

December 19, 2022

Governor Kathy Hochul
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Housing Access Voucher Program

To Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie,

We, the undersigned, submit this memo in strong support of enacting and funding the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) (S2804A/A3701A), which would put New York on a pathway to ending the homelessness crisis in our state. Including HAVP in this year's budget would help ensure more than 50,000 households statewide can avoid the trauma of homelessness.

New York State is in the midst of the worst homelessness crisis since the Great Depression. On any given night, 92,000 people live in shelters and on the streets. Thousands more are uncounted and doubled- or tripled-up in apartments. This represents an astounding 150 percent increase in housing instability since 2009.

In New York City, shelter capacity is dangerously low. To cope with rising demand for services the City has had to rapidly expand shelter capacity adding over 50 new shelter facilities in less than a year. This trend is not unique to New York City. The crisis of homelessness has brought many communities to a breaking point in localities that have far fewer resources with which to manage the homelessness crisis than New York City. As federal aid and eviction protections from the COVID-19 pandemic have lapsed, and thousands of people have flocked to New York City seeking asylum, more and more people across the state are at risk of becoming homeless.

Despite the historic nature and scale of this crisis, last year's budget failed to fund the most inclusive rental assistance program proposed: the Housing Access Voucher Program. HAVP is a permanent, statewide Section 8-like rental assistance program. At least fifty percent of the program's resources will be dedicated to help homeless New Yorkers across the state find stable housing. The rest will go towards eviction prevention for households at risk of becoming homeless. HAVP is designed to be accessible, flexible, and non-discriminatory, making it the most effective program for moving homeless households into stable, permanent housing and for preventing homelessness in the first place. A state housing voucher would reach thousands of New Yorkers left unserved by the underfunded federal Section 8 program.

We are pleased to hear Governor Hochul's commitment to a bold housing agenda aimed at building more affordable housing. However, developing housing takes years, and we need solutions that will meet the crisis today. In order to reduce the number of unhoused people in our

state, we must offer families and individuals a pathway out of the shelters and off of the streets today. HAVP does this by offering immediate rental assistance to New Yorkers, both helping people secure permanent housing and preventing others from losing it in the first place.

We, the undersigned, urge Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, to pass this essential legislation and provide \$250 million to fund HAVP, and put New York on a path to end our housing crisis.

Signed,

1199SEIU

Acacia Network

African American Planning Commission

Asian Americans For Equality

Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)

Barrier Free Living

BRC

Breaking Ground

Broadway Community, Inc.

CAMBA, Inc.

Center for NYC Neighborhoods, Inc.

Center for Urban Community Services

CHPC

Citizens' Committee for Children of NY

Community Preservation Corporation

Community Service Society

Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

Fair Housing Justice Center

Family Homelessness Coalition

Family Homelessness Coalition Fellows

Fifth Avenue Committee and Neighbors Helping Neighbors

FPWA

Gateway Housing

Goddard Riverside

Healing Hands Incorporated

Health x Housing Lab at NYU Langone Health

Henry Street Settlement

Homeless Services United, Inc.

Homes for the Homeless

Housing Justice for All

Housing Opportunities Made Equal

Housing Rights Initiative

Housing Works

Human Services Council of New York

Institute for Community Living, Inc. (ICL)

Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing

LISC New York

Long Island Housing Services, Inc.

Make the Road New York

MBD Community Housing Corp.

Nazareth Housing

Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter, Inc.

Neighbors Together

New Destiny Housing

New York Housing Conference

Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition

NYSFAFH

Open Hearts Initiative

Phipps Houses

Project FIND

Project Renewal Inc

Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)

RiseBoro Community Partnership Inc.

Safe Horizon

Samaritan Daytop Village

Sanctuary For Families

SCO Family of Services

Selfhelp Community Services

Settlement Housing Fund

Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation

South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO)

Supportive Housing Network of New York

The Health & Housing Consortium, Inc.

The Legal Aid Society

The NYC Anti-Violence Project

Trinity Church Wall Street

United Neighborhood Houses

University Settlement

Urban Pathways

Volunteers of America-Greater New York

WE ACT For Environmental Justice

Westhab

Win

Womankind