/state/country functioning by providing housing, rental support, case management, and more. Without the staff, the entire system falls apart."

"Let's be absolutely clear: A cut to HOPWA would be a death sentence for the people we serve. Housing remains the number one unmet need for individuals living with HIV—2 out of 5 people living with HIV/AIDS who require housing assistance do not receive it," said **Andrew Bonfrancesco, Social Worker, LCSW, Prevention and Substance Use Services Program Coordinator, Housing Works**. "The program is essential not only for reducing homelessness but also for mitigating associated risks, such as increased exposure to HIV transmission. This is why I am urging Congress to maintain The Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funding at \$600 million base and \$150 million for an Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) housing program within HUD and to combat attacks targeting transgender individuals."

"Safe, affordable housing is a critical foundation for aging well, and hundreds of thousands of older New Yorkers rely on HUD for their housing," said **Sebrina Barrett, President & CEO of LeadingAge NY**. "Efforts to significantly cut the agency's staffing, funding, and long-standing tenant protections threatens the viability of these critically important affordable housing communities and the housing stability of our most vulnerable neighbors. We urge the administration to roll back its efforts to gut HUD, or risk irreversibly compounding the housing, homelessness, and long-term care crises for a generation of older adults across the nation."

"The hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who rely on HUD know that the federal government can't slash its way to greater functionality," said **Anna Luft, Director of New York Legal Assistance Group's (NYLAG) Public Housing Justice Project**. "A functional HUD ensures that our communities live in dignified, stable housing. The current proposed cuts will put our neighbors, colleagues, and friends not only at greater

risk of eviction, but will also make it harder for folks to find and keep apartments, and ultimately affect their employment, education and access to healthcare."

"The current changes at HUD create a high degree of uncertainty for nonprofit providers and New Yorkers across the state," said **Kristin Miller, Executive Director of Homeless Services United (HSU)**. "Housing stability and affordability remain a major challenge in NYC and other major cities across the country. We must continue to make every effort to protect New Yorkers who are already at greater risk of homelessness and funding cuts are counter to that priority."

"New York City's housing crisis is already an emergency, which the proposed cuts to the Department of Housing and Urban Development will only exacerbate," **Jennifer Vallone, Associate Executive Director for Arts, Adults, and Advocacy, University Settlement**. "Hundreds of thousands of NYC families living in public and Section 8 developments are still reeling from inflation and heightened costs-of-living, and cuts to federal financial assistance for these households will be devastating. We need everyone who is concerned about housing affordability and the prevalence of homelessness in our communities to make noise on this issue – if Elon Musk and Donald Trump blow a more than \$200 million hole in our city budget for housing supports, it will directly impact every New Yorker's quality of life."

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