

October 23, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

Last year, New York missed a critical opportunity to modernize the NYS Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP), and protect the homes of some 9,000 formerly homeless families and individuals. NYSSHP was the state's first-generation supportive housing resource created in 1987, which has tragically remained funded at nearly the same level since inception. The Network proposed a new \$32 million investment to begin to save these vulnerable New Yorkers' homes and the mission-driven nonprofits trying to keep them housed. Despite being included in the Senate one-house resolution, this critical funding was left out of the adopted budget. We implore you to make this one of your priorities in 2025.

NYSSHP programs across the state are affected by the severe underfunding:

- Low wages and related staffing issues have left one NYSSHP-funded residence for survivors of domestic violence in New York City with a single case manager for 56 adults and children.
- In Buffalo, as you are aware, a 25-unit program is planning a closure after losing hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.
- A 40-unit NYSSHP project for disabled and elderly adults in Kingston relies on a single overworked case manager, while a newer residence across town with 35 units for the same population, but funded by the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI), benefits from two case managers, 24-hour front desk staff and two part-time bus drivers.

The NYSSHP program is not sustainable and has been slowly imploding for decades. Since 2003, approximately one third of nonprofit NYSSHP providers have had to close their doors, merge with another agency (bringing their deficits with them), or stop providing supportive housing all together. If this issue is not addressed in the upcoming Executive Budget, New York stands to lose even more housing for those most in need, negating the progress the State makes in constructing new supportive housing.

Thankfully, there is a clear solution: create a Supportive Housing Modernization Act for first-generation NYSSHP units under the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Utilize a five-year, phased-in approach that will create fiscal parity among supportive housing units across New York.

Despite the transformative impact of its services, NYSSHP funding rates have remained virtually unchanged since its inception in 1987 – just \$2,964 for individuals and \$3,900 for families. These outdated rates provide the only source of service funding for more than 9,000 households in supportive housing. 7,000 of these units also lack dedicated rental assistance, leaving residences with steep operating deficits, deferred maintenance and unacceptable housing conditions.

By comparison, newer state programs like the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) – NYSSHP's successor – dedicate \$25,000 or more per unit for both services and rental assistance. These

newer funding programs cannot be used for NYSSHP units, even though they serve the same populations. This chronic and severe funding disparity has left NYSSHP on the verge of collapse.

The Supportive Housing Modernization Act would cost just \$32 million in its first year – FY 2025-26 – a fraction of the multibillion-dollar annual state budget. Over time, this investment will more than pay for itself by preventing the high costs associated with increasing homelessness.

New York is already grappling with multiple crises: from intensified mental health concerns and a rise in more deadly drugs like Fentanyl, to a record number of people experiencing homelessness. All create additional strain on our shelter and social services systems. The systemic underfunding of NYSSHP is disproportionately harming Black people and people of color, many of whom have suffered from years of trauma, survived domestic violence, served in our military, returned from incarceration, and struggle with complex mental health challenges. It also has exacerbated a chronic staffing shortage, as supportive housing programs cannot compete with higher wages available at big box stores and fast-food restaurants.

In addition, due to deep underfunding for services and operating, NYSSHP-funded programs cannot access the visionary [Supportive Housing Preservation capital](#) which your administration created in your first year in office. That capital is necessary to make upgrades and repairs to NYSSHP-funded buildings – many of which are decades, if not centuries, old. Both tenants and staff pay the price of leaky roofs, faulty elevators, and outdated facilities that are not accessible. Many of these buildings, built with NYS capital, were funded without having the ability to create a reserve fund and deferred maintenance is a critical problem. Dilapidation of existing supportive housing units harms supportive housing's reputation, making it more difficult to gain community acceptance for new affordable and supportive housing initiatives.

We implore you to include our proposal for bringing first-generation NYSSHP out of the dark ages in the 2025-26 state budget through the Supportive Housing Modernization Act that will bring funding equity to the supportive housing ecosystem, preserving essential programs and units statewide.

We stand ready to serve as a resource and to join you in advocating for this much needed reform, which will make a profound difference in the lives of thousands of New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Supportive Housing Network of New York
163rd Street Improvement Council, Inc.
Acacia Network
ACCORD
ACMH, Inc.
Ad Essentials
Albany Damien Center
Albany Housing Coalition Inc.
Ashley McGraw Architects
Association for Community Living (ACL)

Auburn Housing Authority
Autism Society Greater Hudson Region
Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc.
Boys & Girls Clubs of Syracuse
BRC
Breaking Ground
Brooklyn Community Housing & Services, Inc.
Brooklyn Community Services
Build for Good
CAMBA, Inc.
Capital District YMCA
CARES of NY, Inc.
Catholic Charities Brooklyn & Queens
Catholic Charities Housing Office
Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties
Catholic Charities of Onondaga County
Cayuga Community Health Network
Center for Community Alternatives
Chances and Changes, Inc.
CLUSTER, Inc.
Columba Kavanagh House
Community Access, Inc.
Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.
Community Housing Innovations
Compassionate Family & Individual Services Inc.
Concern Housing
Connecting Communities in Action, Inc.
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
Credo Community Center for the Treatment of Addictions, Inc
Custom HOA Management
Encore Community Services
Enterprise Community Partners
ETC Housing Corporation
FACES NY, Inc.
Family of Woodstock, Inc.
Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.
Family Service League
Federation of Organizations
Finger Lakes Area Counseling and Recovery Agency (FLACRA)
Geel Community Services, Inc.
GMHC
Goddard Riverside
Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango, Inc.
HELP USA

HELPDevCo
Henry Street Settlement
Homeless Alliance of Western New York
Homeless Services United (HSU)
Homeward NYC
Hour Children
Housing & Homeless Coalition of Central New York
Housing and Services, Inc.
Housing Visions
Housing Works
HousingPlus
Hudson River Housing
Human Development Services of Westchester, Inc.
Human Services Council
Institute for Community Living, Inc.
InUnity Alliance
Jericho Project
Johnson Park Center (JPC)
Joseph's House and Shelter
Keuka Housing Council, Inc.
Lantern Community Services
Leviticus Fund
LiveOn NY
Long Island Coalition for the Homeless
Long Island Connections
Long Island Mediation Advocates
Long Island Social Justice Action Network
Mercy Haven
Milestone Development LLC
MM Development Advisors, Inc.
Mohawk Opportunities, Inc.
Mohawk Valley Housing and Homeless Coalition
Nazareth Housing
Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter, Inc.
Neighbors of Watertown, Inc.
New Destiny Housing
New Hour
Newburgh Community Land Bank
Newburgh Youthbuild
NY-511 Southern Tier Homeless Coalition CoC
Odyssey House
Onondaga County Dept Children & Family Services
Options for Community Living
Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.
Partners Ending Homelessness

PathStone Corporation
People Inc.
Person Centered Housing Options Inc.
Polish Community Center of Buffalo, Inc., d/b/a: Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY
Praxis Housing Initiatives, Inc.
Project FIND
Project Renewal
Providence Housing, Inc.
Providence Housing Development Corporation
Ranni Law Firm
RECAP, Inc.
Resurrection House, Inc.
RiseBoro Community Partnership Inc.
River Architects, PLLC
RUPCO
Safe Harbors of the Hudson, Inc.
Samaritan Center
Samaritan Daytop Village
Saving Grace Ministries
Schenectady Community Action Program
SEPA Mujer, Inc.
Services for the Underserved
Shelters of Saratoga
Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation
Southern Tier Environments for Living Inc
Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach Inc.
St. Francis Friends of the Poor, Inc.
Taproot Community Land Trust
The Bridge
The Center for Youth
The Community Builders, Inc.
The Doe Fund
The Family Resource Center of Peekskill, Inc.
The Fortune Society
The Health & Housing Consortium
The Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services
The Minority Business Development Institute
THRIVE Wellness and Recovery, Inc.
UAI
Unique People Services
United Veterans Beacon House
United Way of Central New York, Inc.
Urban Pathways
Veterans & Community Housing Coalition

VIP Community Services, Inc.
Volunteers of America – Greater New York
Volunteers of America Upstate New York
WAIT House
Wellspring
West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing
Westchester County Continuum of Care Partnership to End Homelessness
WESTHAB
Wilson Commencement Park
Win
YWCA NorthEastern NY
YWCA of Binghamton
YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County
YWCA of Syracuse and Onondaga County
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region
YWCA Ulster County
Xenolith Partners LLC