

For Immediate Release
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March 15, 2022



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING NETWORK OF NEW YORK MEMBERS UNDERSCORE NEED FOR SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT TO PRESERVE, EXPAND AFFORDABLE & SUPPORTIVE UNITS TO ADDRESS PROTRACTED HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

Experts Testify On FY'23 Preliminary Budget, Call on City Council to Reject Proposed Funding & Staffing Cuts, Reallocate Scattered Site Housing Split

New York, New York (March 15, 2022) – Members of the Supportive Housing Network of New York (the Network) told members of the City Council Committee on Housing and Budgets Oversight at a hearing on Tuesday, March 14, 2022, that changes to the City’s supportive housing program need to be formalized, that the City must invest more money for creating supportive and affordable housing and that understaffing at critical agencies has slowed the pipeline at a moment when vulnerable New Yorkers are most in need of those units.

As the City grapples with a homelessness crisis, it can ill afford to delay the construction of safe, affordable housing with supportive services to help homeless individuals get off the streets. Addressing this problem requires a significant commitment and investment in funding, as well as policy changes and staffing increases that expedite construction of new units, preservation of existing units, and placement of individuals where space is available.

For the City’s commitment to supportive housing, **Rebecca Sauer, Director of Policy and Planning at the Supportive Housing Network of New York** submitted testimony on changes that need to be made to the program’s targets in order to reach its goals: “In order to ensure that the NYC 15/15 program reaches its crucial unit targets, the City must reallocate the 50/50 split between congregate and scattered site to a 75/25 split, respectively,” said “Due to chronic underfunding, providers are unwilling to take on scattered site contracts and the program is already meeting the 75% target for creation of congregate housing. This must be formalized and included in plans for the Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) capital.”

“We appreciate City and State efforts to address the homelessness crisis, but clearly, we need to do more,” said **Paul Woody, Vice President of Real Estate at Project Renewal**. “We must create supportive housing on a greater scale. The preliminary budget falls short and should be

increased significantly. The City must also create and survey its entire land portfolio to identify public sites for supportive housing.”

“We currently have four 100% affordable unit buildings under construction,” **said Michelle de la Uz, Executive Director at Fifth Ave Committee.** “Lack of staff at the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and HPD has meant seniors that are homeless or other homeless families are not getting access to housing that they should. We have units that are waiting for referrals from agency staff. It means for projects where we know we need to make repairs on our own buildings were not assigned a project manager for six months.”

“We are concerned with budget cuts of 3% at HPD, which was already subject to hiring freezes,” **said Gabriela Sandoval Requena, Senior Policy Analyst at New Destiny.** “Fewer staff has slowed down the pipeline of affordable and supportive housing in our City. We also ask that the City invest \$4 billion for housing that the mayor committed to in his campaign but failed to deliver in preliminary budget.”

“We are trying to close projects and deal with ongoing issues at properties and it's very difficult to get answers and approvals from HPD,” **said Patrick Boyle, Assistant Vice President of Public Policy at Volunteers of America - Greater New York.** “We wait months and months for things that used to take weeks. Knowing HPD is facing shortages and has not been exempt from budget cuts like other agencies is unthinkable, given the housing crisis we’re facing right now.”

“I can’t underscore this enough: efficiency means getting and keeping as many people in as many affordable housing units as possible; everyone deserves a right to a roof,” **said Barika Williams, Executive Director at ANHD.** “We join United for Housing in demanding that the HPD capital budget increase to \$2.5B to grow the production of affordable and supportive housing and to create a fund specifically dedicated to stabilizing existing nonprofit owned affordable housing.”

“The high costs of homelessness are needless,” **said Jim Dill, Executive Director at Housing and Services, Inc.** “The City should be investing New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) capacity to solve for the many New Yorkers languishing in shelter while thousands of supportive housing units remain vacant.”

“The need for affordable housing long preceded COVID,” **said Johanna C. Kletter, Acting CEO at Catholic Charities Community Services of New York.** “Nonprofits doing 100% affordable housing should be prioritized in the development pipeline.”

“Several thousands of individuals on Rikers Island who are experiencing homelessness, struggle with ongoing behavioral health needs and will cycle through crisis systems when released,” **said Cassandra Warney, Senior Program Manager at Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).** “The cost to the City is \$1.4 billion every year to incarcerate this group. What this group needs is an intervention of supportive housing, which would only cost \$108 million.”

If you would like additional information about the aforementioned experts, or to receive a copy of their respective testimonies, please contact: Liz Benjamin, Liz@MarathonStrategies.com.

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About The Network:

The Supportive Housing Network of New York is a 32-year-old nonprofit membership organization representing more than 200 nonprofits statewide that build and run supportive housing. The Network began life as a handful of pioneers seeking to create a respectful new model of housing to meet the needs of chronically homeless New Yorkers and evolved alongside the movement. As the only supportive housing membership organization in the state and the largest in the country, the Network serves as a voice for the provider community, which has created the largest, best managed, and most innovative supportive housing stock in the nation.