



City of New York
DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
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nyc.gov/hpd

AHMED TIGANI
Acting Commissioner

**Testimony of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
to the New York City Committee on Housing & Buildings**

FY 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 25, 2025

Introduction

Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for having me today. It's a privilege to discuss the critical work we're doing at HPD and our shared responsibility to ensure every New Yorker has access to safe, affordable housing.

I'm here today as Acting Commissioner of NYC's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. It's a new title, but at its core, the job hasn't changed much.

When I walk through the doors of HPD each morning, I focus on three things:

First, my job is to care. To believe—deeply—that housing isn't a privilege, it's a necessity. To treat everyone who needs our help, like they could be your parents, our friends or my son.

Second, my job is to take action. Not just to talk about solutions, but to deliver them—every single day—so that more New Yorkers can find stability, security, and a real path forward.

Third, my job is to build momentum. Because this work doesn't happen overnight, and the progress we make today is what will put more families into homes tomorrow.

My focus comes from being a New Yorker through and through. I was born and brought up in Sunset Park, Brooklyn and while my mother might disagree, I often feel that I was raised by the entire City.

I need to say, I hate talking about myself, because this moment – when *so much* is at stake -- *I'm* not what matters. But my story, how I ended up in this seat, in this building, at this hearing, is the story of so many New Yorkers. Our City made space for family with government support including rental assistance, allowing us to find communities and create incredible lives where now we have the chance to give back and I get to raise my very own New York family.



To be very clear, I am not here because it is my obligation to give back to the City that gave me so much, I am here because it is an honor.

Speaking of honors, I've worked alongside many of you for years—some of you, decades. We've debated, collaborated, and pushed each other.

So it is my intense joy to say that today, my job is also about making a commitment to you and your constituents – after all our budget is a commitment to taking action – **my commitment, HPD's commitment, is to not just set ambitious goals, but to deliver real, lasting results that make this city more livable, more affordable, and more just.**

I know firsthand that the decisions we make in this room don't just live on paper—they shape real lives, just as they once shaped mine. But this job, this agency, and this hearing aren't about me, and they aren't about you. They're about the people who are counting on us—the families on the brink, the seniors trying to stay in their communities, the kids who just need a fair shot. And our responsibility—my responsibility—is to make sure we don't let them down.

That's why HPD's commitment is unwavering. With uncertainty, fear and confusion weighing, *now* is the time to turn **ideas into action.**

Finally, before I begin the overview, I want to take a moment on behalf of the agency to thank Deputy Mayor Carrion for his steadfast leadership of HPD over the last three years. His commitment to community and housing equity has been critical to HPD's recent successes and we only expect more success to come under his direction in his new role as Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce.

HPD's 2024 Budget Overview

To get real results, we need to start with a clear understanding of both our resources and our challenges.

Here are some key figures that reflect our work and our commitment:

- **\$1.69** billion: HPD's total expense budget for Fiscal Year 2026.
- **\$1.31** billion: HPD's operational and programmatic budget, with \$375 million going to NYCHA.
- **20**: The number of funding sources that flow into HPD's budget.
- **\$492** million: The amount (38%) that comes from the City's own resources, underscoring our collective investment in affordable housing.
- **\$815** million: a significant portion (62%) comes from the federal government
- **\$7.6** million: <1 percent comes from the state and other sources.
- **\$2.39** billion: HPD's total capital plan for Fiscal Year 2026 (excluding \$875 million in pass-through funding for NYCHA PACT)
- **\$20.73** billion: HPD's FY2026–2035 Ten-Year Capital Plan

It's not all about what is coming into the agency, it's about what we do with it. These resources support teams working on critical areas, from neighborhood planning to enforcement. Our inspectors make sure that every family in this city can lay their head down in a home that offers safety, warmth, and the chance to prosper.

Here are some key staffing numbers:

- **2,383:** The full-time staff working on behalf of New Yorkers. This includes:
- **316** staff dedicated to building and preserving affordable homes.
- **382** inspectors and supervisors keeping our city safe and ensuring homes are secure for every New Yorker.
- **431** staff dedicated to getting New Yorkers into the homes we've created and using the vouchers allocated to us.
- **383** positions are still open, and our vacancy rate stands at 14%.

City of Yes in 2025

Last year, we made history with the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity—modernizing our zoning laws to unlock new housing opportunities across all five boroughs. We took bold steps to cut outdated restrictions, streamline approval processes, and remove barriers that have long hindered housing production. These reforms are already making it easier to build where it makes sense—near transit, in high-opportunity neighborhoods, and in areas that have the capacity to grow. By enabling more mixed-use development, we are not only expanding housing options but also strengthening our commercial corridors and small businesses, ensuring that more New Yorkers can live closer to jobs, schools, and essential services. City of Yes was a critical step toward a more inclusive, sustainable, and economically vibrant New York—but we must continue building on this momentum to meet the full scale of our housing crisis.

Now that the zoning has been approved, HPD has turned to implementation of new programs and the commitments we made to the City Council. We are bringing in new staff to manage the Universal Affordability Preference program and our capital commitments, are developing resources for homeowners who want to add ADUs, helping more tenants stay in their homes through an expanded Partners in Preservation program, and have been adjusting our projects to take advantage of the new floor area, revised parking requirements, and other new zoning rules.

Turning Ideas into Action

We've built the foundation—now it's time to deliver.

Over the past several years, we've crafted bold policies, secured new incentives, and streamlined processes to make housing development faster and more effective. Last year, those efforts resulted in record-breaking housing production, but we know the urgency of the crisis demands even more. In 2025, we are doubling down on our commitment, using every tool available to not only build and preserve homes but ensure they reach the New Yorkers who need them most.

We are harnessing new tools to drive private development and maximize every opportunity to build and preserve affordable housing. The 421-a extension is now fully implemented, unlocking up to 71,000 new apartments citywide, including 21,000 affordable homes. The 467-m program, which incentivizes affordable housing in high-cost areas, has already led to approvals for 484 affordable units, 485-x is now operational, with applications beginning to roll in, and we expect the first projects utilizing the Universal Affordability Preference to begin this year.

Meanwhile, we have expanded our preservation toolbox. Too often, preservation is considered secondary to new construction – but it's a key way for us to create and protect affordable housing. We launched the Community Partnerships for Affordable Renovation program, where we work with CDFI partners to make it easier for owners to navigate assistance. And, J-51 is back, providing critical tax benefits to rehabilitate aging buildings and keep them livable for

decades to come. Our enforcement and preservation teams are working hand in hand to get this message out to owners, that HPD is ready to help them meet today's economic challenges.

And we're refocusing on homeownership. For many, owning your own home is a critical way to build wealth for yourself and your family while creating stability yourself, your community and the City's housing market. We have established the Office of the Homeowner Advocate, launched a Homeowner Help Desk and new HomeFix repair program, and recently announced the expansion of HomeFirst, our downpayment assistance program for first-time homebuyers.

At the same time, we're bringing new affordable housing to life on key public sites across the city. Transforming underutilized spaces into vibrant, mixed-use communities with affordable homes, retail, and open space. These developments will create thousands of homes, many deeply affordable and prioritized for New Yorkers who need them most, including formerly homeless and working-class families.

Despite rising costs and new economic challenges, HPD is laser-focused on turning policies into places people can call home. By leveraging every available resource—from public land to private investment, from zoning reforms to tax incentives—we are making real progress toward building a more affordable, inclusive, and livable New York.

Connecting New Yorkers to Homes

It's not enough to just build housing – we need to make sure that we're connecting people who need support with homes – whether it's through supportive housing, vouchers or just knowing how to use housing connect. That's why we're not just building housing—we're making sure New Yorkers can access it. Every year, we administer rental subsidies to approximately 45,000 households, ensuring families have stable, affordable homes. Through the NYC Housing Lottery and homeless set-aside placements, we've helped secure 40,000 affordable homes in just three years.

By streamlining procedures and eliminating unnecessary barriers—like credit checks for voucher holders, which has streamlined access to housing for over 4,000 families annually—we're making the system more efficient and accessible. Beyond housing, we're also investing in stability and opportunity. This year's graduates of the Family Self-Sufficiency program collectively saved over \$1.3 million to invest in their future, contributing to a total of \$14.4 million awarded since the program began. And for families transitioning from shelters to permanent homes, we've provided \$2 million for essential furniture, helping them settle in with dignity. We've also revitalized the Ready to Rent program, connecting free financial counseling with application support so more New Yorkers can successfully navigate the affordable housing process.

This year, we are intensifying our focus on reducing the time and administrative burden involved in lottery and lease-up processes. We successfully advocated at the federal level to reduce documentation that applicants and owners submit and review. Ongoing feedback sessions with industry partners are prompting us to remove a slew of cumbersome or outdated requirements like paper notarization, post-office rules and paper application processes.

And across our placement and rental subsidy programs, we are deeply involved in building new tools, technology, and data systems to automate and simplify what are large programs with complex processes, and deliver user-friendly and efficient experiences for all of our staff and stakeholders.

Enforcing the Housing Code and Protecting Tenants

Our Enforcement and Neighborhood Services team continues to be on the front lines, protecting tenants and holding bad actors accountable. In 2024, we secured two warrants for the arrest and civil commitment of notorious landlord Daniel Ohebshalom, ensuring he faces consequences for the hazardous conditions at two Washington Heights buildings. In addition, we won a Housing Court case to appoint a 7A administrator for 410 West 46th Street, removing Ohebshalom from the day-to-day management of the building and ensuring tenants receive the repairs and oversight they deserve. These actions send a clear message: landlords who neglect their buildings and put tenants at risk will face serious consequences.

At the same time, we've expanded key enforcement programs to protect more New Yorkers from dangerous conditions. Our Self-Closing Door Proactive Inspection Program is helping limit any loss of life and homes by ensuring critical safety mechanisms are in place at high-risk buildings. The Heat Sensor Program is requiring sensors in more buildings with recurring heat violations, helping to ensure tenants don't suffer in the cold. And with our new Certification Watchlist, we're cracking down on landlords who falsely claim to have corrected violations, requiring more re-inspections to hold them accountable. We've also strengthened our enforcement of lead-based paint laws, securing \$150,000 in civil penalties against one landlord responsible for hazardous conditions affecting over 790 units.

To better inform tenants and property owners, updated the ABCs of Housing guide in 2024, providing clear and accessible information about housing rights, safety regulations, and available resources. Meanwhile, our Lead Exemption Online Portal and redesigned HPDOnline are making it easier than ever for owners to comply with the law and for tenants to access crucial building data. These efforts are making our city's housing safer, fairer, and more transparent for all New Yorkers.

Our Promise

When one of the thousands of dedicated public servants at HPD walk through the doors of 100 Gold in the morning, or any of our offices across the five boroughs, we are collectively focused on the work—the projects that need to move forward, the deals that need to close, and the community meetings we need to lead.

But I know when I leave at night and head home to Queens, I'm thinking about the people we serve.

I think about the family on the verge of homelessness—who can't afford to wait for housing costs to come down. But I also think about the family who just moved into an affordable home—one they found through Housing Connect, in a neighborhood they love.

I think about the senior trapped in an inaccessible apartment, struggling to live with dignity. But I also think about the senior who just moved into a home that's safe, affordable, and built with the community in mind—on public land, with a center where neighbors can gather and support one another.

And I think about the kid who feels the weight of their family's housing struggles, even if they don't fully understand why. But I also think about the kid who gets to grow up with stability, in a home made possible not just by government, but by our partners—nonprofits, faith-based groups, developers—working together to build a future for this city.

That kid could be yours. That kid was me.

As Acting Commissioner of NYC's Housing Preservation and Development, I bring all of that with me—my experiences as a public servant, my time as a colleague, and most of all, my perspective as a New Yorker who will never forget why this work matters.

And I promise you this: I grew up in a New York that made space for my family—now, I'm here to make sure we do the same for even more people.



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS
MARCH 25, 2025**

Good afternoon Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings. I am Jimmy Oddo, Commissioner for the New York City Department of Buildings (“the Department”). I am joined today by several members of the Department’s leadership team. We are pleased to be here to discuss the fiscal year 2026 preliminary budget, as well as the Department’s performance and priority initiatives.

Before I discuss the fiscal year 2026 preliminary budget, I want to take a moment to thank Chair Sanchez, as well as the members of this Committee, and countless other Council Members, who have worked closely with the Department during my tenure as Commissioner over the past two years. When I was appointed Commissioner in 2023, I made it clear that keeping buildings and construction sites safe would be my top priority. Working together, we have made strides to make New York City’s built environment safer and more livable. This includes partnering to advocate for additional resources for the Department to take a proactive approach to building safety, additional resources to address quality of life issues facing New Yorkers and working together to solve local issues raised by your offices, other elected officials’ offices and community boards. I look forward to continuing to work together on behalf of New Yorkers.

Turning now to the budget, the fiscal year 2026 preliminary budget allocates approximately \$220 million in expense funds to the Department. Of this funding, approximately \$176 million is for personal services, which supports 1,805 budgeted positions, and \$44 million is for other than personal services, which primarily supports contractual services, equipment, and supplies. This funding is critical to supporting the Department’s mandates and priorities. Of note, the Department has received 60 additional positions to establish a proactive enforcement program, 25 additional positions to strengthen its enforcement of required periodic gas piping system inspections, 10

additional positions to enforce Local Law 97 of 2019, 38 positions to fulfill our mandates under City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, and 45 positions related to other housing initiatives, including the legalization of basement apartments. Before I discuss these initiatives further, I will discuss the Department's performance over the past year.

In fiscal year 2024, the last full fiscal year, approximately 280,000 construction jobs were filed with the Department, and we issued approximately 169,000 initial and renewal construction permits combined. This represents a slight decrease in construction job filings from the previous fiscal year. Despite the decrease in filings, the average time to review filings slightly increased across the board last fiscal year. However, the Department continues to maintain strong service levels, with customers waiting just over three days for their job filings to be reviewed for the first time. The slight uptick in the time it takes the Department to review filings can be attributed to an increased number of resubmissions after the Department conducts an initial review of a filing and issues objections. Our goal is to continue to promptly complete our initial plan reviews and to improve the quality of such reviews by continuing to train our plan examiners to ensure that plan review is efficient and consistent to reduce resubmissions.

The wait time between a construction inspection request and an inspection, which occurs after a construction project is completed by a contractor, continued to be short last fiscal year, with customers waiting about 4 days for a construction inspection, 5 days for an electrical inspection, and 3 days for a plumbing inspection. However, we are beginning to see increased wait times across the board this fiscal year. The biggest impact on development inspection service levels has been a reduced reliance on overtime due to overtime reduction efforts the Department has implemented. Last fiscal year, the Department reduced its overtime spending by \$4.7 million, which represents a 50% reduction from the previous fiscal year. In order to improve service levels, the Department is being judicious about allowing for overtime where it is seeing heightened demand for inspections, is piloting the use of self-certification for certain low risk inspections, and is prioritizing recruiting for inspectorial vacancies.

We also continue to respond to complaints from members of the public expeditiously. We are responding to the most serious complaints, priority "A" complaints, which are those complaints

that relate to conditions that may present an immediate threat to the public, within hours. We are responding to priority “B” complaints, which capture violating conditions that if occurring, while serious, do not present an immediate threat to the public, within 13 days. As a result of responding to these complaints, and our proactive inspections concerning construction safety, we issued approximately 44,000 OATH summonses last fiscal year. This is a slight decrease from the previous fiscal year and can be attributed to education campaigns by the Department intended to provide more transparency to the construction industry regarding conditions that will result in enforcement action being taken, greater adherence to construction regulations by the industry, and to the continued implementation of the Homeowner Relief Program, which provides small property owners with the opportunity to address violating conditions before receiving a summons and monetary penalties.

To ensure that safety regulations are being complied with, the Department continues to conduct complaint-based inspections and proactive inspections of larger construction sites. Last fiscal year, the Department conducted approximately 204,000 enforcement inspections, which was 24,000 more inspections than the previous year. This includes inspections that were conducted because of the nearly 102,000 311 complaints the Department received. Despite conducting more inspections, the Department found fewer violating conditions during such inspections, which demonstrates that there is greater adherence to construction regulations by the industry, including with site safety training requirements. To date, Department-approved course providers have issued approximately 456,000 site safety training cards, which includes supervisory site safety training cards. I am pleased to report that the number of construction-related incidents that resulted in an injury or fatality to a worker decreased last fiscal year, with an 8% reduction in the number of incidents that resulted in an injury, and that we continue to see a decrease this fiscal year.

Turning now to the Department’s priority initiatives.

Establishing a Proactive Inspection Program

Last year, the City Council passed Local Law 79 of 2024, which was sponsored by Chair Sanchez. That law, which we were extremely supportive of, tasked the Department with establishing a

proactive enforcement program. Following the passage of the law, the Department received an additional 60 positions, which includes inspectors, plan examiners, data analysts, and attorneys, to stand up the program. To date, the Department has primarily focused on hiring and has filled 25 positions, with an additional 16 positions in the hiring pipeline. With these additional resources, the Department will use its data to identify and hold bad actors accountable, identify sensitive buildings that may be impacted by neighboring construction to get ahead of incidents, and perform reinspections of immediately hazardous violating conditions until such conditions are corrected. We look forward to keeping the Committee updated on this important work in the coming months as we work to implement this important program, which will fundamentally change how the Department approaches building and construction safety.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In addition to enforcing the Energy Code and existing laws that require certain buildings to report their energy and water use and to perform retro-commissioning, the Department continues to implement Local Law 97 of 2019, which requires the city's largest buildings to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions over several compliance periods, culminating in achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Implementation efforts have included promulgating rules and issuing guidance to inform property owners about how to comply with the law and growing the Sustainability team, which is tasked with enforcing the law and serving as a critical resource to building owners and the industry as they work to come into compliance. As I mentioned earlier on in my testimony, we have recently added 10 additional attorneys to the Sustainability team, who will work on enforcing the law. These additional positions grow the Sustainability team to 112, which means the team has grown by 60% since last year. Most recently, we achieved a major milestone as it relates to implementing the law, with the reporting portal for compliance reports opening earlier this month. Building owners have until the end of June to submit their compliance reports, and they can also apply for an extension through August 29th. Leading up to this deadline, the Department is offering a series of educational webinars for building owners and sustainability professionals to provide guidance on how to file compliance reports.

Improving Quality of Life

We are also taking significant steps to improve quality of life for New Yorkers and to improve building safety by taking a multifaceted approach to removing sidewalk sheds more quickly, while reimaging the sidewalk sheds that are needed to protect the public and in connection with construction work. This builds upon the work of the Department to address longstanding sidewalk sheds, including performing regular inspections and taking legal action to hold building owners accountable for maintaining their buildings. The additional resources allocated to the Department in the current fiscal year are supporting our efforts in this area. We are working closely with three architecture and engineering firms to deliver on two major initiatives, which includes redesigning sidewalk sheds to make them less obtrusive and more aesthetically pleasing and to study Local Law 11, which requires buildings greater than six stories in height to have their facades inspected periodically to determine whether any changes to the program are needed. We expect to conclude our work with these firms this summer and look forward to updating the Committee on this work. We have also released guidance to the construction industry regarding the use of netting in lieu of sidewalk sheds and rules regarding the installation of art on sidewalk sheds. We are also working closely with the City Council to give the Department more enforcement tools to hold building owners accountable when they put up sidewalk sheds and do not take action to repair their building facades in order to remove such sidewalk sheds.

Increasing Efficiency Through Use of Technology

Last year, the Department and the Partnership Fund for New York City launched the Buildings Tech Lab, a public-private initiative to find, evaluate, and test innovative technology solutions that will support the Department's work, including to better manage internal processes to make plan reviews, permitting, and inspections more efficient, and to better utilize data in its work. Eight finalists were recently selected to enter a proof-of-concept phase, during which they will work with the Department to further develop and test their proposals. Following this phase, certain companies will be selected for a yearlong pilot, which will come at no cost to the Department. The Department is appreciative of the Partnership's support with this effort and looks forward to working with the companies that have been selected to incorporate innovative technologies into our work, with the goal of working more efficiently. Last year, the Department also launched a

new Innovation Review Board, tasked with evaluating cutting-edge technologies that can potentially be used in the construction and development industry. The board consists of volunteers from the construction, real estate, labor, technology, architectural, and engineering communities. These volunteers will join Department subject matter experts and other city agencies in regular meetings to discuss emerging technologies that could be implemented to improve efficiency, safety, sustainability, and resiliency. Ideas selected by the board will be supported by the Department to promote wider adoption throughout the industry.

Supporting Residential Development

Finally, the Department serves a critical role in supporting residential development. The zoning text amendment, City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, which was adopted late last year, is expected to make it possible to build more housing in every neighborhood, with a projected 82,000 homes being created over the next 15 years. Additionally, at the end of last year, the City Council passed local laws which create a pathway for the creation of legal basement apartments and ancillary dwelling units. Given these recent developments, the Department has been hard at work training its plan examiners on these regulatory changes so that they are prepared to handle related filings. The Department is also hiring additional staff to handle the projected increase in filings, as well as to respond to complaints from members of the public as our housing landscape transforms.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We welcome any questions you may have.



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS
MARCH 25, 2025**

Good afternoon,

Thank you very much, Madame Chair. I just want to congratulate the Acting Commissioner, congratulations, couldn't happen to a nicer, more attentive guy, so I appreciate that. And I want to shout out my 16 year old, Amelie, who is here today, out of school, thanks for joining, junior in high school.

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you very much to Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings for holding this hearing and allowing me the opportunity to provide a statement.

New York City's housing crisis has significantly worsened over the past five years with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating it in every area. Our housing agencies have faced high attrition rates with HPD experiencing a 45.6 percent change from pre-pandemic to current trends.¹ The attrition rate pre-pandemic (2016-2019) was 164 and we saw an attrition peak in 2022 with 273.² As for 2023, it was 300 and in May 2024, it was 238.³ There is a clear indication that during the pandemic to the attrition peak there was a drastic increase and even more in 2023. The attrition rate went down mid-2024.

As of February 2025, HPD's vacancy rate is 13.8 percent with a total of 382 vacancies.⁴ HPD has bounced back from the pandemic lows with production in FY25 increasing from the low point of the previous two fiscal years. However, the vacancy rate from last month is still very high. Since July 2019, there have been changes in five civil service titles which make up 54 percent of HPD's total headcount.⁵ The position for Community Associate was down 15 percent through June 2023 and went up 8 percent through January 2025.⁶ As for Housing Inspector, it was down 16 percent through June 2023 and went up 27 percent through January 2025.⁷ The position for Principal Administrative Associate went up 18 percent through June 2023 and went down 8 percent through January 2025.⁸ Community Coordinator went up 53 percent and Construction Project Manager went down 8 percent.⁹ I hope HPD continues to prioritize hiring to fill the gaps to ensure it does not negatively impact the agency's capacity.

¹ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-2-2025.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/top-15-agencies-by-vacancies/>

⁵ <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/changes-to-new-york-city-employee-staffing-levels-february-2025.html>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

According to the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report, within the first four months of FY25, HPD issued 13 percent more violations compared to the same period of FY24 for hazardous conditions including 15 percent increase for class A non-hazardous violations, 13 percent increase for class B hazardous violations and 11 percent increase for class C immediately hazardous violations.¹⁰ In addition, HPD's Section 8 voucher utilization rate was 89 percent in the first four months of FY25 which was a 8 percent decrease compared to FY24. The rate is much lower because of the transfer from NYCHA that saw 3,000 vouchers added to the Agency's baseline which in turn increased the number of vouchers issued by 26 percent.

DOB faces similar staffing challenges with a higher attrition rate of 68.3 percent change from pre-pandemic to current trends.¹¹ The attrition rate pre-pandemic (2016-2019) was 104 and we saw an attrition peak in 2022 with 223.¹² As for 2023, it was 208 and in May 2024, it was 175.¹³ This shows that during the pandemic to the attrition peak there was a drastic increase. By 2023 and mid-2024, the attrition rate went down.

As of February 2025, DOB's vacancy rate is 12.41 percent with a total of 216 vacancies.¹⁴ Since July 2019, there have been changes in five civil service titles which make up 48 percent of HPD's total headcount.¹⁵ The position for Construction Inspector was up 14 percent through June 2021 and went down 8 percent through January 2025.¹⁶ As for Clerical Associate, it was up 5 percent through June 2021 and went down 15 percent through January 2025.¹⁷ The position for Plumbing Inspector went down 38 percent.¹⁸ Assistant Plan Examiner was steady and Principal Administrative Associate was steady through June 2023 and went up 34 percent.¹⁹ Compared to HPD, DOB has been falling behind from the pandemic lows with production in FY25 being minimal compared to the previous fiscal years. It is critical that we ensure that DOB is able to fill all its vacancies for this year.

There has been a concerning trend in building safety in the past couple of years. 2023 was the deadliest year for construction workers. There were 30 construction workers who died on the job, which was the most in a decade.²⁰ According to the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report, construction-related incidents with injury decreased from 237 to 143 and construction-related injuries decreased from 266 to 146.²¹ DOB has put several steps in place to prioritize and ensure the safety of workers. In addition, the average inspection response has been negatively impacted due to being understaffed. The average wait

¹⁰ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2025/hpd.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-2-2025.pdf>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/top-15-agencies-by-vacancies/>

¹⁵ <https://www.jho.nyc.ny.us/jhoreports/changes-to-new-york-city-employee-staffing-levels-february-2025.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/03/04/construction-worker-fatalities-nycosh/>

²¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2025/dob.pdf>



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

time for construction inspections increased to 4.2 days, plumbing inspections increased to 3.9 days, and electrical inspections increased to 9.4 days more than doubled from before.²²

The final part of my statement will include my concerns and asks for this budget cycle.

1. I noticed that almost \$214,000 that was set aside for the asylum seekers was removed. Where is this money going? Can we substitute this money for a different need for HPD?
2. The current federal administration is dismantling agencies including HUD and it is currently facing agency cuts and massive layoffs during a housing crisis. One department in particular that is seeing the deepest cuts is the Office of Community Planning and Development. This office funds disaster recovery and programs that help local communities build affordable housing.²³ In addition, this office provides more than \$3.6B in federal funding for rental assistance, substance use treatment, mental health, and outreach to get those living outside into housing or shelter.²⁴ HPD runs an emergency housing program for people who need to be relocated because of fires. How will this impact HPD? And folx who are on the verge of homelessness?
3. HUD has only one staff person for the entirety of the State of New York which has a population of approximately 20 million.²⁵ What is the City planning to do to protect the federal funds and capital projects? How will the City respond to a potential and probable backlog on the administration of Section 8 applications?

I hope during today's hearing the administration will provide more information on the issues I highlighted in my statement. We cannot have unsafe and weakening infrastructure that puts New Yorkers at risk everyday. I would also like to know if the administration plans to respond to the federal government and meet the goal of being fully staffed for HPD and DOB.

I'll just end by saying a few weeks ago I was here at a public safety hearing. The only thing discussed during that public safety hearing was law enforcement. I just want to re-up the fact that all of these issues, whether education, or housing, really, really have to be a part of the public safety discussion. I hope soon, we'll talk about it as such.

Thank you.

²² Ibid.

²³ <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/22/g-s1-50199/doge-trump-hud-cuts-homeless-housing-programs>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ <https://www.nydailynews.com/2025/03/10/huds-nyc-office-left-with-just-1-management-employee-after-trump-cuts/>



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ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings Hearing on the FY26 Preliminary Budget March 25, 2025

Good morning Chair Sanchez and thank you for holding this hearing today. I am representing Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, who continues to work with this Council on multiple efforts to combat our housing crisis.

The Borough President wants to commend the City Council for your advocacy on housing. Thanks to last year's Homes Now, Homes for Generations campaign, and the City for All commitments that accompanied the passage of City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, your investment in housing capital has achieved record numbers. Given the severity of our housing crisis (as the BP often mentions, the Regional Plan Association estimates that our region needs 500,000 more housing units just to meet current demand), we always need more investment in affordable housing development.

However today, we want to focus on preservation, specifically protection of small homeowners. We hear a lot about rent burden, but not as much about the approximately 40% of NYC homeowners with mortgages and 25% of homeowners without mortgages who are considered cost-burdened (paying more than 30% of their income toward housing costs) according to analysis from Comptroller Lander.

It is no surprise then that there are over 26,000 properties with municipal debt on the 60-day tax lien sale list released this month, or that we continue to see an uptick in scams targeting homeowners with debt and older homeowners, especially in communities of color. Scammers use fraudulent refinancing offers, equity stripping, and foreclosure bailout loans to take over properties, resulting in the displacement of our neighbors and the loss of generational wealth.

This is why New York City needs a true Tangled Title Fund to assist homeowners whose ownership is unclear or disputed, either because the previous homeowner died without a will or because the property has already been a target of deed theft. The City of Philadelphia has such a program, funded through its Division of Housing and Community Development. In their program, an independent Advisory Committee oversees the fund, which is administered through a non-profit called Philadelphia VIP. The fund provides up to \$4,000 each for qualified homeowners to cover administrative, legal, and other costs that may arise in resolving a homeownership issue. Homeowners are eligible if they make less than 80% of Area Median Income and have less than

\$10,000 in assets, meaning they would be unable to afford these costs on their own and would be much more likely to lose their home.

BP Reynoso commends the City Council for starting to think about what this would look like through its FY2025 Estate Planning Initiative. However, the required funding to make this work at scale is much more than provided so far, so he encourages the Council to increase that allocation this year, and to increase funding for community lawyers generally. In addition to the Tangled Title Fund work, local legal services organizations provide educational outreach, workshops, and other essential legal support, making them a critical line of defense against scammers.

Thank you again for holding this hearing today and for your ongoing partnership on efforts to help our constituents stay in their homes now and for generations.

REBNY Testimony | March 25, 2025

The Real Estate Board of New York to The New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings Regarding the FY 2026 Preliminary Budget

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is the City's leading real estate trade association representing commercial, residential, and institutional property owners, builders, managers, investors, brokers, salespeople, and other organizations and individuals active in New York City real estate. REBNY thanks the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony at today's hearing on the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 in support of honoring commitments for agency staffing to support City of Yes and subsequent neighborhood rezonings.

New York City currently lacks enough affordable housing to meet its diverse socioeconomic needs. To address this, the Mayor and Governor set a goal of 500,000 new units by 2032, or about 50,000 units annually. This would require a significant increase in housing production over historic levels. An important catalyst in housing production, under local control, is neighborhood rezonings, which account for [28% of housing production](#) over the past two decades.

REBNY commends Speaker Adams, the City Council, and the Governor for the \$5 billion commitment secured as part of the recently adopted [City of Yes for Housing Opportunity](#) proposal. One billion of that allocation is meant for staffing at the Department of City Planning (DCP), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Department of Buildings (DOB). Both DCP and HPD provide significant resources and time to neighborhood planning processes, and several additional neighborhood rezonings were committed to as part of the City of Yes negotiations. HPD shoulders significant responsibility after a rezoning, through the issuance of inclusionary housing applications, financing affordable housing projects, certificate of no harassment claims, affordable housing preservation deals, and inspection and enforcement for existing tenants. DOB serves as the primary permitting agency for any housing permitted as of right through rezoning actions, ultimately responsible for ensuring projects meet the requirements of new zoning and are constructed safely.

Each of the agencies plays an important role in the delivery of new housing supply and will require adequate staffing to do so. For these reasons, the commitments made as part of the City of Yes for staffing at DCP, HPD, and DOB should be upheld to ensure City of Yes and subsequent neighborhood rezonings deliver on their full promise of housing units.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

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**Testimony for Committee on Housing and Buildings
Budget and Oversight Hearing on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal
Year 2025**

March 25, 2025

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Thank you to the Housing & Buildings Committee chair Council Member Sanchez for the opportunity to submit written testimony today.

My name is Jenille Scott and I am the Climate Director at ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. We bring together labor, climate, and community for a more just and sustainable New York. We co-coordinate the Climate Works for All Coalition—a group of labor, community, student, parent, faith, and environmental justice organizations demanding a just transition for workers and environmental justice communities. Our campaigns move us towards an equitable economy, a healthy climate, and justice for low income Black and Brown communities across New York City.

As we know, buildings contribute to over 70% of New York City's emissions and in order for our city to move in the right direction of reducing emissions, the Climate Mobilization Act was passed which included Local Law 97. Since its passage, Climate Works for All has worked relentlessly to ensure that LL97 is implemented effectively.

Our coalition is dedicated to ensuring that New York City prioritizes decarbonization in citywide municipal buildings, especially public school buildings. NYC school students, teachers, and faculty deserve a safe and healthy workplace and learning environment. Students, teachers, and faculty often are among those first impacted when a climate disaster strikes, and the growing impact of climate change will only make matters worse.

Investing in decarbonization for NYC Public Schools will save the City millions in climate disaster repairs and make us a national leader in the transition to a clean energy economy. Under the Leading the Charge initiative, Mayor Adams has committed \$4 billion to electrify 100 public schools by 2030; to date, he has only allocated \$1.7 billion. With more than 1300 buildings in the school district, this is not enough. Our schools need investments to match the depth and scale of this crisis. Furthermore, investing in schools will help NYC reach its climate goals set under LL97.

As a coalition, we strongly urge the City to invest in this budget session to provide clean energy upgrades and prioritize schools in environmental justice communities. Not only will this create a healthier learning environment for students and improve the health of surrounding communities and existing workers, but it will also create more good paying, family-sustaining union careers. Additionally, increasing the funds for this fiscal year will put New York on a path to electrify and upgrade 500 school buildings by 2030 and become a zero emissions school district by 2040. This is our coalition's vision for Green, Healthy Schools.

We also want to express our coalition's support for Intro 1180 which would limit renewable energy credits (RECs) that a building can access to 10% of its electricity emissions. RECs could severely undermine LL97 and create loopholes for building owners by allowing buildings to choose to comply by purchasing a credit instead of conducting onsite improvements which would reduce local air pollution, generate thoughts of local jobs and make people's homes and workplaces healthier. **A strict limit on RECs will assist with aggressively reducing targeted emissions from the building sector. The City needs to** Incentivize building retrofits to help residential buildings decarbonize and ensure building owners receive all possible benefits and provide robust financing tools for building owners to conduct necessary retrofits

We must be proactive and invest in climate resilience that will save the City billions in the long-term. We are asking for an investment in the New York City workforce, students, and families that will result in savings in climate damage repairs, create green jobs and long lasting careers and a healthier, safer, and more resilient New York.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Jenille Scott



**Testimony of Emily Goldstein, Director of Organizing and Advocacy, ANHD
Before the New York City Council Housing and Buildings Committee Regarding Priorities for
the New York City Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget**

March 25, 2025

Thank you, Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today on the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget. My name is Emily Goldstein, and I serve as the Director of Organizing and Advocacy at the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development (ANHD).

About the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)

ANHD is one of the City's lead policy, advocacy, technical assistance, and capacity-building organizations. We maintain a membership of 80+ neighborhood-based and city-wide nonprofit organizations that have affordable housing and/or equitable economic development as a central component of their mission. We are an essential citywide voice, bridging the power and impact of our member groups to build community power and ensure the right to affordable housing and thriving, equitable neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. We value justice, equity, and opportunity, and we believe in the importance of movement building that centers marginalized communities in our work.

ANHD's work directly supports the needs of our members who develop, manage, and organize to preserve affordable housing, and who fight to bring equity into low-wealth and historically disinvested communities in New York City. Our groups rely on us for technical assistance and capacity-building resources that allow them to maximize their resources, skills, and impact. The support services, research, analysis, public education, and coalition building we do helps to identify patterns of local neighborhood experiences and uplift citywide priorities and needs. Our work translates into the capacity to win new programs, policies, and systems that ensure the creation and preservation of deeply and permanently affordable housing, and economic justice.

The Community Housing Preservation Strategies (CHPS) Initiative

We are grateful for the Council's longstanding commitment to the Community Housing Preservation Strategies (CHPS) Initiative, which has served as a lifeline for the city's most vulnerable tenants and homeowners for more than fifteen years. Through CHPS, over 45 community-based organizations provide preservation services in neighborhoods most at risk of displacement, particularly among low-income, BIPOC, and immigrant communities. However, despite this essential work, our CHPS partners continue to face two interrelated challenges:



persistent underfunding and unacceptable delays in the City's contracting and payment processes. Every CHPS organization surveyed this year reported delays in registration—some dating back to Fiscal Year 2023—forcing them to front costs for essential services while waiting months or even years to be reimbursed. These delays significantly hinder program operations and staff retention, placing strain on frontline teams and putting tenant protections at risk.

In light of the escalating housing crisis, we call on the City Council to increase CHPS funding to \$4.95 million in FY26. The program's funding has remained flat at \$3.65 million since 2016, despite skyrocketing demand and increasing costs. New investments would enable CHPS groups to scale their services, provide cost-of-living adjustments for staff, and expand their capacity to address evictions, poor housing conditions, and tenant harassment across the city. In tandem, we urge the Council to address the systemic contracting backlog by advancing reforms and ensuring timely contract approvals and payments.

Displacement Alert Project (DAP)

DAP is a critical resource for affordable housing advocates, helping users to proactively identify and outreach to those at risk of displacement and do in-depth research of individual building histories. The tool has scaled since inception and has the capacity to continue expanding in New York and beyond to support unit, building, and area level strategies that prevent affordable housing displacement. Last year over 1,280+ users (including tenant coalitions, community boards, and elected officials) relied on DAP to track eviction risks and landlord patterns. In addition, ANHD provided 8 specialized trainings conducted to help organizations leverage data tools, build organizing strategies, and advance tenant protections, while providing direct troubleshooting support to CHPS-funded groups responding to housing crises in real time.

We urge the City Council to continue their crucial funding of this work through our application for \$268,907 for ANHD's Displacement Alert Project and our Capacity Building Training and Technical Assistance for the CHPS program. This will allow us to maintain and expand DAP, provide technical assistance and training to CHPS-funded organizations to improve housing stability efforts, and produce research and data tools, including the Housing Risk Chart and AMI Cheat Sheet, to support housing advocacy and policy solutions

KEY OUTCOMES WITH FY26 FUNDING:

- Sustained operations of the Displacement Alert Project (DAP) and DAP Portal to provide real-time data on displacement risks.
- Expanded training and capacity-building support for CHPS-funded groups, enhancing their ability to protect tenants and preserve affordable housing.
- Development of new housing research tools, including the Housing Risk Chart and AMI Cheat Sheet, for advocacy and policymaking.



- Annual convening with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and CHPS groups to assess program impact and discuss policy solutions.

Housing Capital Funding

Emergency Preservation Funds for Non-Profit Affordable Housing Providers

ANHD commends the \$2 billion capital commitment under the “City of Yes for Housing Opportunity” and “City of Yes for Housing Equity” initiatives, including the critical focus on affordable housing preservation. We are encouraged by the revival of the J-51 tax abatement to support moderate rehabilitation and extend affordability in older housing stock.

That being said, we urge the City Council to ensure that this commitment is codified, and that the promised \$1 billion in capital city resources for preservation comes on top of previously committed resources.

Moreover, targeted action is crucial to ensure that these capital funds reach New York City’s nonprofit affordable housing providers, who need them most. These organizations maintain deeply affordable units with rents under \$1,000 and are facing mounting financial challenges from pandemic-era rent arrears, rising operational costs, and dwindling reserves. Unlike for-profit developers, these mission-driven nonprofits operate on narrow margins, prioritizing long-term affordability and tenant stability over profit.

The combined \$2 billion in preservation capital from the City and the State should be directed strategically to support portfolio-level stabilization, particularly for nonprofit developers. These funds can have a transformative impact by covering essential repairs, upgrading building systems, and renovating units to bring them back into service — directly supporting the long-term viability of deeply affordable housing. Preservation is about more than just maintaining physical structures; it’s about protecting tenants and ensuring they can live in safe, healthy, and dignified homes.

To fully achieve the objectives of the “City of Yes” initiative, capital dollars must be allocated equitably and strategically to support the sustainability of nonprofit housing portfolios. Without timely investment, many nonprofit-owned buildings could face serious risks of disrepair and tenant displacement within just a few years — ultimately increasing costs for the City and undermining our shared housing goals.

Now is the time to act: preserve what we’ve already built and protect the communities that depend on it.

Prioritizing Deeper Affordability



The FY26 Preliminary Budget reflects a record high level of housing capital investment thanks to the City of Yes/City for All agreements. However, record investments must be matched with deeper affordability and targeted implementation. In 2024, only 16% of housing completions and 21% of housing starts served extremely low-income (ELI) households—despite ELI households representing 35% of all NYC renters, 58% of rent-burdened households, and the vast majority of those experiencing homelessness. To address this disparity, the City must dramatically increase the proportion of capital dollars dedicated to projects that serve the lowest-income New Yorkers. This includes prioritizing financing tools that make deeply affordable housing feasible and sustainable, and using capital creatively in conjunction with operating support to enable our members and the broader affordable housing field to develop more of the affordable housing homeless and housing insecure New Yorkers need.

Lastly, we are deeply concerned that while the FY26 allocation for HPD is \$3.3 billion, funding declines sharply in the outyears, dropping to \$1.9 billion in FY27 and less than \$500 million in subsequent years ([NYHC, 2025](#)). Similarly, NYCHA's capital funding is set to fall from \$1.1 billion in FY26 to roughly \$200 million in the following years ([NYHC, 2025](#)). If we are to make real, sustained progress in solving New York City's housing crisis, both the Council and the Administration must commit to maintaining and increasing housing capital funding beyond FY26. Long-term investment is critical to ensuring that both new development and preservation efforts receive the funding they need to support affordable housing for generations to come.

Right to Counsel

ANHD calls for full funding for the Right to Counsel program - we have a proven, effective tool to prevent evictions, and far too many eligible New Yorkers are being denied access due to lack of resources. In 2024, less than half of tenants with eviction cases in housing court were represented by an attorney ([Right to Counsel NYC](#)). Full funding for Right to Counsel will have an immediate impact to reduce eviction rates and stop even more vulnerable New Yorkers from becoming homeless.

CityFHEPS

In the midst of an unprecedented homelessness crisis in New York City, the agencies responsible for safely sheltering unhoused New Yorkers and helping them to transition into permanent housing urgently need additional funding. One of the most effective solutions to alleviate overcrowding in the shelter system is expanding access to permanent, subsidized housing—while also preventing more families from entering homelessness in the first place.

The package of CityFHEPS laws passed in summer of 2023 are a critical part of making these solutions a reality. Now that the CityFHEPS expansion bills are law, we must have them fully



implemented and funded. CityFHEPS is one of the key programs that helps those in shelters access permanent housing, which in turn helps alleviate overcrowding in the shelter system itself ([CSS, 2023](#)). The program's expansion will also allow more New Yorkers to use vouchers to avoid eviction and stabilize their housing before reaching crisis levels. We know that housing stability yields wide-reaching benefits—supporting higher wages, lower healthcare costs, and improved educational and workforce outcomes.

While the Administration has cited logistical, staffing, and budget constraints as barriers to implementation, the FY26 Executive Budget must reflect the resources necessary to fulfill the mandate of these new laws. We also urge increased baseline funding to ensure more CityFHEPS vouchers can be distributed and used effectively. While expanding the program to cover families facing eviction is projected to cost the city approximately \$8 billion dollars, it is also expected to save \$5 billion from reduced shelter and rehousing costs—resulting in a net cost of about \$3 billion over five years ([CSS, 2023](#)).

Homeownership

While the “City of Yes” initiative includes a significant commitment to expanding homeownership, the Administration’s proposed FY26 budget does not appear to fully reflect that promise. Based on the City Council’s homeownership tracker, several key programs fall short of the 10-year investment goals outlined in the Council’s proposal.

For example, HomeFix—which should be funded at \$27.7 million—is currently projected to receive only \$18 million over 10 years, based on this year’s allocation. HomeFirst is funded at \$3 million annually, totaling just \$30 million instead of the \$41 million target. HelpDesk is allocated \$20 million over 10 years, falling short of the recommended \$25.6 million.

The Tenant Legal Services (TLS) program appears to receive only \$200,000 next year, far below the \$2.2 million annual target (or \$22 million over a decade), though this may reflect HPD staffing allocations. Funding for the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Technical Assistance program is also lower than expected—roughly \$3.3 million (\$2.4 million + \$907,000) instead of the proposed \$4 million.

We urge the Administration to fully fund these homeownership programs in alignment with the Council’s proposed investment levels and ensure these resources are accessible to low- and moderate-income New Yorkers seeking to build wealth and stability through homeownership.

Agency Staffing

The Preliminary FY26 expense budget includes additional funding from the “City of Yes” and “City for All” agreements to support increased staffing at HPD, Department of Buildings (DOB),



and the Department of City Planning (DCP). According to NYHC analysis, the budget adds 153 new positions across these agencies: 77 at HPD, 66 at DOB, and 10 at DCP ([2025](#)). ANHD supports increased staffing, as it is critical to the operations of our members citywide.

We urge the administration to ensure that additional staff at HPD and DOB is directed towards two areas where our members are experiencing negative impacts due to insufficient agency capacity.

First, HPD's code enforcement and litigation units must improve their capacity to not only respond to tenant complaints and conduct routine inspections, but to take proactive measures targeting buildings with consistent patterns of severe violations. This requires more capacity for activities like roof to cellar inspections, as well as increased capacity to forcefully pursue penalties in court.

Second, HPD and DOB must increase their capacity to support nonprofit developers — especially in preservation and operations. Persistent delays in approvals, processing, and inspections create major cash flow challenges for nonprofit housing providers, impacting their ability to sustain and reinvest in affordable housing. Backlogs in addressing building code violations and operational approvals not only stall preservation efforts, but also directly affect residents' quality of life.

On the development side, HPD plays a central role in nearly all affordable housing production in New York City. Recent staffing shortages have significantly slowed down this pipeline. In 2022, 12,000 fewer apartments were built compared to pre-pandemic numbers, according to the Comptroller's office ([Gothamist, 2024](#)). The staff shortages have caused delays for nonprofit developers, who are forced to carry expensive pre-development and construction loans longer while awaiting closings and permanent financings. Although HPD has made great efforts to alleviate the shortages, the loss of institutional knowledge and experience cannot be diminished. There is still a significant backlog of affordable housing projects from the past couple years requiring us to give HPD all the resources we can to ensure that we recuperate from the loss in production ([Comptroller, 2024](#)).

Additionally, we urge the council and administration to increase funding to the Commission on Civil and Human Rights to ensure that we continue to protect New Yorkers from discrimination in the housing market. Especially at a time when the federal government is rolling back its commitment to fair housing, New York City must step up. Despite being outlawed since 2008, Source of Income (SOI) discrimination remains pervasive, and presents a significant barrier to New Yorkers seeking to leave shelters for permanent housing. CityFHEPS and other housing voucher programs have proven to be effective in allowing tenants to remain in their homes and prevent future evictions/homelessness. However, even after tenants jump through multiple hoops to obtain a voucher, they are rejected by landlords who choose to discriminate against them. The CCHR needs more funding to fully staff its offices to have increased enforcement of



discriminatory laws. It is a step in ensuring we prevent further discrimination and homelessness. At minimum, capacity should be increased to 2018 staffing levels, which would be an estimated cost of \$3 million in new funding for the Commission's Law Enforcement Bureau in FY25.

Finally, the Department of Social Services (DSS) budget must reflect an accurate assessment of the cost to house asylum seekers, without relying on inhumane measures like shelter time limits. It must also include funding for case management, helping asylum seekers access work authorization and other supports needed to stabilize and thrive.

Delayed Contracts and Stalled Projects

ANHD commends NYC Council Speaker Adrienne Adams for her leadership in reducing delayed payments to nonprofits, a critical step toward strengthening the organizations that serve our communities. We strongly support advancing legislation to transition to a grant-based model, which would streamline funding and improve cash flow for nonprofits ([State of the City, 2025](#)). Additionally, we urge the restoration of \$16 million to the Mayor's Office of Contracts to ensure adequate staffing and capacity to prevent further delays and administrative breakdowns ([State of the City, 2025](#)). ANHD members working in low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities across the city that depend on timely City contracts to sustain their operations. This includes nonprofit housing developers, who need reliable funding to preserve and build affordable housing. When contract approvals are delayed, projects stall, forcing nonprofits to absorb financial losses they cannot afford. To prevent further harm, the City must restore this funding and implement reforms that ensure nonprofits can continue their essential work without unnecessary financial strain. Investing in a strong, efficient contract system is not just about fiscal responsibility—it is about safeguarding the stability of the communities we serve.

Prevailing Wage/Wage floor

ANHD is dedicated to ensuring fair wages and equitable treatment for workers and understands the spirit and intent of City Council proposed bills to ensure fair wages and workers' rights. We have serious concerns on the proposed bills' potential reduction in affordable housing units and the adverse effects on non-profit developers. Due to uncertainty in housing and construction costs from federal tariffs and significant federal cuts to HUD, we believe it is not the appropriate time to impose additional funding requirements on non-profit affordable housing developers. Without significant sustainable added capital, city agency staffing capacity and capacity by our non-profit developers we believe these proposals will result in a significant loss of affordable housing units and a reduction in affordability for the lowest-income New Yorkers.

If the parameters of Intros 1156-2024 and 910-2024 fall upon non-profit developers, the cost of building affordable housing units will increase drastically on a citywide scale. These parameters



include: providing prevailing wages and ensuring that 30% of hours worked are done by residents of a certain zip code where 15% of the population is below the federal poverty level.

Intros 1156-2024 and 910-2024 do not stipulate the definitions of “certain economic developers” or “housing developers of certain housing development projects.” Affordable housing developments rarely cost less than \$1 million. Non-profit developers do not have the capital capacity or cash reserves to bear the burden of the above requirements without the properties they are developing losing their affordability.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions or for more information, please contact Emily Goldstein: emily.g@anhd.org.



Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, Inc.
Testimony to the City of New York – City Council
Stabilizing NYC Initiative

25 March 2025
Submitted by Brian Sahd

On behalf of Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, Inc. and the Banana Kelly Resident Council, I am honored to submit this testimony today in strong support of the Stabilizing NYC Initiative. Now in its eleventh year, Stabilizing NYC is requesting \$5 million in City Council initiative funding to continue its highly successful efforts to combat tenant harassment, evictions, and the loss of affordable housing at the hands of predatory equity and speculative investors. This initiative has been a lifeline for countless residents, ensuring that our communities remain places where working families, seniors, and low-income individuals can live with dignity and stability.

Banana Kelly is a mutual housing association and community organization that has been deeply rooted in the South Bronx since the late 1970s. We were formed in response to widespread disinvestment and the devastation that followed, and through community ownership and control of housing, we have played—and continue to play—a vital role in the revitalization of the Longwood, Hunts Point, Morrisania, and Mott Haven neighborhoods. For the past eleven years, it has been both our privilege and our responsibility to be a member of Stabilizing NYC, working alongside our coalition partners to protect vulnerable tenants and preserve affordable housing.

As you are aware, Stabilizing NYC (SNYC) is a citywide coalition that brings together legal, advocacy, and organizing resources to empower tenant associations and build strong landlord coalitions. Through grassroots organizing, tenant rights education, leadership development, and legal defense, SNYC members help tenants build power and protect their homes.

At Banana Kelly, our Stabilizing NYC program is central to our mission of defending the rights of low-income residents and ensuring that they have access to safe, healthy, and affordable living conditions. For decades, government divestment left the South Bronx largely overlooked by the forces that sought to displace low-income residents for profit. However, in the past decade, we have witnessed a wave of development that, in many cases, has mirrored the gentrification and displacement crises seen in Manhattan and Brooklyn. This has brought a new urgency to our work. We recognize that fighting displacement requires both strengthening our base and forging strong alliances with like-minded organizations across the city. Our broader strategy is twofold: to remain a locally based organization, deeply embedded in the community and controlled by neighborhood residents, while also building citywide coalitions that amplify our collective power against the forces of displacement. By combining local organizing with broader advocacy efforts, we create deep-rooted connections and a stronger, more resilient community. This approach allows us to grow our base, expand our influence, and win victories benefiting not just our residents but the city as a whole.

We deeply appreciate your unwavering support for Stabilizing NYC. It is because of your leadership and commitment that we are able to make such a meaningful impact on communities across this great city. With your continued investment in this initiative, we can keep fighting to ensure that all New Yorkers—regardless of income—have the right to a safe, stable, and affordable home. Thank you for your time, your dedication, and your belief in the power of community-driven solutions. We look forward to working together to build a more just and equitable New York City.

BANANA KELLY Community Improvement Association, Inc.

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Presentation Title: Addressing Housing Challenges in the Bronx

Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening esteemed partners and community leaders. My name is Gladstone Johnson, and I am the Executive Director of Bronx Neighborhood Housing Services CDC Inc. For over 30 years, we have been dedicated to serving the housing needs of low- to moderate-income residents in the Bronx, helping them achieve the dream of first-time homeownership.

Current Challenges:

Despite our efforts, we face significant challenges. The Area Median Income (AMI) in the Bronx is considerably lower than what is required to qualify for market-rate homes. This gap makes it difficult for potential homeowners to enter the market. Additionally, many of our senior homeowners, whose homes were built between 1924 and 1941, have not engaged in estate planning and wish to remain in their homes. These homes often require urgent repairs, and we maintain a waiting list of approximately 200 homes seeking assistance.

Our Current Efforts:

Currently, we receive repair grants that allow us to assist only 8 homes annually. Through partnerships with financial institutions, we have been able to offer emergency repairs and HELOC loans without income verification or FICO score checks. However, to make a substantial impact, we need to expand our capacity to reach 50 homes per year, with an average allocation of \$20,000 each.

Case Study:

Recently, I was contacted by a community leader about an elderly resident in the NE Bronx who owns a three-family home. Unable to visit our office, I went to her home, where she pleaded for assistance with repairs to ensure her tenants could continue paying rent. A \$20,000 grant would significantly alleviate her situation, securing her income and maintaining her legacy.

Call to Action:

We need partnerships with elected officials and other nonprofits in the affordable housing space to explore creative solutions to these challenges. Your support is crucial in helping us secure the necessary resources to address these urgent needs.



Conclusion:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our vision and challenges with you. We ask for your serious consideration of our request to support the constituents of the Bronx. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of many families and seniors in our community.

I respectfully request funding from the City Council in the amount of \$3 million dollars to launch the NHS of New York City's Home Repair Gap Program. NHS of New York City is NHS Brooklyn's long-standing partner, and we would work with them to ensure that these resources are delivered to high-need homeowners in our community.

Regards,

Gladstone Johnson

Gladstone Johnson
Executive Director
Bronx NHS CDC



CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities testimony to the City of New York City Council

Submitted by Sasha Wijeyeratne, Executive Director of CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities on behalf of Stabilizing NYC

On behalf of CAA AV: Organizing Asian Communities (CAA AV), I am honored to submit this testimony as a member and in strong support of the Stabilizing New York City (SNYC) initiative, a coalition of legal, advocacy, and community organizing nonprofits that build power through outreach, tenant rights education, leadership development, and legal support. This year Stabilizing New York City is requesting \$5 million in City Council initiative funding to support the eleventh year of our highly successful and collective work to combat harassment, evictions, and the loss of affordable housing at the hands of predatory equity and speculative investors across the city.

CAA AV is based in Manhattan Chinatown and Astoria, Queens, and has organized thousands of working class, Asian immigrants throughout NYC around affordable housing and safety since 1986. One of our recent significant victories includes successfully organizing hundreds of tenants in an Astoria building housing predominately Bengali families who were living without cooking gas and hot water over 9 months, housed in units under severe disrepair—including collapsing ceilings, and were regularly harassed and intimidated by their landlord. After months of organizing, we succeeded in pushing the landlord to turn gas and hot water on in the building. In addition to preventing self-eviction and displacement, this win galvanized our base, laying the foundation for us to continue to advocate for tenants across the neighborhood, which is rapidly developing as a site for luxury housing.

Through SNYC, CAA AV has had the opportunity to strengthen our work alongside 19 other legal and housing organizations. Together, we have held over 5,000 convenings and workshops, built over 200 tenant associations, participated in nearly 500 direct tenant actions and more to protect working class New Yorkers from landlord abuse in an increasingly unaffordable city. We believe that housing justice is racial justice. As predatory equity and speculation disproportionately forces tenants in BIPOC communities, decades of government disinvestment in communities of color has been exacerbated by redlining, speculation, and overleveraging. Landlords and lenders continue to benefit from systemic racism by going unpunished and wield power over renters through denying services, neglecting repairs, and illegal construction. Rarely are they held accountable by city and state agencies.

Courts have been overwhelmed with eviction cases since the moratorium was lifted and tenants struggle to pay rent. It has been reported that there have been over 100,000 eviction cases in NYC since the moratorium was lifted in 2022. SNYC tenants grapple with landlords who use a variety of harassing tactics to displace tenants to flip buildings out of regulatory status to maximize profits over people, including:

- Aggressively pursuing eviction cases
- Refusing to make repairs, forcing tenants to live in dangerous & unhealthy conditions
- Warehousing vacant apartments, hoping to ultimately circumvent rent regulations, and more.

Stabilizing NYC funding will allow us to hold tenant Know Your Rights trainings, connect our members to legal support, and protect our members from evictions and landlord harassment. For the past several years, the City Council generously awarded us \$3,700,000 to continue our work. ***With the additional increase of \$1.3 million, we can protect more homes, win more building improvements and strengthen community organizing across the City.***

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

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 - Richmond County District Attorney
 - Kings County District Attorney
 - Manhattan District Attorney (forthcoming)

The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

Family
 Criminal
 Community Development
 Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

2. Harlem Community Justice Center
3. Headquarters
4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

6. Community Justice Connect (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
8. Bronx Community Justice Center
9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
13. Neighbors in Action
14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)

Staten Island

Brooklyn

Queens

Bronx

Manhattan

Citywide

For More Information
 Hailey Nolasco
 Senior Director of Government Relations
hnolasco@innovatingjustice.org

Access to Justice
 Alternatives to Incarceration
 Driver Accountability Program
 Gender and Family Justice

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
 Parent Support Program
 Project Reset
 Restorative Justice Practices

RISE Project
 Strong Starts Court Initiative
 Youth Action Institute
 Youth Impact

Center for Justice Innovation

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

Good afternoon Chair Sanchez and esteemed members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings. My name is Ignacio Jaureguilorda and I serve as the Director of the Civil Access to Justice Initiatives at the Center for Justice Innovation.

The Center for Justice Innovation (the Center) works to build community safety by addressing the root causes of crime. Any conversation around community safety must include housing instability. Housing is the bedrock of well-being in our lives, supporting our ability to stay healthy, keep a job, succeed in school, and maintain community and family ties.

However, far too many people struggle to find and stay in decent, affordable homes. Unsafe conditions can disrupt people's lives and health. Tenants may struggle to assert their rights while evictions have the capacity to destabilize families. These harms disproportionately affect Black and Brown neighborhoods, particularly impacting women of color and their children.

Helping to preserve housing stability in historically disinvested neighborhoods is a critical method of attaining true community safety. Stable and fair access to housing helps people avoid contact with the legal system, stops the cycle of trauma associated with displacement and instability, helps those returning from incarceration rebuild their lives, and fosters safety for individuals, families, and communities.

We have helped thousands of New Yorkers remain in their homes by providing direct assistance with rent and other tenancy issues; helping tenants get critical repairs; connecting residents to legal services and benefits; and providing trauma-informed, multi-lingual care.¹ Our work takes place in the courthouse and in the communities that need it most. Through it all, we are problem-solvers working with tenants, community leaders, city agencies, and the courts in pursuit of strong, vibrant, healthy communities.

The Center's unique approach works to address the root causes of what drives people to court—poverty, lack of sustained employment, lack of childcare, healthcare needs—and responds to local concerns, rather than simply enforcing the law. For housing cases, this means working directly with tenants to secure much needed repairs and fighting evictions.

Housing insecurity and justice system involvement can be a vicious cycle with long-lasting effects for individuals, families, and communities as well as government systems. The Center is requesting the support of City Council to continue to grow the effort to break this cycle. Below is a selection of programs that the Center offers that contribute to city-wide housing justice for all.

Housing Resource Centers

The Center operates two Housing Resource Centers out of our Community Justice Centers in Harlem and Red Hook. Here, staff are able to provide court navigation, one-on-one assistance, and direct connection to a variety of resources and legal services for tenants. Our housing resource centers help tenants, supporting them in documenting and tracking their repair

¹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

needs, as well as accessing and navigating the court system when needed to hold NYCHA accountable. Last year, Harlem’s Housing Resource Center served 1,349 clients, while Red Hook’s served 1,266 clients.² We also work to achieve systemic reform through advocacy for open data on NYCHA’s housing code violations and for improvements to NYCHA’s work order systems.

In-House Housing Courts

The Housing Resource Centers in Harlem and Red Hook have included in-house Housing Courts since 2001. These courts are intentionally and seamlessly integrated within the community, creating a sense of accessibility and approachability not often found in traditional courts. Our in-house housing courts emphasize the tenets of procedural justice, such as transparency about the legal process and humanizing language from court staff, including the judge. In addition, the Center adamantly supports Right To Counsel for NYCHA residents facing termination of tenancy and eviction in housing court. However, when Right To Counsel attorneys are not available due to limited funding, the Center actively supports unrepresented NYCHA tenants in the neighborhoods we serve as they navigate housing courts and find solutions to keep their families housed.

Virtual Court Access Network

In partnership with the Office of Court Administration, the Center also operates the Virtual Court Access Network (VCAN) in Harlem and Red Hook, helping tenants respond to housing court notices and file Housing Part Actions for repairs. VCAN facilitates access to housing court clerk desk services and support filing while addressing underlying and complicated needs with the range of on-site Help Desk resources. The design allows tenants and the Help Center to interface directly with court clerks at New York County Civil Court to help tenants file Housing Part Actions against their landlords for repair hazards or harassment, answer Eviction/Landlord-Tenant petitions, file Orders to Show Cause, and initiate cases of illegal lockouts and roommate holdovers.

Housing Navigators

Building off of the impactful program models in Red Hook and Harlem, the Center launched a city-wide housing navigator initiative in the beginning of 2024. Housing Navigators are now working in public housing communities throughout the City to address the most pressing issues threatening the housing stability of public housing residents including, rental arrears, evictions, health and habitability. Navigators are based out of Community Justice Centers in East Harlem; the South Bronx; Far Rockaway, Queens; and Red Hook, Brooklyn. Simultaneously, the Center has been partnering with the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) and artists to create high-quality, multi-lingual, informative guides for public housing residents navigating lease and rent issues.

² Ibid.

Community Justice Connect

Community Justice Connect trains volunteers from the communities it serves to provide free legal information, assistance, and referrals to help New Yorkers resolve civil legal issues that affect their lives. Volunteers, who are not lawyers, operate out of easy-to-find, neighborhood storefronts, and are supervised by attorneys from partnering legal services organizations. While Community Justice Connect offers assistance in areas like family, immigration, domestic violence, and benefits, by far, the greatest area of support given is on housing. Our trained local volunteers directly support eviction prevention, addressing habitability issues and assistance finding housing. In 2024, 1,324 residents utilized Community Justice Connect to receive legal guidance regarding housing concerns.³

Our Community Justice Connect project has become a model in the city for increasing access to justice for tenants outside of the courts by bringing justice to the neighborhoods they live in. Community Justice Connect empowers community residents to support their neighbors with free legal information. Many of our volunteers know someone who has been through similar situations as our visitors or have been affected by housing issues themselves. Community Justice Connect is also engaged in community outreach and conducts Know-Your-Rights sessions and workshops. This is more important now than ever as residents face rocky transitions under RAD/PACT and Trust lease conversions.

The Pro Se Support Project

The Pro Se Support Project (PSSP) is a novel concept to increase access to justice in civil court for historically marginalized communities, prevent mental health crises by decreasing the presence of risk factors upstream, and conserve court resources by connecting pro se litigants with services they need to address the underlying issues bringing them to court. By providing case management and resource coordination for pro se litigants (i.e., individuals who are representing themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney), PSSP addresses longstanding roadblocks to civil justice for those who cannot access or afford attorneys. The model offers a way to solve disputes for an underserved population whose issues often run deeper than their litigation presents, while reducing risk factors that could lead to worsening mental health conditions down the road.

The Pro Se Support Project began when Judge Anne Swern of Kings County Civil Supreme Court noticed a concerning trend among pro se litigants in her court. After spending decades in criminal court, Judge Swern recognized that these litigants in civil court faced many of the same hardships as criminal defendants. In response, she reached out to the Center to develop a pilot program that would provide eligible pro se litigants access to voluntary service referrals, case management, and, where appropriate, legal navigation—similar to the types of services criminal defendants access through the Center’s alternative-to-incarceration (ATI) and voluntary services programming.

Many pro se litigants turn to the legal system to address larger underlying issues that are much better addressed through connections to resources and services in housing, behavioral and mental health, and workforce development—to name a few examples—than they could be through available legal remedies. Without the ability to provide pro bono full scope legal representation to every eligible pro se litigant in civil court, the Pro Se Support Project attempts

³ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Zendesk Legal Hand database. [Data file].

to address underlying issues while aiding courts in efficiently and effectively adjudicating the matters in front of them.

The pilot currently operates out of Judge Swern's court. After achieving success initially, the Center now wants to explore expanding the program to a Manhattan courtroom to study scaling and operating the program across multiple courtrooms and boroughs. Judge Suzanne Adams, Administrative Judge of Manhattan Civil Supreme Court, has already volunteered her courtroom for the next phase of the pilot as she has identified a similar need in her court.

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives (NSI) supports the implementation of NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), a resident-driven community organizing initiative and comprehensive strategy to enhance public safety and strengthen community well-being in 30 public housing developments.

NSI enlists residents, City agencies, and community-based partners to help move beyond enforcement and address the factors underlying safety – providing opportunities for work and play, health and well-being, and youth development; promoting activated, well-maintained spaces through community and human-centered design; and improving trust between neighbors with a responsive and just government. Their mission is to improve community safety in places impacted by historic disinvestment by creating opportunities for residents to identify key issues underlying crime and participate in the decision-making to address these priorities. Through NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), we harness the collective expertise of residents, government, and community partners to drive meaningful dialogue, problem-solving, and, ultimately, create positive change at both the neighborhood and administrative levels.

NeighborhoodStat connects residents to social services and community resources; increases the security and quality of shared community space by working with residents to physically improve and maintain public space, thereby enhancing a positive sense of ownership; increases civic engagement; and enhances the capacity of residents to improve public safety and wellbeing in their communities. Adopting a participatory justice model, NeighborhoodStat works with local organizers to provide direct investment into historically underserved communities and ensures that those most affected and most marginalized, especially those who have been historically left out of these conversations, have a say in improving health and wellbeing, safety and justice, economic stability, physical space, and youth development policies that affect their lives.

Last year, the program reached over 50,000 residents of the New York City Housing Authority utilizing the following strategies:⁴

- **Invest in Residents:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives hires, trains, and supports community organizers; recruits and organizes resident leadership teams; designs and implements social programs; manages community action plans; and implements data collection and evaluations. Social programs include youth mentorship, coding courses, music mentorship, adult entrepreneurship training and support, intergenerational green space stewardship, healing and justice events, public education campaigns like those around COVID-19, summer time basketball series, economic mobility events, and more.

⁴ Center for Justice Innovation. *Neighborhood Safety Initiatives*. New York, NY.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/programs/neighborhood-safety-initiatives/more-info>

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives also respond to residents' immediate needs. The program coordinates collaboration across city agencies and other non-profit partners to answer food needs, connect residents to resources, and host conflict resolution events. In 2024, over 400 intergenerational residents were actively involved in resident stakeholder teams, taking the lead in identifying both the issues plaguing their communities and driving positive change.

- **Transform Public Spaces:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives works with residents to re-envision public spaces to make them more welcoming and promote people's well-being. In the last five years the program has designed and implemented a series of community gardens and recreational public spaces, wayfinding projects, murals, creative lighting installations, and a pop-up outdoor program with movable kiosks where partner agencies can provide information and supportive services to the community. Since 2017, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives has overseen the co-creation and implementation of over 65 built environment projects and social programs. These initiatives include murals, open plazas, community gardens, pop-up modular resource hubs, music programs for youth, and adult entrepreneurship programs in collaboration with NYCHA community stakeholders.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We appreciate the City Council's recognition of the critical role of stable, habitable housing in the communities we serve. We look forward to continuing our work in partnership with the Council to combat housing insecurity.

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

FY26 Center for Justice Innovation Housing Proposals

- **#197482 - Center for Justice Innovation General Funds - \$750,000**

Innovative Criminal Justice Programs; Speaker's Initiative (Renewal/Redesign)

Description: This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation's innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all. With expanded funding, the Center will be able to make deeper investments in housing justice: a key priority area that underpins our efforts at large to build community justice.

- **#194222 - Strong Starts Court Initiative - \$100,000**

Children Under Five (New)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation seeks funding to build the capacity of the successful Strong Starts Court Initiative to meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and their families throughout New York City and help build a sustainable program not entirely dependent on private foundation support. The Strong Starts Court Initiative is a Family-Court-based project; it employs a two-generational approach to provide specialized supports for infants, toddlers and their families who have child protection cases, and it works to educate court-based professionals in an approach focused on early child development that will transform the traditional family court response to this extremely vulnerable population.

- **#195412 - Pro Se Pilot Program - \$188,917**

Information and Referral Services; Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (New)

This application seeks to expand an ongoing pilot program to provide holistic case management and legal navigation services for pro se litigants in civil court (i.e., individuals who are representing themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney). Currently housed in Judge Anne Swern's Kings County Civil Supreme Courtroom, the Pro Se Support Program connects unrepresented litigants with a case

manager/social worker who works to address the underlying needs which bring these litigants to court. Judge Swern brought this idea to the Center for Justice Innovation as a response to the types of cases pro se litigants in her court were bringing, noticing that almost always an underlying resource gap was the true source of the issue before the court, and that a legal resolution often failed to address these underlying issues. By providing case management and legal navigation services to unrepresented litigants, The Pro Se Support Program seeks to increase civil access to justice for indigent, marginalized populations, prevent mental health crises and criminal offending upstream, and save the court time and resources.

- **#192497 - Bronx Community Solutions NYC Clean Up - \$50,000**

NYC Clean Up (Renewal)

Description: Bronx Community Solutions' (BCS) Community Service Initiative seeks to beautify the Bronx and develop healthy, engaging public spaces for its residents. BCS creates projects that target local needs and connect participants to resources in their community. BCS partners with the criminal court system, local volunteers, city agencies, and community-based organizations to conduct graffiti and street cleanup, park revitalization, community garden upkeep, art installations and more. Through BCS's Community Service Initiative, individuals with low-level criminal charges have an opportunity to reconnect with their community rather than serve jail time. Additionally, BCS empowers local residents and organizations to sustain their own projects by providing expertise, supplies, volunteers, and existing partnerships to support community-led projects. Continued City Council funding will support these community service projects, including special projects conducted with partner organizations throughout the Bronx.

- **#192555 - Harlem Community Justice Center Housing Help Center - \$50,000**

Community Safety and Victim Services (New)

Description: The Harlem Community Justice Center's Housing Help Center seeks funding from the City Council's Community Safety and Victim Services Initiative to help residents who have experienced violence or victimization, seniors, public housing residents and non-English speakers to obtain emergency safety transfers, critical home repairs, preserve affordability, prevent evictions, and find justice and fair treatment in housing court.

- **#192673 - Community First - \$60,000**

Community Safety and Victim Services (Renewal)

Description: This funding would ensure continuity of Midtown Community Justice Center's (MCJC's) Community First program, which serves community members experiencing varying levels of housing insecurity and homelessness in the Times Square

area. The program likewise serves housing insecure participants from across MCJC's programs, including the Manhattan Misdemeanor Mental Health Court, Emerging Adult Court, Community Court, and Project Reset. While New York City is service-rich, the field often operates in silos, creating a disjointed system of care for the most vulnerable populations. Often, those who need support exist under the radar until a moment of crisis like an arrest or an emergency room visit forces a response. As a pre-crisis intervention, Community First seeks to facilitate continuity of destigmatizing and client-centered care for some of the city's most disconnected residents through mobile case management, street outreach, and assistance for court-involved and diversion participants. Community First's Community Navigators share lived experience with participants, offering peer support to help clients achieve participant-identified goals such as obtaining transitional and permanent housing, substance use treatment, mental and physical health care, identification, financial benefits, employment, and legal assistance. MCJC requests funding to support the Community First program through City Council's Community Safety and Victim Services Initiative.

- **#192581 - Brownsville Placemaking and Community Cleanup - \$60,000**

NYC Clean Up (Renewal)

Description: Brownsville residents are disproportionately affected by major quality of life issues, which have a negative effect on public health and safety. The Brownsville Community Justice Center's Placemaking and Community Cleanup program will engage participants ages 14-24 in community service and placemaking activities, such as crime prevention through environmental design and various innovative and tested strategies, which address public safety concerns and build community. Participants attend regularly scheduled workshops, which provide training on environmental stewardship, leadership, communication, organizing, and strategies for reinvestment within the community. Youth will be involved in identifying, designing, and implementing community projects, in conjunction with the community board and local community-based organizations. Participants will work with Justice Center staff to plan, develop, and facilitate various program projects to support community. Projects may include graffiti removal, art installations, greening, street cleaning, lighting projects, and more.



DARCEL D. CLARK

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BRONX COUNTY

March 6, 2025

Speaker Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, I am pleased to write this letter in support of key Center for Justice Innovation (formerly, Center for Court Innovation) FY25 City Council Applications. Funding will expand:

- pre-arraignment early diversion options;
- mental health supports;
- restorative justice programming;
- human trafficking survivor leadership initiatives at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence; and
- innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities within the Bronx.

These programs will enable the Bronx to move towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the legal system wherever possible and allow us to build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

For the past several years, the City Council has supported the Bronx with **\$710,000** to invest in early system diversion, which includes Project Reset, the Center's citywide pre-arraignment diversion model and same day at arraignments programming that re-directs New Yorkers with misdemeanor arrests from the court system. Project Reset Bronx includes borough-wide restorative justice circles to aid in diversion. This has offered relief from the collateral consequence's participants might otherwise experience if arraigned for low-level crimes. We support the Center's continuing to partner with the Council to implement the next generation of early system diversions for the Bronx to continue to lead the City in scaled restorative justice-based interventions.

The Bronx County District Attorney's Office partners with the **Bronx Child Trauma Support** program to support clinical assessment and treatment of child victims and witnesses to crimes in the Bronx. The continued support of the Council will baseline these direct services conducted through evidenced-based and trauma-informed intervention models designed to prevent or reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms, suicidality, re-traumatization, and future victimization.

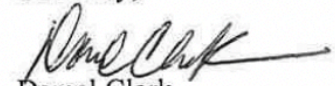
Thanks to meaningful changes in the treatment of trafficking victims in the justice system, the Center's Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) referrals continue to decline. **Project Healing and Empowerment through Advocacy and Leadership** (Project HEAL) is a survivor leadership and peer support initiative for human trafficking survivors. Additionally, we support the Center's RISE Project which is used in Family Court and provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence.

Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by court mandate to complete a screening and assessment, **DWI treatment**, and enrollment in the **Driver Accountability Program**. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services.

Finally, we support continuation of the **Center's Innovative Core Funding** which addresses the immediate needs of all borough residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, victim services, mental health integrations to diversion.

The Center has a long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in the Bronx. Their mission to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities aligns with my Office's vision. Together we can reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice. We can do this by reducing incarceration as well as by building substantial and meaningful community-based support. I encourage the City Council to consider funding each of the Center's programs which will ultimately enhance fairness, accountability, and safety for the people of the Bronx.

Sincerely,



Darcel Clark



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY
MICHAEL E. MCMAHON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

February 28, 2025

Honorable Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Center for Justice Innovation Fiscal Year 2026 Initiatives

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of the New York City Council:

I am pleased to offer my support to the Center for Justice Innovation's application to expand alternatives to incarceration opportunities and to provide mental health support, early diversion programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence, restorative re-entry options for individuals and their families, pre-court eviction prevention options, and innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities across the city. Many of these important initiatives and programs will advance Staten Island towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system and build public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

CJI's long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in Staten Island to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities align with my office's vision. My office has proudly partnered with CJI in the development of a **Staten Island Community Justice Center** to reduce crime and incarceration, strengthen community trust in justice, and create safer, more equitable neighborhoods through community-driven public safety initiatives, youth opportunity, and economic mobility efforts. To maintain existing operations and plan for new programming, existing Justice Center staff will dedicate time to the development of new initiatives and activities including data collection and evaluation plans. Together, we reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice, aiming to reduce incarceration and conviction and build substantial and meaningful community-based supports through innovative courts and alternatives to incarceration programming and services. I strongly encourage

investment in each of the programs and areas outlined above to ensure that they can continue this successful work.

I further urge the Council to support **Youth Impact Staten Island**. The Youth Impact program (formerly Youth Court) is a multi-pronged youth leadership development program focused on peer-led mentorship and violence intervention and prevention practices, with a goal to keep young people in school and out of the criminal legal system, while inspiring community safety and healing from a youth-centered perspective. The program primarily uses a restorative justice model through structured in-school violence intervention partnerships and organized civic engagement. Participants develop hard skills including in oral and written communication, facilitation, conflict resolution and research processes; learn the impact and infrastructure of the justice system; and are trained in community planning and organizing.

Individuals demonstrating persistent and untreated mental illness require access to culturally competent mental health treatment. To address gaps in mental health-related support for court-involved youth in Staten Island, I urge the Council to continue and expand support for the Staten Island Justice Center's **Youth Wellness Initiative**. This initiative provides vital mental health services that address trauma and promote healing for young people on Staten Island involved in the justice system or at-risk of justice system involvement. Additionally, the initiative is geared towards providing holistic support to families by supporting the parents and caretakers of youth enrolled in the initiative.

To address the issue of street safety, I support the continuation and expansion of the Center's **Driver Accountability Program** to provide a constructive and restorative response to dangerous driving and work to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court. The Driver Accountability Program is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process.

I also urge the Council to continue supporting **CJI's RISE Project**, which provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence. RISE works to reduce intimate partner violence by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, changing community norms to reduce the tolerance for violence, and training credible messengers to identify risk factors for intimate partner violence.

The Council should continue and expand support for **CJI's Innovative Core Funding**. CJI uses this funding to respond to the immediate needs of Staten Island residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, providing victim services, mental health integrations to diversion, and other pilots to test for scalable solutions.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this letter as you make important financial determinations on behalf of the City of New York.

If you have questions, please contact Agency Chief Contracting Officer and Grants Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Sloan, via telephone at (718) 556-7089 or via email at Lisa.Sloan@rcda.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,



Michael E. McMahon
District Attorney

MEM/aem



ERIC GONZALEZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KINGS COUNTY**
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March 21, 2025

Adrienne Adams
Speaker, New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams and Members of City Council,

On behalf of the office of the Kings County District Attorney, I write in support of key Center for Justice Innovation FY26 City Council Applications to sustain critical investment in the following areas:

- alternatives to incarceration,
- mental health support,
- programming at the intersection of intimate partner violence and gun violence,
- and innovative pilot programs that address pressing needs in communities.

These programs will enable Brooklyn to continue to move towards our shared vision of reducing unnecessary and harmful involvement in the justice system wherever possible and building public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions.

The Center has submitted a proposal for continued support of its **Brooklyn Felony Diversion Programs**, which assist my office in expanding diversion opportunities for felony alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) across Brooklyn, while maintaining public safety and accountability. The Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court, launched in January 2020 with Council support, offers clinical assessments, individualized community-based interventions, and judicial monitoring on felony cases. I urge the Council to continue funding to this initiative to reduce unnecessary incarceration and strengthen diversion opportunities in Brooklyn. Also included in that application is a request for continued support of the Center's renowned **Brooklyn Mental Health Court**. For the past twenty plus years, Brooklyn Mental Health Court has served as a pioneering model that offers community-based mental health treatment, paired with rigorous judicial monitoring and case management for defendants diagnosed with serious mental illness and facing felony charges. If not for the intervention of this specialized court, these defendants would be facing long-term incarceration in our jails and prisons. Support for this program is an essential component of our effort to address the mental health crisis in our City.

I urge the Council to continue supporting the Center's **RISE Project** which provides community-based intimate partner violence prevention services in communities most impacted by gun violence. RISE works to reduce intimate partner violence by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior; changing community norms to reduce tolerance for violence, and training credible messengers to identify risk factors for intimate partner violence.

To address the issue of street safety, I support the continuation of the **Driver Accountability Program**, which seeks to change the risky driving behavior of people charged with driving-related offenses in criminal court, while simultaneously reducing reliance on fines or short-term incarceration for those offenses. The Driver Accountability Program is also addressing more serious cases through a second tier of programming, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims through a restorative justice process in cases of serious crashes that have resulted in serious injuries or fatalities.

Finally, the Council should continue and expand support for the Center's **Innovative Core Funding**. The Center uses this funding to respond to the immediate needs of Brooklyn residents by piloting novel and effective approaches to anti-gun violence, victim services, mental health integrations to diversion, and other pilots to test for scalable solutions.

The Center's long and documented history of conducting original research and operating direct service programs in Brooklyn to promote equality, dignity, and respect in communities align with my office's vision. Together we reimagine a fairer and more holistic approach to justice, aiming to reduce incarceration and conviction wherever possible and build substantial and meaningful community-based supports. I encourage investment in each of the Center's programs to enhance fairness, accountability, and safety for the people of Brooklyn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Gonzalez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small horizontal line at the end.

Eric Gonzalez
Kings County District Attorney



Testimony of
Coalition for the Homeless
before the Committee on Housing and Buildings
of the New York City Council

on the

Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

submitted by

Alison Wilkey
Director of Governmental Affairs & Strategic Campaigns
Coalition for the Homeless

March 25, 2025

The Coalition for the Homeless (“Coalition”) welcomes this opportunity to submit testimony to the New York City Council’s Committee on Housing and Buildings. As the court- and City-appointed independent monitor of the Department of Homeless Services (“DHS”) shelter system and the shelter system for adult New Arrivals, and party in the historic *Callahan*, *Eldredge*, and *Boston* cases that created the right to shelter in New York City (“NYC”), we are uniquely situated to provide insight into the impact of proposed funding for the shelter system and related programs serving all unhoused New Yorkers.

Compounding Crisis, Failed Responses

NYC has one of the largest populations of unhoused people in the United States. In January 2025, there were 120,513 people sleeping in New York City shelters, including 41,415 children.¹ This staggeringly high figure does not include the many thousands of people sleeping unsheltered in public spaces, or the hundreds of thousands temporarily sleeping doubled- and tripled-up in the homes of others. As such, the number of people without homes in New York has never been higher.

These alarming statistics have been fueled by decades of underinvestment in permanent affordable housing for low-income communities and the failure of all levels of government to enact policies to meaningfully reverse this trend. The affordable housing shortage in NYC, particularly for extremely low-income (“ELI”) households, is underscored by stark data revealing the depth of the crisis. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s 2024 report, “The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes,” there is a glaring disparity in the availability of affordable housing: for every 100 ELI households in the New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA metro area, there are merely 32 affordable and available rental units.² In a city where the cost of living far exceeds national averages, and ELI households are defined as those earning 30 percent or less of the area median income (“AMI”), this gap leaves a vast number of residents in precarious housing situations.

The worsening housing precarity in NYC is evidenced by the growing rent burdens borne by its residents. The number of ELI households who were severely rent-burdened (spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing) increased to 74 percent in 2024.³ This financial strain severely limits the capacity of ELI households to afford other necessities, such as food, healthcare, and childcare. It forces many of them to live in overcrowded conditions – defined as having more than two people per bedroom or more than one person living in a studio apartment. In fact, nearly a quarter (23 percent) of NYC households with at least one child are overcrowded.^{4,5} Given that living in overcrowded conditions is frequently a precursor to homelessness, such statistics portend greater levels of mass homelessness if this affordable housing crisis continues.

The dynamics of NYC’s real estate market have also exacerbated the affordable housing shortage. The city’s median rent has consistently outpaced inflation and income growth, creating an environment where

¹ “Facts About Homelessness,” Coalition for the Homeless. Accessed March 12, 2025, <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/facts-about-homelessness/>.

² “The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes,” National Low Income Housing Coalition, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://nlihc.org/gap>.

³ The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes,” National Low Income Housing Coalition, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://nlihc.org/gap>.

⁴ New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, “2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Selected Initial Findings,” (2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdfs/about/2023-nychvs-selected-initial-findings.pdf>.

⁵ New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, “2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey Selected Initial Findings,” (2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdfs/about/2023-nychvs-selected-initial-findings.pdf>.

affordable housing becomes increasingly scarce. Rent-stabilized units are particularly difficult to come by. Per the most recent Housing Vacancy Survey, the vacancy rate for rent stabilized units was less than 1 percent in 2023 – down from an already distressingly low 4.6 percent in 2021.⁶ More to the point, the vacancy rate for affordable apartments – those renting for less than \$1,100 per month – was only 0.39 percent. Effectively, there are no affordable apartments left in New York for those who need them most.

Coupled with this is the fact that evictions have remained worryingly high, nearing pre-COVID levels. In New York City in FY24, there were 126,236 eviction filings in city housing courts.⁷ The increase in evictions is particularly impacting low-income residents and communities of color and further straining the city's social safety net. In addition, this surge in evictions, in conjunction with a near-total lack of available affordable housing, has made a substantial increase in mass homelessness in the city a near-inevitability.

The crisis extends beyond those in shelters to include those living unsheltered, which presents its own significant challenges. According to the last HOPE estimate published in 2024, more than 4,000 individuals experienced unsheltered homelessness in one night. However, there is no reliable estimate of the total number of those sleeping unsheltered.⁸ The City's annual HOPE survey, mandated by the Federal government, underestimates the true size of this population due to flawed methodology, and as a point-in-time survey, it fails to capture the dynamic nature of unsheltered homelessness. Whatever figure is reported by the City, we can safely assume the true number of people sleeping unsheltered is far higher.

Housing solutions for the unsheltered homeless population remain woefully inadequate. Recent statistics reveal a troubling disconnect in the supportive housing system. Out of 955 people living on the streets and subways who were approved for supportive housing during a period tracked by city social service and health agencies last year, only 175 successfully obtained a housing placement —just 18 percent of the total.⁹ Nearly 400 people were still waiting to be referred to a supportive housing provider for an interview, despite thousands of apartments sitting empty, while 131 people waited more than a year and had their applications expire without receiving a placement.¹⁰ This systemic failure highlights how even those who navigate the application process successfully are frequently left without the housing solutions they desperately need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating Affordable Housing for Extremely Low-Income and Homeless Households

While the Coalition will continue to vigorously defend the Right to Shelter, our ultimate goal is to make shelters unnecessary. But the increasing need for emergency shelter over the past 43 years is a direct result of the depletion of housing that is affordable to those at the lowest income levels. The only way to decrease the number of people living without shelter and the crisis in the shelter system is through permanent, affordable housing. Yet, the City has no plan that acknowledges and addresses the housing need for homeless and ELI individuals and families. The City of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ New York City Office of Civil Justice, “FY24 Annual Report.” *Department of Social Services*. Accessed 27 Feb. 2025, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/civiljustice/OCJ_Annual_Report_2024.pdf.

⁸ New York City Department of Social Services, “Homeless Outreach Population Estimate 2024 Results,” 2024, Available: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dhs/outreach/hope.page>.

⁹ Gwynne Hogan, “Most Street-Homeless Housing Applicants Never Get a Shot, Inside Stats Show” *The City*, January 2025, <http://www.thecity.nyc/2025/01/06/homeless-supportive-housing-eric-adams-statistics/>.

¹⁰ Gwynne Hogan, “Most Street-Homeless Housing Applicants Never Get a Shot, Inside Stats Show” *The City*, January 2025, <http://www.thecity.nyc/2025/01/06/homeless-supportive-housing-eric-adams-statistics/>.

amendment did not set requirements for the deepest affordability, only creating an optional Universal Affordability Preference that allows developers to build 20 percent larger if the addition includes units that are affordable to households making 60 percent AMI or higher. Even these units – which are not addressing the greatest housing need – will not be built without subsidy, particularly as there is no requirement to build any affordable units.¹¹ Given the high cost of housing construction in NYC, there is not enough housing being developed for those who need it most, and no plan in place that fills this void.

We urge the City to allocate \$2.5 billion in additional new construction financing each year for the next five years for apartments to specifically be built for homeless and ELI New Yorkers. Increased funding at this level would support building an additional 6,000 apartments for homeless households and 6,000 apartments per year for ELI households.

The City for All commitments that the City Council negotiated as part the agreement with the Mayoral administration to pass the City of Yes zoning text amendment included “\$2 billion secured in additional housing capital investments to finance affordable housing development and preservation, support Mitchell-Lama developments, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and HDFCs.”¹² At least half of this commitment – \$1.25 billion – must be put toward the aforementioned \$2.5 billion recommendation to ensure the development of affordable housing for homeless and ELI households.

Expand CityFHEPS as an Eviction Prevention Tool Using Promised City for All/City of Yes Funding Commitments

According to the Mayor’s Preliminary Management Report, during the first four months of FY25, there was encouraging progress in housing placements across all population groups. Exits to permanent housing increased significantly: 61 percent for adult families, 58 percent for families with children, and 2 percent for single adults compared to the same period in Fiscal 2024. These improvements were largely driven by coordinated efforts between DHS and contracted shelter providers to expedite housing placements. Subsidized exits showed even stronger growth, with a 69 percent increase for adult families, 68 percent for families with children, and 14 percent for single adults, primarily due to expanded CityFHEPS placements.¹³ The evidence is clear that CityFHEPS works.

We must ensure the \$215 million funding promised in City of Yes is strategically deployed to expand CityFHEPS as an eviction prevention tool, targeting those most vulnerable to housing instability. We recommend applying specific criteria to maximize the preventative impact of this expansion, focusing on households who would otherwise face eviction, experience homelessness, and ultimately require rehousing at substantially higher cost to the city. The Coalition’s Eviction Prevention Program, which pays rent arrears to keep households facing eviction in their homes, turns away approximately a quarter of people seeking assistance because they cannot afford to pay the rent going forward (something that is required to receive a grant for arrears). If many of these households received CityFHEPS, they not only would have been eligible for grants like those we provide for arrears, but they would have been able to stay in their homes.

¹¹ “City of Yes – Universal Affordability Preference,” The City of New York, accessed March 12, 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/city-of-yes/housing-opportunity/guide-universal-affordability-preference.pdf>.

¹² New York City Council, “City for All Commitments,” Accessed March 18, 2025, <https://council.nyc.gov/press/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2024/11/City-for-All-Commitments.pdf>.

¹³ Office of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, “Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report 2025,” January 2025, https://donbuqm3ub5fw.cloudfront.net/files/PMMR_2025_Cover_817ffc435e.pdf.

To effectively target this funding, we propose prioritizing households that meet all of the following criteria: (1) currently facing legal action by their landlord in Housing Court; (2) living in regulated housing such as rent stabilized, rent controlled, Mitchell-Lama rental or cooperative properties, units with low-income tax credits, or those eligible under good cause provisions; (3) household includes either an elderly person over 62, a disabled person, or a minor child under 18; and (4) applicants' current rent does not exceed established CityFHEPS rent levels.

Successful expansion of the CityFHEPS program is also dependent on fixing the unnecessary delays and hurdles that plague every step of the process. Clients of the Coalition experience extended delays in processing their applications for CityFHEPS, approvals of apartments, and payments to landlords. Such extreme delays and processing issues are commonly experienced by people who are trying either to leave shelter and find permanent homes or to avoid eviction, like the seven tenants in a lawsuit filed by the Legal Aid Society who faced delays in the processing of their CityFHEPS voucher recertifications.¹⁴

In recent months, the Coalition assisted three different households that had already received eviction notices from Housing Court, even though two of those people had CityFHEPS vouchers and failed to receive help they needed to complete recertification. The third person was eligible for CityFHEPS to keep her in her home, but was told she was not eligible by a HomeBase provider. Two of these individuals entered the shelter system and were there for months before we were able to get them back in their homes. These examples are reflections of a broken and dysfunctional system that results in unneeded trauma and a waste of resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. We look forward to working with the Council on the budget and other legislation to address the needs of those who are unhoused or precariously housed throughout NYC.

About Coalition for the Homeless

The Coalition, founded in 1981, is a not-for-profit advocacy and direct services organization that assists more than 3,500 homeless and at-risk New Yorkers each day. The Coalition advocates for proven, cost-effective solutions to address the crisis of modern homelessness, which is now in its fifth decade. The Coalition also protects the rights of homeless people through litigation involving the right to emergency shelter, the right to vote, the right to reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities, and life-saving housing and services for homeless people living with mental illnesses and HIV/AIDS.

The Coalition operates 11 direct-services programs that offer vital services to homeless, at-risk, and low-income New Yorkers. These programs also demonstrate effective, long-term, scalable solutions and include: permanent housing for formerly homeless families and individuals living with HIV/AIDS; job-training for homeless and low-income women; and permanent housing for formerly homeless families and individuals. Our summer sleep-away camp and after-school program help hundreds of homeless children each year. The Coalition's mobile soup kitchen, which usually distributes 800 to 1,000 nutritious hot meals each night to homeless and hungry New Yorkers on the streets of Manhattan and the Bronx, had to increase our meal production and distribution by as much as 40 percent and has distributed PPE and emergency supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, our Crisis Services Department assists more than 1,000 homeless and at-risk households each month with eviction prevention, individual advocacy, referrals for shelter and emergency food programs, and assistance with public benefits as well as basic necessities such as diapers, formula, work uniforms, and money for medications and groceries. In response

¹⁴ Mihir Zaveri, Program That Fights Homelessness Is Mired in Dysfunction, Advocates Say, The New York Times (Apr. 5, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/nyregion/ny-housing-voucher-program-problems.html>

to the pandemic, we are operating a special Crisis Hotline (1-888-358-2384) for homeless individuals who need immediate help finding shelter or meeting other critical needs.

The Coalition was founded in concert with landmark right-to-shelter litigation filed on behalf of homeless men and women (*Callahan v. Carey* and *Eldredge v. Koch*) and remains a plaintiff in these now consolidated cases. In 1981, the City and State entered into a consent decree in *Callahan* through which they agreed: “The City defendants shall provide shelter and board to each homeless man who applies for it provided that (a) the man meets the need standard to qualify for the home relief program established in New York State; or (b) the man by reason of physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter.” The *Eldredge* case extended this legal requirement to homeless single women. The *Callahan* consent decree and the *Eldredge* case also guarantee basic standards for shelters for homeless men and women. Pursuant to the decree, the Coalition serves as court-appointed monitor of municipal shelters for homeless single adults, and the City has also authorized the Coalition to monitor other facilities serving homeless families. In 2017, the Coalition, fellow institutional plaintiff Center for Independence of the Disabled – New York, and homeless New Yorkers with disabilities were represented by Legal Aid and pro-bono counsel White & Case in the settlement of *Butler v. City of New York*, which is designed to ensure that the right to shelter includes accessible accommodations for those with disabilities, consistent with Federal, State, and local laws. During the pandemic, the Coalition worked with Legal Aid to support homeless New Yorkers, including through the *E.G. v. City of New York* Federal class action litigation initiated to ensure Wi-Fi access for students in DHS and HRA shelters, as well as *Fisher v. City of New York*, a lawsuit filed in New York State Supreme Court to ensure homeless single adults gain access to private hotel rooms instead of congregate shelters during the pandemic.

*Preliminary Budget Hearing - Housing and Buildings
Oksana Mironova, Samuel Stein, and Iziah Thompson
March 25th, 2025*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing of the City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings and the City Council Committee on our city housing budget needs. Our names are Oksana Mironova, Samuel Stein, and Iziah Thompson, and we are housing policy analysts at the Community Service Society of New York (CSS).

CSS has worked with and for New Yorkers since 1843 to promote economic opportunity and champion an equitable city and state. We center the voices and experiences of communities of color and those with low incomes, powering change through a strategic combination of research, services, and advocacy.

We commend the City Council for securing a \$5 billion commitment in funding for an inclusive policy agenda during the City of Yes negotiations. Our testimony will focus on ensuring that commitment remains steadfast in FY26 budget negotiations, as well as on identifying key programs that require additional funding during a period of unprecedented federal upheaval.

Right to Counsel

One of those key programs is Right to Counsel. In her original City for All proposal, Council Speaker Adams [called for](#) "a major increase of funding for the Right to Counsel program," which could "help expand access to legal services that reduce housing insecurity caused by evictions, strengthening the program and its workforce to help more eligible New Yorkers." Unfortunately, this funding expansion did not make it into the final City for All package.

Our March 2025 [eviction analysis](#) found that Right to Counsel, in tandem with a stronger rent stabilization system, has helped reduce eviction filings by 49 percent. But even as the program's impact is clear, gaps in implementation are growing. Increasingly, qualified tenants are not being offered legal counsel. And we are also seeing a troubling rise in evictions of moderate-income tenants.

Right to Counsel is an empirically proven policy tool that helps keep people in their homes. But without full funding, its potential is being undermined—with dire consequences for tenants. It is imperative that the program is funded fully. Full implementation requires at least an additional \$350 million to ensure there are enough attorneys to represent every tenant entitled to counsel under the law.

We call on the city to honor its commitment to full implementation of Right to Counsel. No eligible New Yorker should ever be forced to face an eviction without legal support.

Neighborhood Pillars and Open Door

Last year, we joined advocates, Councilmembers, and the Comptroller's Office in calling for increased funding for Neighborhood Pillars and Open Door, as part of the Homes Now, Homes for Generations campaign to expand investment in social housing in the city. The final budget included a two-year, \$30 million investment in Neighborhood Pillars and a \$110 million investment in Open Door.

Yet, as we near the end of the third quarter of FY25, neither program has been relaunched with new term sheets, much less produced new units.

These delays undermine the city's commitment to expanding affordable housing. We call on the city to follow through on its promises and relaunch both programs immediately.

Community Land Trust Initiative

Alongside these programmatic investments, the city must continue supporting community-driven housing models, including the growing network of community land trusts. Since 2017, the city has provided support to the community land trust (CLT) movement through the citywide CLT Initiative. Despite receiving just \$1.5 million annually in municipal funding, grassroots organizers have seeded [nineteen CLTs](#) throughout New York City thus far. Increased investment would expand these groups' organizational capacity and help launch additional local projects.

As part of its \$5 billion City for All plan, the City Council pledged to double funding for the citywide CLT Initiative to \$3 million a year, contingent on the State's commitment to the City for All plan.

We call on the city to follow through on this promise in the FY26 budget and double funding for the citywide CLT Initiative.

Legacy social housing funding: Public housing, Mitchell Lama, HDFCs

Preserving and strengthening the city's existing social housing infrastructure is just as important as supporting new development and community ownership. We commend the City Council for ensuring that the \$2 billion capital commitment—equally split between the city and state—includes funding to preserve our legacy social housing stock: Mitchell Lama developments, public housing, and HDFC coops. We are also encouraged by the complementary funding for public housing and Mitchell Lama preservation in both the Senate and Assembly one-house budgets.

Additionally, we are glad to see a coordinated plan to help improve and stabilize Mitchell Lama projects through a joint City-State Mitchell Lama Action Group. Our legacy social housing developments house over 275,000 families. As the city and state undertake their stabilization efforts, it is crucial that their deep and permanent affordability is preserved.

HPD and DOB capacity

Investing in buildings alone is also not enough. The city must also ensure that existing housing is safe, habitable, and not undermined by speculative ownership or landlord neglect. As the current federal administration destroys its own administrative capacity, high-functioning and well-resourced local agencies are more important than ever for helping to protect tenants, enforce housing quality standards, and hold negligent landlords accountable.

With a commitment for 200 staff lines in City for All, we encourage the Department of Buildings and the Department of Housing and Preservation Development to immediately expand proactive inspections, code enforcement, and litigation against unscrupulous landlords. This need is especially urgent in neighborhoods like the Northwest Bronx, Southeast Brooklyn, and Upper Manhattan, where there has been a troubling increase in housing violations. These neighborhoods were hot spots for predatory investment in the early 2000s, saw a wave of foreclosures in the ensuing mortgage bubble, and experienced renewed speculation in the 2010s, fueled by predatory lending practices from banks like [Signature and New York Community Bank](#).

The tenants in many of these buildings have endured unsafe and unsanitary living conditions for years—sometimes decades—because of poor financial decisions made by their landlords. These conditions demand strong public intervention, facilitated by proactive code enforcement and strategic litigation.

Preservation

Proactive code enforcement and litigation must be part of a broader recommitment to housing preservation. While the current administration has oriented its housing agenda around development, distress is mounting across the full spectrum of housing where low-income New Yorkers live: unregulated and regulated, subsidized and unsubsidized, public and private.

The City Council's commitments to preservation in City for All—including additional capital and a revamped J-51 program—are important steps forward. But more is needed. The city must also employ existing and new tools for taking away properties from landlords who force their tenants to live in unconscionable conditions. These include revamped Third Party Transfer (TPT) and 7A programs, both of which allow the city to directly address gross mismanagement of rental properties. Similarly, if passed, the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) would give tenants and mission-driven entities the first chance to purchase distressed properties before they fall into speculative hands.

All three of these strategies will require increased funding for effective implementation. We urge the city to fund TPT and 7A, and to pass COPA.

CityFHEPS

Just as we need stronger tools to preserve and stabilize housing, we also need stronger tools to prevent displacement. We appreciate the City Council's championship of CityFHEPS and particularly City Council's Housing Chair Sanchez's multiyear commitment to in-community expansion of the program.

Preventing eviction is more effective—and less traumatic—than responding to it after the fact. That is precisely what in-community expansion of CityFHEPS is designed to do: to intervene *before* a family loses their home.

However, the administration's budgeting practices continue to undermine this potential. The city consistently underbudgets CityFHEPS, only to reallocate money to cover the need later in the year. As a result, the additional \$215 million allocated to CityFHEPS under City for All will not actually result in any additional service whatsoever. It will only mean a smaller mid-year reallocation to cover the people who would already be covered. To have a meaningful impact, the city must earmark the additional CityFHEPS funding for in-community expansion. To have the most impact with the resources available, we recommend prioritizing households that:

1. Are currently being sued by their landlord in Housing Court;
2. Are regulated (rent stabilized, rent controlled, Mitchell Lama, LIHTC, or Good Cause eligible);
3. Have a senior, a person with a disability, or a minor child (under 18); and
4. Have an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level;
5. Are paying rent at or below the CityFHEPS rent levels; and
6. Would use a voucher for their current apartment,

We believe New York City can lead the way in ensuring housing stability for its residents. The FY26 budget is an opportunity to move us closer to that future. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions or want to discuss further, please reach out to us at omironova@cssny.org, sstein@cssny.org, and ithompson@CSSNY.org.

Dismantling Racism Team
Congregation Beth Elohim

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Testimony of Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team
New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings
Preliminary Budget Hearing, March 25, 2025

Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team engages in advocacy to reform the criminal legal system, in alliance with directly impacted groups. Congregation Beth Elohim, with locations in Park Slope and Prospect Heights, is the largest Reform synagogue in Brooklyn, with over 1,200 households.

In Genesis 1:27, we read that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. This foundational text guides us, as a Jewish community, to advocate for policies that will protect people who are vulnerable, including those who are homeless and/or suffering from mental illness, and thereby increase public safety.

Mayor Adams' proposed budget fails to invest in programs desperately needed to improve public safety and keep people from cycling in and out of the crisis that is Rikers Island.

Supportive housing is a proven solution that combines permanent affordable housing with specific support services to help individuals with complex health challenges, such as mental-health and substance-abuse disorders. It enhances public safety while reducing homelessness and over-reliance on costly and less-effective emergency services like shelters, emergency rooms, and law enforcement, which only provide temporary responses.

In 2019, the City committed to fund 500 Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) units as part of the Close Rikers Points of Agreement. So far, 380 of these units have not been brought online due to insufficient funding for supportive services in the budget of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Despite serving clients with highly complex needs, the JISH units receive \$17,000 less per unit compared to similar supportive housing units citywide. The funds allocated are insufficient for providers to deliver critical services with a sufficient number of qualified staff.

We urge the City Council to allocate at least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental-health needs and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:

- **Build on the City's investment last year by appropriating \$4.8 million more in annual funding for JISH and reissuing the RFP for the 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs.** This will enable the City to adhere to the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - **Create a JISH line item in the DOHMH budget to allow for better tracking moving forward, given the JISH program's importance for public safety.**
- **Allocate \$22M more to create 15 more Intensive Mobile Treatment Teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
- **Allocate \$7M more to create more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams** and reduce the long wait times (averaging 6 to 12 months) to access this service.

To make funds available to meet these housing and mental-health needs, the City Council could:

- **Eliminate vacancies for Department of Correction (DOC) uniformed staff.** The preliminary budget proposes spending over \$420,000 a year to incarcerate just one person on Rikers. There are 5,900 officers on payroll today – already one of the most richly staffed jail systems in the country. But the DOC preliminary budget includes funding for over 7,000 officers. If we just eliminated vacancies for uniformed DOC officers, New York City could save \$149.6M next year to reinvest in programs and services that create real community safety and wellbeing.

Thank you for hearing us.



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**City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings
March 25, 2025**

I'm Steve Herrick, Executive Director of the Cooper Square Committee. Thanks for the opportunity to testify today.

Our organization, located in the Lower East Side/East Village neighborhood in Manhattan, has worked for 66 years to prevent the displacement of low and moderate income households from our community, and has sponsored the renovation and development of over 600 low income housing units. We are currently part of a joint venture to develop over 550 low-income units on a vacant site on Avenue D.

When the rent laws were weakened by the NYS legislature starting in the 1990s, our community saw the steady erosion of rent stabilized apartments for roughly two decades, with several thousand rent stabilized apartments being deregulated through various landlord practices, including buyouts, frivolous litigation and disruptive renovation, which we call construction as harassment. The Stabilizing NYC Program enabled our organization to hire 2 full time tenant organizers, and with this added staffing capacity, we were able to organize tenant associations and coalitions of tenants with the same landlord who were funded by predatory equity investors with the aim of emptying buildings of rent stabilized tenants in order to convert the buildings to market rate. We helped tenants bring HP actions and, in several cases, worked to get the NYS Attorney General's office to investigate some of the worst bad acting landlords, resulting in millions of dollars in settlements that compensated tenants for the harassment they experienced.

This program has more than paid for itself by preventing many more tenants from entering the homeless shelter system and by holding landlords accountable. We are asking for \$5 million in discretionary funding for Stabilizing NYC. The Stabilizing NYC coalition consists of 20 housing and legal service groups, currently receiving \$3.7 million from this initiative. Our organizations have collectively provided tenant counseling for over 7,000 tenants, door-knocked almost 3,000 buildings over the past decade, held over 5,000 meetings, trainings and workshops, built over 200 tenant associations, and participated in almost 500 direct actions. We have supported and trained dozens of organizers. Tenants organized and represented by the SNYC members have won in courts and in the streets and work with the City Council to pass stronger laws and policies.

Cooper Square Committee's tenant organizers have worked with tenants who have experienced construction as harassment in their buildings, including work without permits or outside the scope of their permits, unsafe working conditions that resulted in obstructions of their means of egress, and disbursement of construction dust containing high levels of lead in more than two dozen buildings that we have gotten the NYC Dept of Health to document. Our work, in partnership with other SNYC coalition members, has resulted in legislative reforms that have improved real time enforcement by the NYC Dept of Buildings and Dept of Health, better communication among agencies, stiffer fines for construction work done without a permit, written tenant protection plans posted in building lobbies, and improvements to the City's Lead Law.

We need increased SNYC funding, which has remained flat for 8 years despite significant increases in the cost of living. Our organizations need to continue to have the capacity to organize tenant associations, conduct know your rights trainings, and research and confront the worst landlords who are displacing low income rent stabilized tenants who have no other affordable housing options. I urge the City Council to fund the Stabilizing NYC program at the \$5 million level, and to fund more staffing at HPD to register contracts and handle invoicing. We also need more staff at MOCS to move contracts through the Passport system to register them more quickly since some groups have not yet been registered for over 2 years after their contract start date. HPD needs to provide advances on contracts once they are registered which the state does for many contracts. Contracts should also be registered as 3 year contracts rather than 1 year contracts, so we don't have to go through this time consuming process so frequently.

Thank you for your time.



Testimony of Enterprise Community Partners

To the New York City Council Committee on Housing & Buildings Public Hearing on the FY26 Preliminary Budget March 25, 2025

Enterprise is a national nonprofit that exists to make a good home possible for the millions of families without one. We support community development organizations on the ground, aggregate and invest capital for impact, advance housing policy at every level of government, and build and manage communities ourselves. Since our New York office opened in 1987, we have committed more than \$4.6 billion in equity, loans and grants to affordable housing and community to create or preserve over 67,500 affordable homes across New York City. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and the full Committee for the chance to submit this testimony.

In the midst of our affordable housing and homelessness crisis, we are encouraged by steps taken by the City Council to meaningfully reverse the tide. Most notably, 2024 saw the approval of the City of Yes: Housing Opportunity zoning text amendments and the related funding and policy priorities enshrined in the City for All commitments. This is a major achievement.

We at Enterprise look forward to working with vital agencies like NYC Housing Preservation & Development to do our part in ensuring that new and existing resources for housing are deployed for maximum impact.

City for All Priorities

Among the announced measures in the City for All agreement, we point toward a few of particular importance to Enterprise's core priorities and which build on our existing programmatic areas of focus.

- \$2 billion in additional capital investments for the development and preservation of affordable housing, as well as Mitchell-Lamas, NYCHA and HDFCs.
- \$200 million for NYCHA's Vacant Unit Readiness Program.
- \$1.5 million for additional supports for Community Land Trusts.
- \$1 million in technical assistance for faith-based organizations and CBOs to maximize opportunities under the new text amendments.
- \$215 million in additional CityFHEPS funding for FY25 and FY26.
- \$187 million in additional CityFHEPS funding to allow for rehabilitation and conversion of existing housing.

- \$150 million in rental arrears help for NYCHA residents.
- \$137 million in capital funding for the Justice Involved Supportive Housing program.
- A new unit within CCHR to enforce laws against source of income discrimination.
- 200 new staff positions to strengthen the capacity of housing agencies to combat the housing crisis.

All of the above measures have the potential to be extremely impactful for New Yorkers. We urge the full allocation of all promised funding under this agreement to be included in the final city budget. In addition, we recommend a focus on the following principles as that funding is implemented:

- ✓ The process of getting New Yorkers into affordable housing is beset with red tape, inefficiencies and delays. This is true for the Housing Connect lottery process, re-rentals, homeless placement units and voucher programs. Additional staff resources are necessary to reduce timeframes, and some portion of the new staffing capacity in the City for All agreement should be dedicated to those units that process approvals. In addition, for all of these above processes, more streamlining measures must be taken.
- ✓ The development process which brings affordable housing projects from planning through to ribbon-cutting is also overly onerous. Agencies should be encouraged to look for ways to streamline affordable housing development, and City Councilmembers should publicly support those potential recommendations from the Charter Revision Commission that are sensible and have a goal of delivering more affordable housing to New York City. More efficiency will take the additional capital funding much further.

Family Homelessness

Enterprise co-convenes of the Family Homelessness Coalition, a broad coalition of housing organizations, children's and education advocates, and people with lived experience. Collectively we have watched the increase in family homelessness in New York City with growing alarm, and call upon this city budget to do much more to prevent it.

In addition to the additional CityFHEPS resources in the City for All agreement, and the aforementioned need to move people from shelter into permanent housing far faster, there must be more resources dedicated to preventing evictions and combatting homelessness. We call for an increase in funding to the HomeBase program, which has not grown to meet increased demand.

Combatting Housing Discrimination

Enterprise joins the Human Rights Law Working Group in calling for the Council to allocate at least \$21 million for the City Commission on Human Rights to return staffing levels and funding back to pre-pandemic levels and clear the current backlog of complaints, which take an average of 539 days to resolve. This funding will allow CCHR to adequately enforce the new Fair Chance law, more robustly combat source of income discrimination, and hire new mediator positions to reduce wait times.



HOMELESS SERVICES UNITED

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HSU's Testimony for the New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing on Housing March 25, 2025

My name is Kristin Miller, and I am the Executive Director at Homeless Services United. Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition representing over 50 mission-driven, homeless service providers in New York City. HSU advocates for the expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. Homeless Services United promotes effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in New York City.

The FY26 Budget must take decisive action to rectify payment issues for Shelter Providers.

We are relieved for the recent temporary cash flow due to actions the City took to address overdue payments. The Backlog Initiative moved hundreds of outstanding invoices at the end of 2024; however, providers still have months of catch-up in pending budget, budget updates, and invoice approvals that are prohibiting them from being reimbursed for the services they have already performed and again are in a cash flow crisis.

Providers routinely experience delayed contract registration, delayed approvals for budget modifications and invoices for review, and repeated requests for supporting documentation, only for there to be continued delays once submitting requested documentation.

The lack of normalcy when it comes to payments puts our members, and many more organizations, at risk. It makes it difficult to pay staff, vendors, and run programs for clients. Organizations are often forced to take out lines of credit just to relieve cash flow issues, only to then have to pay interest. Some providers have stopped bidding on new contracts because the risk of doing further business with the City is simply too high. **Other providers are now on a timeline for insolvency, for some, as soon as 2 months.**

Finally, the new federal administration has created much uncertainty for non-profit providers here in NYC.¹ Between the proposed federal funding freezes and federal staff firings, many providers are concerned over the reliability of funds from the federal government. Most recently, the administration has proposed cutting the staff at Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by 50%. We know that destabilizing HUD will have dire results, including the closure of programs that serve people experiencing homeless, and permanent affordable and supportive housing. Households receiving rental assistance may see evictions due to delays in payment.

Given the uncertainty of federal resources and proposed cuts, it is all the more important that the City registers contracts in a timely manner and pay non-profit homeless service providers for their services on time to not further threaten the insolvency of non-profits.

¹ Oreskes, B., Newman, A. (2025, January 28) Nonprofits in New York Are Told Their Contracts 'Have Been Paused'. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/28/us/politics/nyc-nonprofit-contracts.html>



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We ask the FY26 budget to include \$307 million in capital to develop and preserve congregate units and \$72.6 million for the service and operation for both new and existing units operating for the NYC 15/15 Supportive Housing Initiative.

According to data from the Supportive Housing Network of New York (the Network), the City has exceeded its 7,500-unit target for congregate housing. Unfortunately, scattered site housing underperforming, with only 1,410 units awarded. This leaves over 6,000 units unawarded. We support the Network's proposal that calls for reallocating the majority of these units to new congregate housing and preserving existing supportive housing, ensuring we do not lose a single unit in pursuit of new development.

We are appreciative of the Council's ability to secure \$115 million in capital for NYC 15/15 through the City of Yes. However, without a codified reallocation plan, the City's development goals may not be realized. To reach the desired 15,000 units, we recommend developing and preserving 944 units per year, which would require \$307 million in capital funding for FY26.

In addition, service and operating funding are just as essential to making supportive housing work. For the proposed 944 new units, the cost is \$45 million in FY26. Finally, aligning service and operating rates across the program is critical. Currently, congregate operating rates, in the form of rental subsidies, are well below fair market rates and insufficient to keep up with rising maintenance and operational costs. The cost to increase congregate rates for all current units to match HPD's rent payment standards would be \$27.2 million for FY26.

Thank you for your time. Please reach out with any questions. I can be reached at kmillers@hsunited.org.

Testimony of Housing Works
Before
The New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings
Regarding
Mayor's Preliminary Budget
March 25, 2025

Thank you, Chairperson Sanchez, and Members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings, for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Housing Works, a healing community founded in 1990 with a mission to end the dual crises of homelessness and AIDS. My name is Anthony Feliciano, and I am the Vice President of Community Mobilization for Housing Works. We currently provide a range of integrated medical, behavioral health, housing, and support services for over 15,000 low-income New Yorkers annually, with a focus on the most marginalized and underserved—those facing the challenges of homelessness, HIV, mental health issues, substance use disorder, other chronic conditions, and incarceration. and, most recently, migrants displaced from their homes due to violence or other crises who seek safety and a better life in the United States.

Housing Works is also a founding member of the *End AIDS NY Community Coalition* (EtE Community Coalition), a group of over ninety healthcare centers, hospitals, and community-based organizations that are fully committed to ending AIDS as an epidemic in all New York communities and populations. New York City and State have made significant progress implementing the historic 2015 [*Ending the Epidemic \(EtE\) Blueprint*](#) recommendations developed collaboratively by HIV community members, providers, advocates, and public health authorities. Our EtE efforts enabled us to “bend the curve” of the epidemic by the end of 2019, decreasing HIV prevalence for the first time since the epidemic began, and the most recent HIV surveillance data show that this trend continues. However, the data also shows that while HIV health outcomes have improved across all communities, stark and unacceptable disparities persist in HIV’s impact on Black and Hispanic/Latino New Yorkers (who accounted for 84% of persons newly diagnosed in NYC in 2023), transgender New Yorkers, and young men who have sex with men. Ending the HIV epidemic for all New York communities and populations requires sustained and new EtE efforts to advance health equity. New York City Council support has been critical to this progress, and we urge the Members of the General Welfare Committee to review all of the ***End AIDS New York Community Coalition Proposed Additional NYC Investments for the FY 2026 Budget*** attached to this testimony.

At Housing Works, we believe as a core value that housing is healthcare and a basic human right. Our mission is to provide safe, secure, and stable housing to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, employing a low-threshold, harm reduction approach that respects the dignity of every person. At Housing Works, we have witnessed firsthand both the powerful impact of safe, stable housing and the barriers posed by the underfunding and understaffing that cripples our City’s response to the affordable housing and homeless crises.

The Mayor’s Preliminary Budget falls far short of the action necessary to address these challenges. In my oral testimony I will focus on omissions in the Preliminary Budget that will specifically hinder Housing Works’ efforts. Our written testimony includes more detailed calls for action by the Council to support the development of affordable and supportive housing and to transform our failed homeless response.

Transform the City's Failed Response to Homelessness and Behavioral Health Issues

Housing Works and the End AIDS NY Community Coalition strongly oppose any effort to expand involuntary inpatient and outpatient commitment initiatives, and in particular any effort to involuntarily commit an individual based on a determination of “*substantial inability of the person to meet his or her basic need for food, clothing, shelter or medical care.*” For over 35 years, Housing Works has successfully employed low- threshold, harm reduction strategies to engage the most marginalized New Yorkers in effective care to address co-occurring medical, mental health, and substance use disorders. What we have learned first-hand is that New Yorkers struggling to cope with serious mental health issues face multiple, significant barriers to voluntary access to the care they seek, especially those who are also trying to survive without a safe, stable place to live. These often-insurmountable barriers include a lack of supportive housing, low reimbursement rates for needed services, a shortage of health care professionals, high caseloads, and low pay for contracted service workers that makes it difficult to recruit or retain staff. As one result, on any given day, there are approximately 1,400 people with serious mental illness in City jails, where mental health services are woefully inadequate, leaving our most vulnerable New Yorkers to cycle between the streets, shelters, and jails with little or no access to voluntary care.

Housing Works implores New York City to transform the City's inhumane and ineffective response to the homelessness crisis by urgently adopting effective, evidence-based approaches that will save lives and money. We must stop criminalizing and harassing people experiencing homelessness through sweeps of the subways and encampments of those who opt for survival in public rather than entering frightening shelters, and stop stigmatizing people experiencing homelessness, especially those who are dealing with untreated or undertreated chronic medical and/or behavioral health issues while trying to survive in shelter or on the streets.

We must stop treating mental illness and substance use disorder among low-income New Yorkers as criminal justice rather than public health issues, and instead adopt harm reduction approaches that provide every New Yorker with the safe, stable housing necessary to engage in behavioral health care, including private rooms for those struggling with mental health issues. Low-threshold facilities that combine a drop-in center with on-site medical and behavioral health care with private hotel rooms to provide transitional housing without preconditions are perhaps the most effective way to engage unsheltered persons with behavioral health needs who are unable or unwilling to access more traditional shelter or treatment programs.

Make a New York City Council Investment of \$12M Annually in a Meaningful, Evidence-Based Intervention to Address the Crises of Homelessness and Mental Health

After four years of fruitless efforts to work with the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to open an innovative new model of comprehensive housing and services for unsheltered New Yorkers, Housing Works seeks \$12M annually in New York City Council funding for the project, which would support 166 private safe haven beds, a co-located drop in center with on-site medical and behavioral health crisis care, and access to a full range of health, mental health, and substance use services through a proximately located Housing Works Federally Qualified Health Center—as well as debt service on a non-profit owned facility available for NYC use for at least 60 years.

The model involves operating a Drop-In Center with co-located Safe Haven Beds; its cornerstones include delivering on-site medical and behavioral health care through a harm reduction modality,

prioritizing safe haven beds for drop-in center clients who reject “traditional” entryways into DHS shelters, and addressing chronic physical and behavioral health conditions that persist among drop-in and safe haven clients alike. These innovations were developed in thoughtful consultation with DHS and based on Housing Works’ experiences delivering DHS-funded services at the height of the COVID pandemic, including operating two DHS COVID isolation/quarantine hotels and providing medical and behavioral health services at all DHS COVID isolation sites citywide.

Between 2020 and 2022, Housing Works received both DHS and OMB approval to operate the proposed model at three distinct locations: Chelsea, Chinatown, and Jamaica. Unfortunately, in all three cases, the sites fell through for different reasons (in June 2020 the Chelsea hotel owner pulled out one week before opening, betting that NYC tourism would rebound; in May 2022 the hotels union persuaded the Mayor to object to and kill the Chinatown project; and in February 2023 the Jamaica hotel operator reneged on its deal with Housing Works to pursue—successfully—a more lucrative contract to use the site as a DHS City Sanctuary Facility).

Despite these setbacks, Housing Works remains committed to bring its model of street homeless services to one of New York City’s most impacted neighborhood, leveraging our 35 years of experience providing housing, supportive service, and primary and behavioral health care to populations other providers deem “too difficult to serve.” Our goal is to pilot a model that 1) engages NYC’s hardest-to-reach populations who reject “traditional” DHS services, 2) provides sustained high-quality care to addresses chronic medical and mental health conditions, substance use, and overdose, 3) demonstrates long-term cost savings by reducing avoidable utilization of hospital emergency department and other city resources, and 4) work intensively with stabilized residents to secure appropriate permanent housing placements.

In 2023, Housing Works was awarded a grant from the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHF) to conduct a rigorous academic evaluation of the proposed model; while the grant was returned when the last site fell through, NYSHF has graciously invited us to reapply when a new site becomes available. Through a multisector partnership of government, nonprofit, and academic partners, we hope to provide an evidence-based model that would strengthen New York City’s ability to better address unsheltered homelessness and its associated issues.

Housing Works has now identified 538 W 48th Street in Manhattan as a potential site for our proposed program. A former Holiday Inn, this location was a former DHS COVID quarantine hotel which Housing Works operated between 2021 and 2022; therefore, we are well familiar with the property and its condition. The site would provide for 166 safe haven beds and 50 drop-in center chairs.

Housing Works proposes to acquire this site through DHS’s nonprofit-owned (NPO) program, using a 30-year service contract to fund the acquisition and renovation. Given that the site is a former commercial hotel in good condition, the site does *not* require a complete redevelopment; capital costs would be limited to reconfiguring the ground and basement levels into a layout suitable for the drop-in center, and providing whatever minor updates are needed for existing guest rooms. This provides the added benefit of opening the site on a quicker timeline compared to ground-up development or substantial redevelopment. Indeed, 150 safe haven beds and a temporary drop-in center would be operational within four months of registration, and the building would be fully operational within a year.

Housing Works is partnering with Slate Property Group on this project, both to develop and to help finance the acquisition. Slate has successfully facilitated the development of multiple DHS NPO facilities for other nonprofit providers and therefore understands the needs of this program. They have already evaluated the site and found it to be both operationally and financially feasible. Further, they are willing to leverage financing so that the acquisition and renovations may move forward expeditiously.

Significantly, under this acquisition program the location must be operated for its initial purpose for at least 30 years and would remain available for City use for a full 60 years, making this an excellent investment for New York City.

The proposed 48th Street location is also strategically located just two avenues away from the Westside Health Center at 326 W 48th Street opened by Housing Works in summer 2023. As part of our Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) system, the Westside Health Center provides robust primary and mental health care services, including services operated through our FQHC's "Health Care for the Homeless" designation. We also operate a robust New York State Article 31 Office of Mental Health (OMH) program at this site. Through the escort of peer workers, we may help drop-in center and safe haven clients walk to and from the health center for appointments. For clients with mobility issues, transportation would be provided. And staff between the two sites would work hand in hand to monitor client progress and health outcomes through interdisciplinary team meetings, integrated case conferences, and shared client data across our common electronic medical record and case management systems.

The proximity of these two sites will enable Housing Works to deliver a robust model of care that would supplement on-site medical and behavioral health crisis care with access to the full services available at our 48th Street location. As we understand that opioid use, overdose, and co-occurring medical and mental health conditions are among the top public health issues experienced by street homeless populations, we will focus on leveraging on-site medical and behavioral health teams who can provide 24/7 crisis intervention and navigate clients toward buprenorphine induction, ongoing mental health care, and other appropriate interventions available at our 48th Street community health center.

DHS has informed Housing Works that they will no longer support the project because they are only interested in facilities located at the ends of the transit lines in Coney Island, Staten Island, and the Bronx. Housing Works asserts, however, that parts of Midtown West, including Hell's Kitchen and edges of the Theater District and transit hub, have long experienced an unmet need for street homeless services and substance use and mental health interventions. Housing Works intends to leverage the infrastructure, talent, and capacity of its considerable primary care, housing operations, and social service system to address street homelessness in this high need neighborhood. We are prepared to deliver a service-rich program model that will be enhanced by the unique proximity of our proposed site to our existing clinic. Unlike other drop-ins, we do not intend to close our doors once we hit capacity for the night. Rather, we are "all in" on making a marked improvement in the immediate area as well as collaborating with our partners to pilot, innovate, and evaluate models of care that can improve outcomes for homeless individuals citywide.

Invest in Housing With Deep Affordability and Take Action to Facilitate Affordable and Supportive Housing Development

Of course, addressing our housing and homeless crises requires substantial new City investments in housing with deep affordability, including supportive housing for those who need it. The Preliminary Budget fails to include sufficient funding to adequately expand the City's affordable and supportive housing stock—one of the most critical issues facing New Yorkers that should be prioritized in the capital plan. Housing Works calls for \$2.5 billion in additional new construction financing each year for the next five years for apartments specifically built for homeless and extremely low-income New Yorkers, including: doubling the set-aside in new affordable housing developments for homeless households from 15 to 30 percent, to produce at least 6,000 new apartments per year; and building an additional 6,000 apartments per year for households with extremely low incomes. The high delinquency rate in commercial buildings also presents an opportunity, and we call for a dedicated funding stream and the appropriate level of zoning relief to convert these properties to affordable housing.

As a developer of affordable and supportive housing, Housing Works also calls for administrative action to streamline these efforts. Our developments are needlessly delayed by difficulties getting permits and approved certificates of occupancy. Correcting the understaffing at DOB and HPD must be essential. We also call for the establishment of a specific unit within DOB assigned to expedite supportive housing and affordable housing development.

Accelerate the City's Commitment to Create Supportive Housing

We also call on the City to accelerate realization of its commitment to develop 15,000 new NYC-funded supportive housing units by 2030. We urge the City to reallocate the NYC 15/15 initiative to accelerate production and preserve older housing stock, and to remove arbitrary barriers to the housing created. NYC 15/15, the City's 15-year plan to develop 15,000 units of supportive housing, is currently in its tenth year. However, the initiative is in danger of not meeting its target due to problems with the scattered site model. (Only 20% of the 7,500 scattered site units are awarded as of 2025). Housing Works joins calls for the City to immediately shift away from the traditional scattered site model in today's volatile private housing market and allocate a portion of unawarded funding into three "buckets": to create more congregate housing which adds affordable units to the housing stock, to preserve and maintain older supportive housing units which otherwise might be lost, and to create "overlay" units, in which nonprofits will combine increased scattered site service contracts with units in City-funded affordable housing developments. In addition, we urge the City to amend eligibility for the program to remove, to the extent possible, the requirement that residents meet the federal definition of "chronic homelessness." This definition can be difficult or impossible for many people experiencing homelessness to demonstrate, and while we acknowledge that it is a requirement for programs funded at least in part by Federal Continuum of Care homeless housing funding, the City should not employ the definition to define eligibility for any program that does not receive CoC funding.

Improve and Expand the CityFHEPs Program

Housing Works is grateful for the improvements to the CityFHEPs program enacted by the City Council in 2023, and fully support efforts to enforce their full implementation by the Administration. However, as you know, the CityFHEPs process is plagued by unpredictable and lengthy delays, rampant discrimination from landlords and brokers, and administrative missteps that discourage applicants, alienate landlords, and prolong homelessness. We urge the Council to address aspects of the program that undermine its efficacy, including using your oversight authority to hold

DSS accountable for administrative problems, and increasing funding, as noted below, for enforcement of source of income protections.

We also urge the Council and Administration to expand eligibility for CityFHEPs beyond residents of shelters operated by the NYC Department of Homeless Services, to include residents of any type of NYC emergency or transitional housing such as the transitional housing program that Housing Works operates for the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and young adults (16-24) who access shelter through NYC's Department of Youth and Community Development, and for State and City action to work to expand eligibility for the program to include new immigrants.

As just one example, The MOCJ Emergency and Transitional Housing Program (MOCJ ETH) provides up to twelve months of a safe stable place to live for people leaving incarceration without housing, while providing vocational, educational, and therapeutic services as well as assistance to secure permanent housing. Housing Works, as one of several non-profit MOCJ ETH program providers, provides 356 beds combined with skills building, job training, access to medical and behavioral health services, and housing placement assistance. Originally initiated during the COVID crisis, the MOCJ ETH program has been continued and expanded in recognition of the fact that New Yorkers leaving incarceration often require housing assistance and supportive services to make a successful transition back into the community. However, while many of our program participants complete job training and secure employment they are not able to afford housing on the open rental market.

During the COVID crisis, MOCJ ETH program participants had access to Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) under the Housing Choice Section 8 program, but the supply of those vouchers has dried up, and our MOCJ ETH participants is that they are not eligible for any other housing subsidies. Like other supportive housing programs for the justice-involved population, the MOCJ Transitional Housing Programs generate reductions in shelter and jail use, inpatient hospitalizations and related Medicaid costs, and substance use. However, this worthwhile investment is squandered when at the end of a successful 12-month transitional housing stay, participants who have completed educational and job training programs, and are stable and employed, are pushed back into homelessness in the mass shelters or on the streets, and in the worst-case scenario end up back in jail. It makes no economic sense to spend over \$130/day on shelter or over \$500K annually to keep someone at Rikers, when the City has invested \$50K to \$60K annually in supportive transitional housing but is unwilling to afford participants a housing voucher that would cost only \$25K to \$36K a year.

Fund Non-Profit Legal Services Organizations to Address Source of Income Discrimination

To maximize the effectiveness of existing NYC voucher programs, including HRA's HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) rental assistance and CityFHEPs vouchers requires more consistent and effective legal action to enforce the City prohibition on source of income discrimination. Housing Works and the End AIDS NY Community Coalition request \$4M in funding annually to support contracts with non-profit organizations with a record of successful litigation to address the continued illegal discrimination by brokers and landlords who refuse to accept government-funded rental vouchers.

Invest in the City's Human Services Workforce and Infrastructure

The Preliminary Budget plan also fails to make critically needed investments in the City's non-profit sector.

Support Housing and Human Services Agencies with Adequate Indirect Funding

The Preliminary Budget plan also fails to make critically needed investments in the City's non-profit sector. It is time for meaningful action to address the underfunding of critical non-profit infrastructure needs. While we welcomed adoption by the City two years ago of a contracting agency's approved Federal indirect rate after years of inadequate funding, to date total contract amounts have not been adjusted to reflect the additional infrastructure funding, and social service agencies employing their approved indirect rate have been required to cut direct services by an amount equal to the additional indirect costs covered. Housing Works and the End AIDS NY Community Coalition call on the Council to support the funding required to amend each existing NYC human services contract as soon as practicable to increase the total contract amount to reflect the contracting agency's approved Federal indirect rate "below the line" without impacting contract funding for direct services. For the EtE Initiative Contracts alone, we request approximately \$2M in additional indirect funding be added to existing contracts to afford providers their Federally approved indirect rates.

Support Wage Equity for Human Services Workers

Inadequate NYC contract reimbursement rates have resulted in poverty-level wages for many human services workers, who are predominantly women and people of color. Essential human services workers are among the lowest paid employees in the NYC economy, resulting in high turnover and serious disadvantage in an increasingly competitive labor market. Housing Works and the End AIDS NY Community Coalition join the #JustPay Campaign to call on the Administration to ensure a living wage for all City-funded human services workers by creating and funding a comprehensive wage and benefit schedule for City-contracted human services workers comparable to the salaries made by City employees in the same field.

In conclusion, Housing Works calls on the Council and the Administration to be bold when it comes to addressing NYC's unprecedented crisis of homelessness and housing instability. We call for dramatically increased investment in affordable and supportive housing, for Council oversight of the City's homeless response and for an increased emphasis on peer and community health workers, a focus on cultural competency in service delivery, and implementation and rigorous evaluation of new approaches to our housing and homelessness crises that drive poor individual and public health outcomes among NYC's most marginalized residents.

Thank you for your consideration. Please direct any questions to Anthony Feliciano, Vice President of Community Mobilization at Housing Works, Inc., at a.feliciano@housingworks.org.

Attachment:

End AIDS New York Community Coalition Proposed Additional NYC Investments for the FY 2026 Budget

**TESTIMONY OF NEW DESTINY HOUSING
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS
HEARING ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026**

**Gabriela Sandoval Requena, Director of Policy and Communications
March 25, 2025**

Thank you, New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings Chair Sanchez, Council Members, and Council Central Staff for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

ABOUT NEW DESTINY

Founded in 1994, New Destiny's mission is to end the cycle of domestic violence and homelessness for low-income families and individuals by developing and connecting them to safe, permanent, affordable housing and services.

New Destiny is the only organization in New York City solely dedicated to the solution of permanent housing for survivors of domestic violence. We are the largest provider of supportive housing for survivors in New York, and we operate the first federally funded rapid rehousing program for those impacted by domestic violence in our city.

We are also a co-convenor of the [Family Homelessness Coalition \(FHC\)](#), a collective of mothers who have experienced homelessness and organizations committed to tackling housing insecurity among families in our city. New Destiny is also a member of the Supportive Housing Network of New York and the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

Domestic violence and homelessness are fundamentally connected. As New Destiny documented in its report: [A Crisis Compounded: The Dual Crises of Domestic Violence and Homelessness](#), domestic violence is the leading cause of family homelessness in New York City, pushing more families into shelter than evictions.

Due to the lack of permanent housing options, which are compounded by the devastating long-lasting effects of abuse, survivors may linger in shelter for years. In 2023, only 9% of survivors moved to a permanent home and more than half left Human Resources Administration (HRA) domestic violence emergency shelter for another shelter, upon reaching the State-mandated limit of 180 days. One in four survivors and their children had to move to a Department of Homeless Services family shelter, where the average length of stay is over a year, according to the Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.

With no certainty of when they might be able to find a safe home, survivors are forced to make the impossible choice between entering the shelter system or remaining in abusive situations,

putting their lives at risk. In 2023, 1 of every 5 homicides were domestic violence homicides in New York City (73 of 386), where the victim was either an intimate partner or a family member.

FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS

The proposed federal budget cuts will be devastating for survivors. Specifically, the budget and staffing reductions to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD.

Since 2018, New Destiny has received HUD funding through the New York City Continuum of Care (CoC) to provide housing navigation services to hundreds of survivors and, in many cases, also temporary rental assistance. But our program, and hundreds of others like it in New York City, are under threat.

Additionally, HUD announced that funding for the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program will stop at the end of this year. [Close to 8,000 New Yorkers](#) depend on this vital housing resource, including hundreds of domestic violence survivors.

This year, more than ever, we need our city leaders to step up and protect New Yorkers impacted by domestic violence by:

INVESTING IN THE NYC/15/15 REALLOCATION

Supportive housing is one of the safest and most cost-effective housing solutions for survivors of domestic violence. Abuse has long-lasting detrimental effects on the physical and psychological well-being of survivors.

Survivors are [31% more likely to develop cardiovascular disease](#) and 51% are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes compared to those who have not been impacted by domestic violence. At least half of survivors experience posttraumatic stress disorder and depression; moreover, [survivors can sustain head trauma more often than football players](#), but they are rarely diagnosed. In fact, research shows that almost [75% of domestic violence incidents involve brain injury](#), and the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) now recognize intimate partner violence as a [leading cause of traumatic brain injury](#).

Supportive housing provides survivors with a home they can afford and the support they need to heal and thrive. After years of tireless advocacy from New Destiny and partner organizations, in August 2024, the Adams administration included domestic violence survivors as an eligible population for New York City 15/15, the latest city-funded supportive housing program.

The New York City Human Resource Administration is the lead procurement agency for NYC 15/15, and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene manages the contracts. As of 2024, 100% of NYC 15/15 congregate units had already been allocated, which means that organizations like New Destiny cannot develop supportive housing for domestic violence survivors under this critical program.

As the [Supportive Housing Network of NY recommends](#), we urge the city reallocate a portion of the remaining scattered site units to congregate.

EXPANDING CITYFHEPS ELIGIBILITY TO INCLUDE SURVIVORS FLEEING ABUSE, REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

A shelter stay is often required to qualify for rental assistance programs, which effectively excludes survivors who are fleeing abuse and have never spent time in shelter. As it is the case for countless survivors without children, who are often members of the LGBTQIA+ community, trafficking survivors, and older adults, and often unable to access domestic violence emergency shelter. Expanding all voucher program eligibility to include survivors who are escaping an abusive situation and regardless of family size, as the federal Emergency Housing Voucher program did, is vital.

We thank the Council for their leadership in passing the CityFHEPS legislative package in 2023, which scaled up the rental assistance program to include households at risk of eviction or experiencing homelessness, among other key enhancements. Such modification would expand access to CityFHEPS for survivors who are fleeing domestic violence. However, Mayor Adams refuses to implement the bills, and the case continues to be litigated in court.

The Adams administration must fully enact the CityFHEPS legislative package to ensure survivors fleeing abuse. For noncitizen New Yorkers or those in mixed-status households, where at least one member of the family is a U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant, it can be difficult – if not impossible – to access sufficient housing support. This includes countless immigrant survivors of domestic violence, who lack equitable access to housing resources and, as a result, tend to stay in shelter for longer.

Thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to submit written testimony. We are happy to answer your questions.

**NYC Council Committee on Housing and Buildings Hearing on FY2026 Preliminary Budget
New York Housing Conference Testimony**

March 25, 2025

New York Housing Conference is a nonprofit affordable housing policy and advocacy organization. As a broad-based coalition, our mission is to advance City, State and Federal policies and funding to support the development and preservation of decent and affordable housing for *all* New Yorkers.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony which will focus on three issues. First, we are concerned about a [significant decrease in housing capital](#) funding after FY 2026 proposed in the preliminary budget and recommend continuing a baseline funding level of \$4 billion in housing capital. In the Ten-Year Capital Plan, HPD will produce 15,750 fewer units of new construction affordable housing. Over that same time, NYCHA will have 72% less city funding to repair traditional public housing, and PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust are at risk with zero capital funds allocated after FY2026. Second, we released a [policy brief](#) highlighting the problems with the city's Housing Connect lottery process for re-rentals, which are causing financial strain on affordable housing providers. We understand that HPD is prepared to adopt changes to their marketing requirements, but we want to reiterate the need for significant reform. Finally, we are extremely concerned about the impacts of federal housing policy and funding.

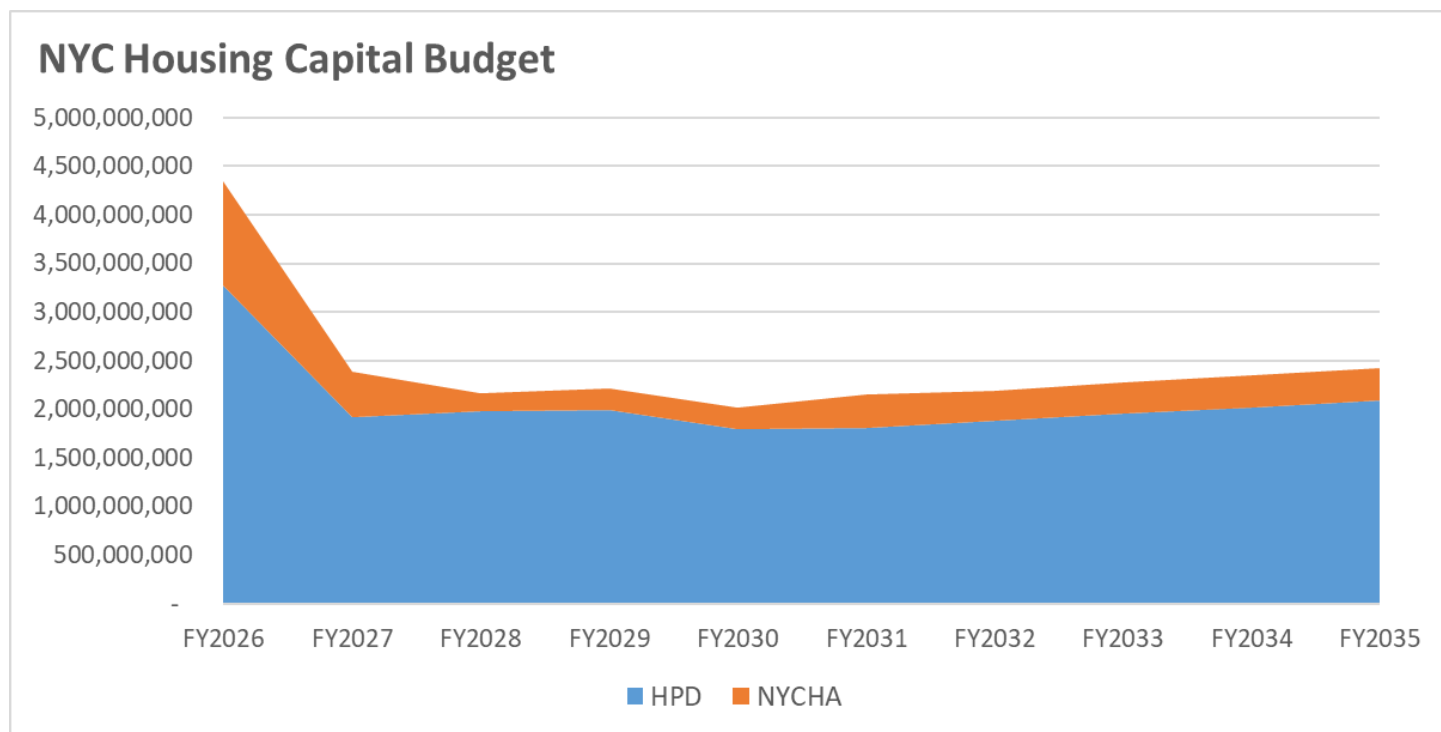
Housing Capital

NYHC is grateful for this City Council's advocacy for funding for affordable housing. Speaker Adams, Chairs Sanchez and Brannan, and so many others have been champions to increase capital funds to meet the need. Your support for City of Yes and negotiation for City for All's \$5 billion of funding will improve housing affordability in New York City. We are tracking the city's budget to ensure that all of the funding the city and state committed are allocated.

While we have robust funding for housing capital in FY 2025 and 2026, we are extremely concerned about the preliminary capital plan funding in 2027 and beyond. New York City's housing capital budget, which includes city funding for the New York City Housing Authority and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, decreases dramatically in FY 2027 – dropping from \$4.5 billion in the current fiscal year (FY2025) and \$4.3 billion next year (FY2026) to \$2.4 billion in FY2027 and averaging \$2.2 billion in the following eight years. \$4 billion in housing capital must be considered baseline funding to maintain current production levels.

The current housing capital funding includes \$1 billion of additional housing funding added to HPD and NYCHA over the next four years as part of the City of Yes and City for All zoning changes agreed to by the mayor and the City Council. Even with the additional funding – which comes out to more than \$825 million for HPD and \$175 million for NYCHA, housing capital decreases dramatically after FY2026. New York State is also expected to approve another \$1 billion in housing capital for the City of Yes over 5 years. These funds are not included in the chart but if allocated evenly would add \$200 million each year over the next 5 years according to the Governor's Executive Budget. The intent of the City of

Yes capital funding was to be additive but without a baseline funding level of \$4 billion for housing capital, this funding will plug budget holes rather than support additional needs.



Capital funding for HPD decreases from \$3.6 billion and \$3.3 billion this year and next year to \$2 billion or less per year from FY 2027 – FY2035. This represents a 41% decrease in capital funding for HPD.

HPD’s capital spending goes to several different categories including: New construction of affordable housing; special needs housing, including supportive and senior housing; preservation of affordable housing; funding for occupied in-rent housing which is housing the city foreclosed on for tax delinquency; and NYCHA preservation, which provides gap funding for public housing preservation through the PACT and Preservation Trust programs.

Funding changes are different among the different categories. Funding for new construction decreases by 31% and special needs housing funding decreases by 24%. Housing capital funding for preservation actually increases over time, growing from \$491 million to an average of \$600 million in the outyears. However, the growing need for preservation financing is significant. Many properties are facing financial difficulties and some also are experiencing physical deterioration while in the lengthy queue for preservation financing.

HPD funding for NYCHA preservation is zeroed out after 2026, dropping from \$875 million. NYCHA’s Preservation Programs capital funding is intended to support PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust. PACT is slated to convert 62,000 apartments, 24,584 apartments have already converted since the program’s inception. Out of the remaining 37,416 apartments, 14,082 apartments at 48 developments are in active planning and are slated for comprehensive repairs and upgrades in the upcoming months and years. This successful preservation strategy is at risk after FY2026 funds are spent with zero capital allocated in years 2027 through 2035. The Preservation Trust is

authorized to convert 25,000 apartments and 3 developments have already voted to participate in it. Without a steady capital allocation, NYCHA cannot reasonably plan a pipeline for either preservation strategy.

City capital funding for NYCHA Repair and Rehab directly supports repairs of their Section 9 public housing units, including repairs to roofs and facades, elevators and heating plants, remediating lead and mold, security systems, and apartment upgrades. Decreased funding means fewer units and buildings get repaired. City capital funding for NYCHA decreases from roughly \$1 billion this year and next year to \$467 million in FY 2027 and an average of \$280 million from 2028-2035. This is a 57 percent decrease in FY2027 and an 83 percent decrease on average from 2028-2035.

City Housing Capital Funding FY 2026 - 2035										
HPD	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031	FY2032	FY2033	FY2034	FY2035
NYCHA Preservation Programs	874,841,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Housing Construction	1,120,801,000	702,039,000	782,788,000	817,630,000	736,821,000	726,841,000	761,938,000	782,047,000	808,154,000	835,118,000
Other Housing Support Investment	70,934,000	81,661,000	64,039,000	34,297,000	24,491,000	25,110,000	25,673,000	26,255,000	26,824,000	27,413,000
Occupied In Rem Rehabilitation	124,454,000	83,309,000	86,561,000	90,478,000	78,339,000	76,182,000	78,527,000	19,431,000	92,113,000	95,154,000
Preservation	491,365,000	584,483,000	608,783,000	643,763,000	533,697,000	560,874,000	580,815,000	671,194,000	621,301,000	641,804,000
Special Needs Housing	585,473,000	468,873,000	440,405,000	412,101,000	422,297,000	423,580,000	437,478,000	460,079,000	473,941,000	488,261,000
HPD - Total	3,267,868,000	1,920,365,000	1,982,576,000	1,998,269,000	1,795,645,000	1,812,587,000	1,884,431,000	1,959,006,000	2,022,333,000	2,087,750,000
NYCHA	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031	FY2032	FY2033	FY2034	FY2035
NYCHA Repair and Rehab	1,074,909,000	466,866,000	180,019,000	215,422,000	218,062,000	341,621,000	304,299,000	314,235,000	324,605,000	335,317,000
Housing Total	4,342,777,000	2,387,231,000	2,162,595,000	2,213,691,000	2,013,707,000	2,154,208,000	2,188,730,000	2,273,241,000	2,346,938,000	2,423,067,000

Source: NYC OMB Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy Fiscal Years 2026-2035

Housing Lottery Re-rentals

NYHC also remains concerned about a housing lottery process for re-rentals that leaves desperately needed units vacant for months and sometimes longer than a year. The Housing Connect lottery was designed to provide fair access to subsidized housing for all New Yorkers. However, units in existing affordable housing being re-rented through the lottery are not advertised for the public to apply. Instead, people using the Housing Connect lottery can sign-up to be eligible for all re-rental options. This means re-rental lotteries include “applicants” that did not apply to live in the vacant unit but must be processed in a numerical lottery system, wasting time and resources. The roadblocks to renting are costing affordable housing developments significant revenue losses, while depriving New Yorkers of available units of affordable housing in a tight housing market.

The City must prioritize re-renting affordable housing as quickly and efficiently as possible. This will prevent affordable housing providers from unnecessarily losing income and decrease wait times for renters in need of affordable housing. The City must also improve functionality of the Housing Connect portal so that New Yorkers can view affordable housing vacancies. HPD has conveyed to us their intent to adopt reforms but we are still awaiting details of official policy change.

Federal Funding and Policy Concerns

Finally, cuts to housing programs and staff proposed at the federal level, both from DOGE and in Congressional budgets, would have serious consequences on housing programs in New York City. We are already hearing concerns from lenders and investors in affordable housing about uncertainty in project funding and approvals. Housing organizations are being directly impacted with impounded funds and terminated contracts for the Green Retrofit and Resiliency program for HUD assisted housing, Section 4 technical assistance contracts and fair housing contracts. We remained concerned about overdue homeless grants and contract terms for renewal and the fate of CDFIs. The early funding termination

notice for Emergency Housing Vouchers under the Section 8 program will impact thousands of New Yorkers who experienced homelessness during the pandemic.

We expect this is just the beginning of sweeping changes that will impact federal housing policy, funding and potentially even the finance system backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac with significant impacts to affordable housing preservation and development in New York City.

City Council Public Hearing

Tuesday March 25, 2025

Presenter:

Angella Cummings, Executive Director

Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn CDC, Inc.

Thank you, members of the City Council, for this opportunity to present to you this afternoon. My name is Angella Cummings and I am the Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn CDC, Inc. NHS Brooklyn is a HUD-certified, non-profit, housing-counseling agency. For over 40 years, we have helped residents obtain and maintain affordable housing and assisted in building healthy, safe, sustainable communities across Brooklyn. With offices in East Flatbush, Canarsie, and Coney Island, NHS Brooklyn provides home-buyer education, foreclosure intervention, tenant support services, and other related services designed to preserve homeownership. The service we'd like to focus on today is our home-repair program, which helps keep our most vulnerable residents safe and in their homes.

For many years, NHS Brooklyn has worked on behalf of homeowners on fixed incomes struggling to live in and maintain their homes. As time has passed, however, the need has increased, because Brooklyn's housing stock is aging.

Of the borough's 300,000+ one- to four-family buildings, almost two thirds were built more than 50 years ago. These older homes are deteriorating due to low maintenance and are inefficient by 21st century standards. At the same time, many are owned by older residents who must age in place because they cannot relocate, and yet they cannot afford the renovations necessary to allow a frail adult to remain in the home.

We have tried to address the needs of this vulnerable population through our home repair program, which has received government funding. This funding has been critical in helping four senior homeowners each year to make emergency home repairs.

Recently, for example, we were able to assist a visually disabled senior who needed to insulate his home and renovate his bedroom, but who had been unable to do so due to his low income. We provided a \$20,000 grant for the repairs, and he now lives in a comfortable, healthy home. Here is his story.

NHS Brooklyn Repair Grant Client - E. Edwards – 309 Cornelia Street, Brooklyn

Mr. Edwards is a visually disabled senior who owns a two-family home in Bushwick, Brooklyn. He purchased his home in 1978 and paid his mortgage faithfully until it was paid off in 2008. Unfortunately, shortly after he retired, he began to lose his eyesight and eventually lost his vision completely. He lives in his home with his caretaker grandson.

Mr. Edwards' only source of income is Social Security. It covers his basic needs, but it is not enough to maintain the home, which led to serious safety and structural issues. Due to the amount of care Mr. Edwards requires, his grandson is limited in the number of hours he can be employed and that, in turn, limits how much he can contribute financially to the household.

One day, while browsing online for repair assistance for seniors, Mr. Edwards' grandson found NHS Brooklyn's Home Repair Grant Program. As with all of NHS Brooklyn's repair programs, NHS incorporates construction management to evaluate the homeowners' repair estimate and to inspect the repairs when completed. Through the grant program, Mr. Edwards received \$20,000.00 to insulate and repair his ground-floor bedroom and make his kitchen more functional and accessible. The repairs not only lowered his energy bills, they also improved the quality of his life and meant he could age in place.

Mr. Edwards is just one of our many clients who are facing similar challenges. With more funding, however, NHS Brooklyn can assist more frail homeowners like Mr. Edwards, who need to age in place but who also need a home that is structurally safe and energy efficient.

I therefore respectfully request funding from the City Council in the amount of \$3 million dollars to launch the NHS of New York City's Home Repair Gap Program. NHS of New York City is NHS Brooklyn's long-standing partner, and we would work with them to ensure that these resources are delivered to high-need homeowners in our community.



New York City Council

Committee on Housing and Buildings

Hearing on 3.25.2025

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Tonya Ores, the new Chief Executive Officer at Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City.

NHS NYC has forty-three years of experience promoting and preserving affordable homeownership and financial stability for low-to-moderate-income (LMI) New Yorkers. We reach more than 50,000 clients annually across all five boroughs through homeownership education, foreclosure prevention, affordable financing, and repair loans.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the need for \$3m from the City Council to launch NHS NYC's Home Repair Gap program. Existing home repair programs don't fully meet the need of low- to moderate-income homeowners. When we have had repair funding in the past from the City Council, we have been lucky if we are able to help 1 in 10 homeowners who are on our waiting list. We need flexible, supportive resources that fill the gaps of other repair programs that don't meet certain homeowner's needs or don't have sufficient funding.

This new program will provide forgivable loans of up to \$30,000 for homeowners who earn up to 120% of AMI. NHS NYC will deliver this program in collaboration with its nonprofit partners NHS of Brooklyn, NHS of Queens, the Bronx NHS, and NHS of Jamaica, all of which have longstanding experience helping homeowners with their repair needs alongside other complementary housing and community services.

This investment of \$3m in home repair resources will result in huge rewards – by preserving affordable housing for small homeowners and their tenants. For an example of where we have been able to have such an impact, we can look to Ms. Braxton, a Brooklyn homeowner. We provided her with a rehabilitation loan for her two-family property to address roof issues, waterproofing, and basement updates while also consolidating her debt and stabilizing her finances. This assistance allowed her to decrease her debt, preserve her home, and provide quality housing for her tenants.

Repair funding of this kind is an effective way to preserve affordable homeownership and rental units in our neighborhoods.

We ask for your support of this funding request and thank you for the opportunity to speak.



NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN THE BRONX

Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City has a 43-year history of serving the Bronx, where nearly one-third of our clients reside and where one of our offices is located, offering services in English and Spanish.

THE BRONX AT A GLANCE



\$345,000

Median Housing Price

\$1,400

Gross Median Rent

1 in 8

Mortgages Delinquent or
in Foreclosure

*Compared to the
citywide rate of 1 in 10*

34.4%

Severely Rent
Burdened

*Spending more than 50% of income
on rent and housing costs*

OUR RECENT WORK IN THE BRONX (2022-2024):



736
Homeowners
Created or Preserved



Closed/facilitated 62
mortgages, valued at over
\$15 million



92% of homebuyers
connected to down-payment &
closing cost assistance, totaling
nearly \$3.5 million



NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN THE BRONX

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: MS. ROGERS' STORY

Ms. Rogers, a retired Bronx resident, struggled to secure a loan, as many traditional lenders would not accept her foster care income for her home purchase. With the help and dedication of NHSNYC's HUD-certified counselors, Ms. Rogers secured two pre-approvals from NHSNYC's bank partners, and ultimately closed on her dream home without any down-payment or closing cost assistance.

OUR CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

NHSNYC offers a comprehensive continuum of services to support low-to-moderate-income New Yorkers in pursuit of financial and housing stability, with special attention paid to underserved and under-resourced populations.



NHSNYC's TWU Counseling Center
at 2475 Westchester Avenue

- Tenant services
- First-time homebuyer education
- Financial counseling
- Down-payment and closing cost grants (including HPD's HomeFirst program)
- Post-purchase counseling
- Insurance and resiliency services
- Landlord education
- Repair loans
- Foreclosure prevention counseling

Many programs and services offered virtually and in-person, in both English and Spanish

📞 (212) 519-2500

✉ info@nhsnyc.org

📍 306 West 37th Street, Suite 1101
New York, NY 10018

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NHSNYC.ORG**



NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN MANHATTAN

Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City
has a 43-year history of serving Manhattan, where our main office
is conveniently located in Midtown.

MANHATTAN AT A GLANCE



\$995,000
Median Housing
Price

\$2,100
Gross Median
Rent

1 in 50
Mortgages Delinquent
or in Foreclosure

*Compared to the
citywide rate of 1 in 10*

24.2%
Severely Rent
Burdened

*Spending more than 50% of income
on rent and housing costs*

OUR RECENT WORK IN MANHATTAN (2022-2024):



419
Homeowners
Created or Preserved



Closed/facilitated 42
mortgages, valued at nearly
\$7 million



More than 70% of homebuyers
connected to down-payment &
closing cost assistance, totaling
over \$1.9 million



NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN MANHATTAN

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: GLADYS' STORY

Twenty-five years ago, Gladys, a single mother in East Harlem, turned to NHSNYC to achieve her dream of homeownership amid rising rent costs. With NHSNYC's guidance, she secured a city-subsidized property and became a successful landlord and homeowner. Recently, Gladys returned to NHSNYC for support in completing major repairs and energy-efficiency upgrades, ensuring her home remains safe and sustainable for years to come.

OUR CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

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The home of NHSNYC Client, Gladys, who worked with NHS on the initial purchase in 1999, and energy-efficiency upgrades and repairs in 2022.

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NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN BROOKLYN

Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City
has a 43-year history of serving Brooklyn, where nearly one-fifth of
our clients reside.

BROOKLYN AT A GLANCE



\$757,500
Median Housing
Price

\$1,750
Gross Median
Rent

1 in 8
Mortgages Delinquent or
in Foreclosure

*Compared to the
citywide rate of 1 in 10*

28.1%
Severely Rent
Burdened

*Spending more than 50% of income
on rent and housing costs*

OUR RECENT WORK IN BROOKLYN (2022-2024):



467
Homeowners
Created or Preserved



Closed/facilitated 86
mortgages, valued at over
\$24.3 million



99% of homebuyers connected
to down-payment & closing cost
assistance, totaling **\$6.6 million**

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, NYC City Council Data, NYU's Furman Center, Realtor.com, and US Census Data



NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN BROOKLYN

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: MS. BRAXTON'S STORY

Ms. Braxton, a Brooklyn homeowner, faced mounting costs for critical home repairs needed to ensure safety for her family and tenants of her two-family property. With NHSNYC's support, she secured a rehabilitation loan to address major issues like a new roof, waterproofing, and basement updates while also consolidating her debt and stabilizing her finances.

This assistance allowed her to decrease her debt, preserve her home, and provide quality housing for her tenants.

OUR CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

NHSNYC offers a comprehensive continuum of services to support low-to-moderate-income New Yorkers in pursuit of financial and housing stability, with special attention paid to underserved and under-resourced populations.



- Tenant services
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NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN QUEENS

Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City
has a 43-year history of serving Queens, where one-third
of our clients reside.

QUEENS AT A GLANCE



\$639,500

Median
Housing Price

\$1,850

Gross
Median Rent

1 in 10

Mortgages Delinquent
or in Foreclosure

*Compared to the
citywide rate of 1 in 10*

27.2%

Severely Rent
Burdened

*Spending more than 50% of income
on rent and housing costs*

OUR RECENT WORK IN QUEENS (2022-2024):



684
Homeowners
Created or Preserved



Closed/facilitated 91
mortgages, valued at over
\$22.3 million



95% of homebuyers
connected to down-payment &
closing cost assistance, totaling
over \$6 million

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, NYC City Council Data, NYU's Furman Center, Realtor.com, and US Census Data

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: THE MAR FAMILY

Mr. Mar, an elderly homeowner on a fixed-income, urgently needed to renovate his three-family home to make it accessible for his wife to return from a rehabilitation facility. With NHSNYC's support, he secured a rehabilitation loan to add a wheelchair ramp and make key first-floor modifications for her mobility needs. These renovations not only ensured his wife could age in place with dignity but also allowed the couple to remain together safely in their cherished home.

OUR CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

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NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN STATEN ISLAND

Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City
has a 43-year history of serving Staten Island.

STATEN ISLAND AT A GLANCE



\$658,000

Median
Housing Price

\$1,730

Gross Median
Rent

1 in 11

Mortgages Delinquent or
in Foreclosure

*Compared to the
citywide rate of 1 in 10*

29.9%

Severely Rent
Burdened

*Spending more than 50% of income
on rent and housing costs*

OUR RECENT WORK IN STATEN ISLAND (2022-2024):



132
Homeowners
Created or Preserved



Closed/facilitated 49
mortgages, valued at over
\$16.2 million



100% of homebuyers
connected to down-payment &
closing cost assistance, totaling
over **\$4.2 million**



NHSNYC
BRIDGING THE GAP

NHSNYC IN STATEN ISLAND

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: THE TORRES FAMILY

With the support of NHSNYC, Mr. Torres achieved his dream of homeownership in Staten Island in 2019. Six years later, his son followed in his footsteps and recently closed on his own two-family home, securing down-payment and closing cost assistance through NHSNYC. The Torres Family's story highlights the power of generational homeownership, demonstrating how access to resources and guidance can create lasting financial stability for families.

OUR CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

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**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 25, 2025**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Sanchez, and members of the Committee on Housings and Buildings for the opportunity to comment.

NYLCV urges the Council to work with the Adams Administration to provide robust funding for the NYC Department of Buildings' (DOB) Local Law 97 (LL97) implementation as well as DOB's and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development's (HPD) efforts to end lead poisoning.

Implementing Local Law 97

In New York City, [buildings](#) account for over 70% of the City's greenhouse gas emissions. This is one of the reasons why the City Council passed and NYLCV strongly supported Local Law 97 in 2019—to directly combat this source of climate change and reduce harmful pollutants that disproportionately impact low income and communities of color. With the first year of LL97 reporting upon us, thousands of building owners now are responsible for the carbon they emit.

NYLCV urges the Administration and City Council to ensure the speedy, effective, and equitable implementation of LL97 by providing robust funding for DOB hiring and staffing, particularly for DOB's Office of Building Energy and Emissions Performance (OBEEP). OBEEP must be prioritized when funding decisions are made in order to handle the full scope of work needed to implement this law effectively and efficiently, which includes technical assistance, conducting analyses required by the law, complete the LL97 rulemaking process, deliver outreach and education to owners; and prepare for the substantial review and enforcement of 'good faith' applications and decarbonization reports that will start coming in this year.

We recommend increased funding to support the outreach and education needed now that the first compliance period has begun, and ask that the City consider allocating more funding toward NYC Accelerator staff capacity. This should also include funding for translating materials into multiple languages. Additionally, to help building owners comply with the new regulations without burdening low- and middle-income owners and tenants, the City should expand financing programs such as property assessed clean energy (PACE) financing options.

As supporters of an equitable buildings fund concept, NYLCV strongly supported the announcement of the Affordable Housing Reinvestment Fund last year. This fund will provide much-needed resources for electrification upgrades in affordable housing and help ensure that LL97 drives investment in the buildings and communities most in need of support, while creating local jobs, health and economic benefits for New York City. The Fund will flow through the Resilient & Equitable Decarbonization Initiative (REDi), a joint New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) initiative which already has a significant pipeline of affordable housing locations that are ready and willing to start building retrofits. We underscore the need for ensuring the REDi program has sufficient funding to implement this new program.

NYLCV also urges the City to continue coordinating and identifying funding opportunities at all levels of government, including targeted funding for NYCHA retrofits, and low-income businesses, homeowners, and tenants. Now that the New York State Environmental Bond Act has been approved by voters, we urge the City to apply for future funding at the state level to be used toward building decarbonization for publicly-owned buildings and schools, especially in disadvantaged communities. We ask that the City also urge Governor Hochul to release draft regulations on New York State Cap and Invest Program (NYCI) for public comment so that this program can launch as soon as possible. Once it is active, NYCI will bring in billions of dollars in recurring revenue for climate action, including funding building decarbonization projects around the state, every year.

Moreover, as we implement LL97, the City must also increase funding for an equitable, green workforce training and development program—with an emphasis on investment in frontline communities. This law has the potential to create more than [140,000 jobs by 2030 in NYC](#). These jobs should be well-paying, union jobs, which will help reduce unemployment and raise wages. With the recent announcement of the Administration's [Green Economy Action Plan](#), we hope funding will be made available to grow the City's green workforce, specifically for a green building and construction workforce pilots. This means there should be increased access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across schools and certification programs, as well as increased investments in union-linked pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and direct-entry programs. These programs would also expand access to workers traditionally underrepresented or systematically excluded from this industry.

Local Law 97 is a critical step towards reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change, and we cannot afford any missteps or delays. The City must prioritize funding for OBEEP to ensure the law achieves its ambitious intention.

Eliminating Lead Poisoning

As a member of the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP), NYLCV stands with advocates calling for the elimination of lead poisoning in NYC through a holistic multi-agency approach. We must eliminate all sources of lead exposures in the City because no

level of lead exposure is safe, as even small amounts can cause neurological damage and other health problems especially in children. Furthermore, lead exposure disproportionately affects children in low-income and communities of color, and it will continue to do so until we take the necessary steps to ensure it ends. Despite passing Local Law 1 of 2004—the most ambitious lead poisoning prevention law in the county with the stated goal of ending childhood lead poisoning by 2010—lead poisoning is still a major concern.

As stated in [NYCCELP's 2024 Lead Agenda](#), the City must invest in programs and interventions that will especially protect children from lead poisoning. We know the primary source of lead poisoning is lead paint in NYC's old housing stock. To enforce LL1 of 2004 and the provisions that have been added to city code in the intervening years, the City must fully fund agencies in order to conduct inspections, test dust and paint for lead, remove lead service lines that deliver water, and other necessary functions that address lead concerns of New York City's families. The City's budget must reflect the needs of this unnecessary and long-standing crisis.

This includes measures funding proactive inspections and notification for tenants exposed to lead hazards. The City must ensure sufficient funding goes towards DOB's code enforcement and Office of Tenant Advocate. Additionally, HPD needs sufficient funding for its Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes Program.

NYLCV urges the Council to provide robust funding for DOB's LL97 implementation and DOB and HPD's work to end lead poisoning. Without this, the City cannot adequately address existing public health inequities and future climate threats.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



NYSFAH Testimony
NYC Council Budget and Oversight Hearing
Committee on Housing and Buildings
Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026
March 25, 2025

Thank you, Chair Sanchez and Committee Members Abreu, Avilés, Dinowitz, Feliz, Hudson and Restler for the opportunity to testify regarding Mayor Eric Adams' Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget. I am Jolie Milstein, President and CEO of the New York State Association for Affordable Housing (NYSFAH).

BUILT ON PARTNERSHIP

NYSFAH was founded in 1998 by affordable housing industry professionals who had the foresight to recognize the need for a greater public-private partnership. We are a membership organization of over 400 businesses representing for-profit and not-for-profit developers, lenders, investors, attorneys, architects, and others active in the financing, construction, and operation of affordable housing.

Critical to our work are the resources and policies advanced by the city each year. We thank the Mayor and City Council for their efforts in 2024 to enact historic citywide zoning reforms as part of the City for All housing plan. We appreciate the collective \$5 billion commitment of city and state resources to create an estimated 82,000 new homes.

While this was a measurable step forward, we were encouraged that the Mayor's FY 2026 Preliminary Budget recognizes that beyond this plan there is still more to be done if we are to have an impact on our city's ongoing efforts to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for all. However, we implore the City Council to ensure the city's budget matches both its short- and long-term goals to meet these challenges.

CONTEXT OF THE HOUSING CRISIS

The 2023 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey validated what our industry and you, our government partners know, there is a continued lack of available, affordable housing. However, the depth of the crisis was none-the-less still shocking.

The city-wide rental vacancy rate of 1.41%, which served as the basis for declaring a state of housing emergency, represents one of the lowest net rental vacancy rates on record since 1965. Low-income residents have the most difficult time finding housing, with the vacancy rate for units renting at less than \$1,100 units at .39%. Furthering compounding the crisis, in 2023, 86%

of households with incomes of less than \$25,000 paid more than half of their income in rent, making them severely rent burdened.

As affordable housing developers and owners, we know first-hand that there is intense competition for few units in our city. The 2023 Housing and Vacancy Survey found that the overall housing supply increased by 2% compared to 2021, but the number of occupied units was up 9% in the same period.

New York is facing a housing crisis of unprecedented scale that demands a bold multi-year investment in affordable housing.

TEN-YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY

Mayor Adams' Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy provides \$20.7 billion for HPD's capital programs. While this seemingly demonstrates a recognition of the scale of the challenge and the need for sustained investment, it is conflicting given the sharp decline in resources over the ten-year term.

In FY 2026 the Preliminary Budget proposes \$3.26 billion in funding for Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). However, this decreases to \$1.75 billion by 2030. Further, in FY 2026, \$1.12 billion in funding is proposed for new construction, but this decreases to \$702 million by 2027.

The trajectory shows that this crisis is worsening and demands a strategic plan that offers financial stability. This mitigates risk and is the foundation on which lenders and developers make informed decisions. We urge the City Council to consider a Ten-Year Capital Strategy that commits to both record and sustained growth in HPD's programs.

UPDATE TERM SHEETS & STANDARDS

Outdated policies and costly bureaucratic delays stymie the development of affordable housing. NYSAFAH encourages the Mayor, HPD and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release updated term sheets, financing terms and underwriting standards. This will allow developers to maximize opportunities for the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

STREAMLINE THE APPROVAL PROCESS

The current approval process for affordable housing projects is long, cumbersome, and fraught with costly delays. To accelerate development, we must streamline the permitting process, reduce the number of agencies involved, and cut down on the time it takes to receive approvals. This will not only help get projects off the ground more quickly but will reduce costs associated with holding land and maintaining project timelines. Doing so will also allow for the production of more units.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment. We stand ready to partner with the city in delivering affordable housing for New Yorkers.

Contact: Jolie Milstein, NYSAFAH President/CEO, at jmilstein@nysafah.org or [REDACTED]

**Testimony to New York City Council
Committee on Housing & Buildings
Preliminary Budget Hearing FY26**

March 25, 2025

Tanya Krupat
Vice President, Policy & Advocacy
Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations



Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee on Housing & Buildings. My name is Tanya Krupat and I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations. As many of you know, Osborne is one of the oldest and largest criminal justice service organizations in the state. Our services reach over 14,000 individuals each year, assisting them and their families in navigating arrest, courts, incarceration on Rikers and in state prisons, and reentry. Through advocacy, direct service, and policy reform, Osborne works to create opportunities for people to heal, grow, and thrive. Osborne also now provides a variety of reentry housing, which I'll describe shortly.

As we all know, affordable housing is in short supply in New York City with a vacancy rate of just 1.4%.¹ Now consider someone returning from incarceration, in some cases, after decades, needing to secure housing. This is a daunting challenge faced by thousands of people each year; for many, instead of “coming home,” they go straight into the shelter system. According to the *State of the Homeless 2023*² report, every year since 2015, between 45 and 55 percent of those leaving state prison were discharged into the NYC shelter system.

We thank the City Council for recognizing the importance of accessing housing for those with incarceration or conviction histories by passing the Fair Chance for Housing Act. It went into effect in January 2025 and should mitigate housing discrimination based on a conviction history. Now, we urge the Council to build on your investment last year and appropriate **\$4.8 million more in annual funding for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#)** (JISH), and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.

The surging population at Rikers (now over 7,000 people) and the housing crisis are closely related: unstable housing precedes incarceration in many cases, and a lack of stable housing can contribute to pre-trial detention and to recidivism. Rikers is also inordinately expensive while yielding harmful and, too often, deadly results. At a cost of \$507,000 per person per year, you could pay the rent for 17 people – and their families – to live in apartments that cost \$2,500 per month.

¹ NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, February 2024, [NYC Vacancy Rate Reaches Historic Low of 1.4% Demanding Urgent Action & New Affordable Housing](#)

² Coalition for the Homeless, June 2023, [State of the Homeless 2023, Compounding Crises, Failed Responses](#)

Osborne has been a member of the NY ATI/Reentry Coalition since its inception. As a coalition of providers, we are critical to the closure of Rikers, as documented in the recently published [report](#), *Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*. Osborne is among the 12 member organizations who are part of the requested increased investment of \$2.4 million, a \$200,000 increase for each of our 12 organizations.

Addressing the Need for Reentry Housing

While Osborne has been around since 1933 providing a vast array of services, we were not a housing provider until two years ago. In the past two years, Osborne has opened the **Marcus Garvey Supportive Housing Program** in Brownsville, Brooklyn, and the **Fulton Community Reentry Center** in the South Bronx, and we have a number of reentry housing projects in construction and in our pipeline (including redeveloping the former Bayview women's prison in Chelsea) that will be opening in the next two to three years.

In June 2022, Osborne partnered with an affordable housing developer who dedicated 52 units of supportive permanent housing for individuals who are formerly incarcerated, over age 50, and have served at least 7 years. Funding to support program operations came from the state's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative ("ESSHI"). The **Marcus Garvey Supportive Housing Program** filled up right away with residents who have served an average of 25 years of incarceration. This vibrant and welcoming community has brought relief to its residents in their quest to find a safe, supportive home and a place that recognizes their needs. This is especially meaningful for those who are transitioning after decades of inadequate and unaddressed health needs and a lack of digital and technological skills. One resident of Marcus Garvey said, "I didn't come out into a new world; I came out into a new universe." Now in his 70s, he lives in an apartment that is his first home, and he treasures it.

Fulton Community and Reentry Center opened last year and now provides transitional housing beds for 140 older men returning from prison and job readiness training, housing support and (soon to come) recreation programs in the former state-owned Fulton Correctional Facility. Fulton is working as it was intended, providing a welcoming transitional home for people who would otherwise end up in the shelter system or be unhoused. This stability and support in a setting unlike any other in NYC allows people to get their lives back in order while our housing specialists work with them to find stable permanent housing. You can watch the video about Mr.

Johnson's journey and successful move into his own home [HERE](#) (scroll all the way to the bottom). We are grateful for past Council funding for Fulton, and this year we are requesting funding for our innovative Kinship Reentry Housing program in the amount of \$250,000.

An Innovative Model

The demand for housing far outweighs the supply. Faced with this fact and inspired by the kinship foster care model, Osborne launched the **Kinship Reentry Housing Program** (Kinship) in 2021 in response to the desperate need for reentry housing and a support system for families housing their returning loved ones. Kinship's services for families include:

- \$500 monthly cash assistance payments for up to 12 months to offset the economic impact of housing a formerly incarcerated family member;
- Case management and counseling to support families in the reunification process, delivered by credible messenger staff who draw from their own experiences with welcoming a loved one home;
- Home visits and advocacy for families, including addressing unsafe living conditions with landlords;
- Financial literacy education and financial planning for the end of the 12-month cash assistance program; and
- Service coordination with the formerly incarcerated person's reentry services provider.

The maximum \$6,000 cash assistance distributions (which do not affect an individual's benefits) provided to Kinship families per year are significantly less than the costs associated with housing a person in a city shelter, which is \$50,370 annually.³ The annual cost of serving a Kinship family is approximately \$14,000, resulting in shelter diversion savings of \$38,370 for every family served.

To date, we have served 256 NYC families, including [Ms. Donaldson and Mr. Ayala](#), and the initial results are highly promising:

- A 83% successful exit rate (meaning that the loved one continued living with their family for 12 months, and the family completed 12 months of supportive services);

³ NYC Independent Budget Office (2022). *Focus On: The Preliminary Budget, Adams Increases Funds for Homeless Shelters, But More Needed for Shelters and Other Programs*. Retrieved from <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/adams-increases-funds-for-homeless-shelters-but-more-needed-for-shelters-and-other-programs-fopb-march-2022.pdf>

- 90% reported that their family relationships were “better” at time of program exit than when they started the program;
- 94% reported their family’s financial stability was “better” at time of program exit than when they started the program;
- Only two individuals hosted by their families have been reincarcerated (both due to parole revocation rather than new criminal convictions); and
- No one involved in the program has become homeless.

With support from the City Council, Osborne will be able to sustain this innovative, cost-effective program, and strengthen clinical support offered to families, including a focus on supporting older caregivers.

We must recognize that housing stability is a matter of public safety. People are most vulnerable after release and that is when they most especially need the stability of proper housing. Being unhoused can impact an individual's ability to find gainful employment, continue an education, get medical and mental health care, and reunite with and provide for their families, including children. They are even more likely to end up back in jail or prison if forced to navigate street life and unsafe shelters. We urge the City Council to invest in reentry housing, support community-based organizations that are addressing this need, and divert funds away from punitive measures and incarceration and towards solutions that work.

A summary of the 7 discretionary funding requests Osborne has submitted to the City Council is attached to my testimony.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

The Osborne Association

New York City Council Discretionary Funding Requests FY26

Program	Description	FY26 Request	FY25 Funding
Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Services (Ref. 194457)	Osborne’s portion of the ATI coalition request, which will support multiple programs: (1) court advocacy and mitigation services; (2) video visiting and family strengthening activities; (3) expansion of job training and placement; (4) elder reentry services; and (5) the Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations. (Application PDF)	\$2,052,074	\$1,852,074
Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention Program - BOGAP (Ref: 193844)	To support BOGAP—an innovative diversion program developed with the Bronx DA—to serve approximately 75 participants annually. Funds will be used to provide hot meals to program participants, stipends for internships, and additional support services to participants to increase their chances of success in the program. (PDF)	\$20,000	\$20,000
Elder Reentry Initiative Services and Advocacy (Ref: 194063)	To support two related program areas: (1) The Elder Reentry Initiative’s participant screening, intake and assessment, reentry service plans, community case management, and technical assistance; and (2) Osborne’s advocacy and public education on behalf of older adults. (PDF)	\$125,000	\$90,000

Health and Wellness – Ending the Epidemic (Ref. 193984)	To support formerly incarcerated people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and come from low-income communities of color, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ people. Osborne will provide sexual health education, referrals to prevention and treatment, trauma support, and other supportive services. (PDF)	\$110,000	\$104,325
Safeguarding Children Initiative (Ref: 193568)	To support the work of Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests their parents. Osborne will provide necessary training and administrative support to the NYPD, and build a network of CBOs that can provide post-arrest support to children. (PDF)	\$300,000	\$265,000
Improving Behavioral Health and Wellbeing for Youth (Ref: 194209)	For assessing and addressing mental health and trauma in youth impacted by the criminal legal system through treatment options that alleviate stress, improve functioning, and reduce trauma symptoms. Targets: 60 assessments; 120 referrals. (PDF)	\$158,000	\$158,000
Kinship Reentry Housing Initiative (Ref. 194304)	To sustain and expand the <i>Kinship Reentry Housing Program</i> , which provides financial assistance, case management, and peer support to families housing a loved one returning from incarceration. By addressing economic and logistical barriers to stable reentry housing, the program reduces reliance on the shelter system, strengthens family reunification, and lowers the risk of recidivism. (PDF)	\$250,000	N/A

**JOINT TESTIMONY OF RIGHT TO COUNSEL LEGAL SERVICES PROVIDERS FOR
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL, COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS,
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING**

March 25, 2025

**BRONX DEFENDERS
BRONXWORKS, INC.
BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION A
CAMBA LEGAL SERVICES
HOUSING CONSERVATION COORDINATORS
LEGAL SERVICES NYC
MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE
NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDER SERVICE
NEW YORK LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP
NORTHERN MANHATTAN IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION
QUEENS DEFENDERS
THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you to the City Council’s Housing and Buildings Committee for the opportunity to testify about the crucial need to improve the City’s contracting process and the need for increased funding and contract reform to meet the mandate of the Right to Counsel (RTC) program to best serve New York City residents.

Over the last 8 years, the critical Right to Counsel program has been well established in housing proceedings in New York City. Studies consistently show that tenants with legal representation in eviction proceedings remain in their homes and that RTC programs reduce the number of eviction filings. In New York City, 84% of tenants with an attorney remain in their homes, while eviction filings and default judgments have dropped by 30% since the implementation of the RTC program.¹ Furthermore, legal representation results in fewer judgments of possession and

¹ See, “In the most expensive city in the country, evictions remain lower than before COVID-19,” by John Pablo Garnhem, The Eviction Lab (January 14, 2025),

lower money judgments. The impact of RTC goes beyond keeping families housed. Evictions have far-reaching consequences, not only affecting housing stability but also impacting employment, physical health, and mental well-being. Even when displacement cannot be avoided, representation ensures that tenants obtain valuable time to navigate related challenges, such as finding alternative housing or stabilizing their finances.²

The benefits of RTC extend beyond the tenants themselves—it also saves the City money. By reducing the number of people who enter the shelter system, the program alleviates one of the most expensive items of the City’s budget. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) spent over \$2.2 billion on shelter operations, with average stays for individuals lasting more than a year. The funding required to fully implement RTC is a fraction of that amount, making it a cost-effective tool to address the housing crisis, preserve affordable housing, and stabilize vulnerable communities.

This testimony highlights the critical issues currently facing Right to Counsel (RTC) providers in New York City, beginning with the ongoing delays in payment that threaten our ability to sustain our operations. Despite timely registration of contracts with the Human Resources Administration (HRA), providers have been unable to invoice for services since July, placing immense financial strain on our organizations, particularly smaller ones. This delay, coupled with a proposed 10% penalty on payments and a new policy that reimburses only 90% of invoices, undermines the fiscal viability of our programs and puts at risk the delivery of high-quality legal services.

Additionally, the FY25-27 RTC contracts fall far short of addressing the growing need for legal representation in eviction cases. The overall amount of funding fails to meet the demand for legal representation – in fact funding covers only 36% of the eviction filings each year. Moreover, the current contract’s proposed case rates are insufficient to cover the costs of providing competent, holistic representation. There are widely disparate case rates across providers which should be equalized at a rate that funds the true cost of the work.

Specifically, we urge the City to take immediate action to reform its current contracting process which is marked by significant disorganization and includes delays in payment that jeopardize provider’s ability to provide crucial legal services to clients. We also urge the City to reform the FY 25-27 RTC contracts which are greatly unequal across provider organizations and simply do not provide for funding sufficient to meet the demand for representation in eviction cases throughout the City.

<https://evictionlab.org/in-the-most-expensive-city-in-the-country-evictions-remain-lower-than-before-covid-19/>, last visited 3/13/2025.

² See, The Effect of Legal Representation on Tenant Outcomes in Housing Court: Evidence from New York City’s Universal Access Program, by Mike Cassidy, Janet Currie. Journal of Public Economics Volume 222, June 2023.

I. The City Should Reform its Current Contracting Process.

A. The City's Current Contracting Process Is Marked by Significant Disorganization.

The City's current contract process is marked by significant disorganization, including delays in registering contracts, failure to timely allocate and disburse funds, and inadequate clarity on reimbursement procedures. Together these issues pose significant challenges to nonprofit organizations contracted to provide services on behalf of New York City.

Nonprofit organizations face significant disadvantages in comparison to City agencies when it comes to receiving funding to provide services. While City agencies begin the fiscal year with their funding already allocated and confirmed, nonprofits are left waiting for funding confirmation, oftentimes for months into the fiscal year. This delay in securing funding allocations and awards creates operational challenges and financial uncertainty for nonprofits, undermining their ability to deliver essential services to New Yorkers who rely on them. Additionally, the registration of the respective contracts can also take months, if not years, which further delays the availability of funds and wreaks havoc on nonprofits' budgets and financial statements.

Furthermore, nonprofits are subjected to a complex, bureaucratic reimbursement process that is characterized by frequent changes in rules, requirements, and deadlines. This lack of clarity and consistency creates further inefficiencies and delays, forcing organizations to expend valuable time and funding navigating a convoluted system rather than focusing on their core mission of serving clients.

The City must ensure that nonprofits receive their funding allocations in a timely manner at the beginning of each fiscal year. Delayed confirmation of funding forces organizations to operate without financial certainty, placing their operations, staff, and services at risk. By aligning the timing of nonprofit funding with City agencies and ensuring timely contract registration, the City can level the playing field and allow nonprofits to plan and execute their programs without interruption.

In addition to timely funding confirmation, nonprofits require a clear and consistent set of reimbursement guidelines to minimize confusion and ensure that payments are processed quickly and efficiently. The City should provide detailed and stable guidance on reimbursement procedures, clearly outlining the expectations and documentation requirements upfront. Furthermore, the City must avoid sudden changes to reimbursement rules mid-year, which can create serious operational disruptions and financial challenges for nonprofits.

The City must also streamline the contracting process itself, reducing unnecessary paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles that slow down the approval and payment process. Nonprofits should be able to enter into contracts and submit invoices without facing excessive delays due to administrative red tape. By making the contracting process more efficient and user-friendly, the City will allow nonprofits to focus on serving clients, rather than spending valuable resources navigating an unnecessarily complicated and inefficient system.

Finally, to address cash flow challenges, the City should implement pre-approved advances or interim payments based on established milestones. This approach would help nonprofits cover operating expenses and ensure that they can continue to serve their communities while waiting for full reimbursement. Advances should be issued promptly and proportionally, reflecting the work being done, so that nonprofits have the necessary financial flexibility to maintain their operations.

By implementing these reforms, the City can reduce the operational burdens placed on nonprofit organizations, enabling them to better serve New Yorkers in need. Streamlining the contracting and funding processes will lead to more effective service delivery, reduced administrative costs, and a more sustainable nonprofit sector that is better equipped to fulfill its vital role in the community.

Recommendation

The City should align timing of nonprofit funding with that of City agencies so nonprofits contracted to deliver services on behalf of the City can do so without interruption or delay. The City should also provide clear, upfront direction on reimbursement expectations and processes, reducing the bureaucratic hurdles nonprofits must cross in order to receive funding. The City should also implement pre-approved advances and interim payments to alleviate ongoing cash-flow problems plaguing non-profit providers.

B. The City Should Pay Nonprofits Timely to Avoid Current Jeopardizing Providers' Ability to Deliver Crucial Legal Services to Clients.

The most urgent issue facing Right to Counsel (RTC) providers is the ongoing delay in receiving payment on contracts with the Human Resources Administration (HRA), which includes critical funding for RTC and the Anti-Harassment Tenant Protection Program (AHTP), and is greatly impeding providers' ability to provide crucial legal services to clients as well as sustain basic operations as nonprofit organizations.

While our contracts were registered on time, most of the nonprofit legal service providers that offer essential housing legal work for low-income and vulnerable tenants have not yet been able to submit invoices for payment due to the City's failure to approve our FY25 budgets. As a result, RTC providers have now gone nine months without being able to invoice, except for limited advances that fail to cover providers' full costs. These outstanding amounts are on top of the significant amounts owed providers for FY24 contracts. These payment delays are threatening the viability of our organizations, especially for smaller nonprofits, and jeopardize our provision of legal services to those facing eviction or housing instability. These delays not only jeopardize our capacity to meet payroll but also undermine our ability to fulfill our mission of providing high-quality, timely legal representation to those most in need, many of whom are facing imminent eviction.

While the advance on baseline City contracts this year was an appreciable improvement, we are now well beyond the period these advances cover, and we have no way to receive additional

payment on these contracts beyond these advances. Even though HRA has been working to resolve this issue, providers are nearly nine months into the current fiscal year and are *still* unable to submit invoices. Nonprofit RTC providers need to invoice monthly to ensure they have enough cash to make payroll, and to continue providing much needed services, especially now that RTC contracts, with the expansion of the program, account for large percentages of providers' overall organizational budgets. Some organizations are already relying on or about to exhaust lines of credit. If providers don't have money to pay their attorneys and paralegals because of HRA contractual delays, their work will come to a screeching halt, completely frustrating the purpose of the Right to Counsel program. Nonprofits cannot continue to operate this way. It is simply unsustainable.

This existential threat is further compounded by HRA's position that, in implementing a new provision that providers must meet performance milestones to earn 10% of the contract amount, HRA will pay the nonprofit providers only 90% of their invoices, whether they are meeting performance milestones or not. This plan, only shared with providers in mid-October 2024 after contracts were bid and issued (and not referenced in any contractual document) is disastrous for nonprofit RTC providers. Providers do not have reserves to await reimbursement for money they have spent – reimbursements that may not come if milestones cannot be met. This is an extremely damaging way to implement a new performance-based payment provision. This scheme unnecessarily undermines the effort to expand and improve this program for New Yorkers in need.

Recommendation

As the City continues to disentangle the bureaucratic morass that has utterly upended the orderly registration of contracts and payment of invoices, to ensure that RTC providers have sufficient cash to operate, the City must (1) allocate additional advances for 75% of the contract amounts immediately; and (2) commit to additional monthly advances until it is current in the payment of invoices submitted by RTC providers.

Further, the City must pay the full 100% on invoices as they are submitted.

II. The Providers Have Significant Concerns about the FY25-27 RTC Contract

A. The Funding Does Not Meet the Demand for Representation in Eviction Cases.

On August 3, 2023, the City published the Anti-Eviction Full Legal Representation RFX with anticipated funding of \$408,520,077 for fiscal years 2025 through 2027.³ This funding was to provide full legal representation for 44,444 eviction cases each year.

³ The RFX had many shortcomings, most of which are outlined here and were outlined by RTC providers in their various protest letters. See, e.g., LAS's Protest Letter at <https://www.scribd.com/document/664436607/The-Legal-Aid-Society-Protest-Letter-to-HRA-8-10-23>

According to the New York State Unified Court System’s Statewide Eviction information, eviction filings in 2024 in New York City totaled 124,599.⁴ The RFX, and in turn the contract providers now operate under, thus caps representation at 36% of NYC tenants facing eviction per year. While some percentage of tenants are over income for services, all seniors qualify regardless of income under Local Law 20/23. Funding at most 44,444 cases each year ensures that tens of thousands of eligible tenants are denied representation before they even walk into the courthouse. This is the antithesis of the intent of the RTC law, which was enacted to ensure that ALL eligible tenants have access to counsel in eviction proceedings.

Even on paper, the RFX proposed in 2023, could never have fully funded the RTC. And in practice, the contract as implemented falls even shorter. The RFX was originally planned to fund 44,444 cases at \$3,063 per case. But once actual rates were negotiated with providers, to account at least in part for the true cost of providing representation, the rate increased to approximately \$4,100 per case. This means that the pool of funding provided by the current contract covers only about 33,000 cases per year, barely more than a quarter of anticipated filings.

The City is severely under-funding a program that is objectively successful in both moral and economic terms. The RTC program boasts an extremely high success rate in preventing evictions and other collateral consequences. Every eviction prevented by the program creates huge savings to the City by avoiding shelter costs, brings the City closer into compliance with its own RTC law, and protects the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Recommendation

The City should increase funding for Right to Counsel to a level sufficient for legal services providers to provide high-quality, holistic services to all eligible cases. There has to be sufficient funding to meet the demand for representation in the new cases being filed and the backlog of eviction defense cases pending without representation. It should also sufficiently fund the brief legal services that are required under the law.

B. The Contracts Do Not Cover the Full Cost of Providing Anti-Eviction Services.

Eviction defense proceedings are complex and require significant time to resolve. New York City has some of the most robust and complicated housing laws in the country. Important laws, such as the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 and the Good Cause Eviction Law passed in 2024, have increased critical tenant protections while also adding to the complexities of tenant defense. As a result, providers must increase staff training to stay current with the law and attorneys must dedicate more time per case. Notably, these changes have all occurred in the last few years. Since 2018, providers have seen a 24% increase in how many hours it takes to resolve a case, while increased administrative and training burdens mean that staff have fewer hours available to do casework.

⁴ New York State Unified Court System Statewide Eviction Information available at: <https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjojZGE3NzljYmItYTBMZC00OGI2LTliYTgtYzY5ZjI0N2U0MwYxIiwidCI6IjI0NTZmZTkxLWwvZDEtNDA2ZC1iNWZLTUzNjRiZWwvYTgzMyJ9>. Last visited 3/12/2025.

The current contract fails to account for these changes and the cost of this work. The case rates under the current contract vary between providers, but the average rate of \$4,100 represents barely more than half the cost of the work. Doing full representation at such a low case rate results in ballooning caseloads and attorneys who may not have the time and resources needed to properly litigate these complex matters. The other outcome has been that even fewer tenants than anticipated are being represented. Providers cannot force staff to handle more cases than permitted by legal ethics, negotiated collective bargaining agreements, and by practical considerations such as retention. Case rates being below the cost of services mean providers cannot hire and retain sufficient legal staff.

The funding also currently fails to consider the full breadth of staffing and support needed to provide holistic, quality legal representation. To meet client needs, provider organizations must staff programs not just with attorneys, but also with paralegals, social workers, administrative staff, and infrastructure supports such as finance and IT. The low case rates in the current contract do not allow for these substantial and necessary costs. While attorney representation stops evictions in the immediate moment, restabilizing a family's housing often requires social workers and benefits advocates. The underfunding has and will continue to hamper our ability to solve the totality of our clients' housing problems and will lead to tenants being sued in Housing Court year after year.

The need is growing. Housing Courts in the various boroughs are scheduling cases at a similar pace as before the pandemic, despite providers' early and frequent warnings about lack of capacity. As more evictions are filed and costs rise, continuing to underfund this critical program will leave even more tenants without legal representation.

The variable case rate between providers must be equalized at the highest rate. Before the RFX process, providers collected data that demonstrated that the then cost of the average provider to holistically and properly defend an eviction case and provide fair salaries for staff was approximately \$7,500 per case. These costs have only increased since cases are taking longer to resolve, in part due to important new tenant protections like the 2024 Good Cause Eviction Law, as well as the rising costs of operations, including interest on loans needed to cover the lack of payments under these contracts. These costs span across organizations, regardless of size or history.

During the negotiation process for the current contract, OCJ met with providers individually. Most providers were asked to present new, lower proposals as close as possible to \$3,500 per reportable case. OCJ told at least one provider that the average case rate was \$4,100 and asked them to lower their case rate to that average. OCJ strongly implied in these negotiations that if the providers failed to lower their case rates, their bids would be rejected. The process for negotiating the bids was entirely incompatible with the City's stated intention of allowing providers to identify their own costs and with partnering to build an effective program.

The outcomes of this process were entirely predictable. Some organizations were forced to accept case rates well below the cost of providing services to continue providing the essential eviction prevention services their organizations deeply believe in. Thus, many RTC providers are now operating under a contract that provides for thousands of dollars per case less than the

\$7,500 necessary to have a robust program with fairly paid staff. These case rates are well below the actual cost of providing services to new and existing clients. The individual bid negotiations created a wide disparity in payment for nearly identical services. This disparity resulted in some of the smaller community-based providers, who are more reliant on RTC funding for their overall budgets and thus more vulnerable, being compensated at the lowest rates. We ask that the City rectify these disparities by funding an increased rate for all providers up to the \$7,500 case rate reflecting the true current cost of doing this work, or at least bringing all providers up to the highest RTC case rate for which OCJ has currently contracted.

Recommendation

The City must equalize funding for the RTC providers at the true cost of doing the work. The current cost-per-case for the average provider is at least \$7,500 per case. The City must (1) fund an increase to the RTC contract to allow for a \$7,500 case rate for all providers and (2) in the interim equalize the funding for all providers at the highest case rate currently being paid under the RTC contracts.

C. Additional RTC Contract Issues

(1) The 10% Reduction in Compensation Should Be Eliminated or at Least Suspended.

The recently implemented contractual penalty for nonprofit legal services providers—imposing a 10% reduction in funding for failing to meet metrics on a new performance scorecard—is a measure that not only exacerbates the existing challenges faced by providers but also undermines the fundamental goals of the RTC program. Compounding the impact of the 10% reduction, the specific metrics used by OCJ to evaluate providers' scorecards were unclear prior to the first evaluation in January 2025. Even after the first evaluation and some vague written guidance, significant confusion remains about how to calculate the scorecard metrics and how they will be evaluated in the future.

Providers are frequently at the mercy of systemic delays, including backlogs in Housing Courts, clogged court calendars, inefficient court administration or operations, backlogs in obtaining public benefits assistance, unresponsive opposing counsel, and evolving legal standards that impact a provider's ability to meet deliverables. Imposing a 10% funding penalty ignores these externalities and unduly harms providers. The penalty also creates perverse incentives for nonprofits to prioritize quantitative metrics over qualitative outcomes. In an effort to meet contractual benchmarks, organizations may feel compelled to take on more cases than their staff can handle or resolve cases quickly, leading to compromised representation.

The penalty provision has significant downstream implications for the City itself. Weakening the RTC program through financial penalties increases the likelihood of evictions, which impose substantial costs on municipal services, including emergency shelter, public assistance, and healthcare. From a cost-benefit perspective, adequately funding and supporting RTC providers is far more fiscally prudent than penalizing them in an already underfunded system.

Recommendation

The City should eliminate or suspend the 10% performance penalty or at least ensure there are clear guidelines, provided in writing, for the evaluation of the metrics. The City should also allow for appropriate flexibility when quantitative metrics cannot be met by a provider due to systemic issues outside of their control.

(2) Rollovers and Brief Services Should Be Counted and Funded.

The current contracts, in sharp contrast to the first eight years of the RTC program, no longer allow cases continuing beyond one year to be “rolled over” and reported in subsequent fiscal years. This change ignores that eviction cases are complicated and often last beyond a year. Disallowing RTC providers from reporting rollover cases as part of their deliverables creates a perverse incentive for providers to prioritize “easy” cases and de-prioritize representing tenants with complex and time-intensive cases. Any incentivization of one case or another caused by contract terms is fundamentally repugnant to the letter and spirit of the Right to Counsel law and to our missions as legal service providers. Such antithetical incentives undermine this essential program.

In a world where not every eligible tenant will obtain legal representation, RTC providers' ability to be compensated for brief legal assistance is an invaluable part of preventing homelessness. For community-based legal service providers, providing brief legal assistance to their neighborhoods is a fundamental part of their mission. In contrast, the new contract's elimination of partial payment for these cases and a shift to all those cases being handled by one provider via a telephone hotline means that every neighborhood referral forces the community provider to choose between providing services for “free” with limited resources and operating contrary to its mission by turning away the vulnerable tenants.

We urge the City to fund brief legal assistance, as it has under previous contracts. This change would allow providers to triage cases at intake and to provide legal advice to the community in accordance with our missions.

Recommendation

The City must fund providers for all active and litigated cases, even those that take a year or more to resolve. The City must also sufficiently fund brief services and advice work to reflect the realities of RTC practice on the ground, particularly for community-based RTC providers.

(3) OCJ Should Streamline and Simplify the Onerous Reporting Requirements of the Right to Counsel Contracts

OCJ's increasingly strict reporting requirements often obstruct the goal of obtaining data that accurately reflects RTC providers' work. By prioritizing strict adherence to reporting protocols over case management realities, OCJ does not obtain a complete picture of RTC providers' work, uses up previous resources with data collection and management and fails to credit providers with work done where marginally relevant data cannot be obtained. For example, if a provider

cannot obtain a tenant's unit number, the case cannot be reported despite the provider dedicating dozens of hours to the case. The resulting obligation to devote increasing resources to reporting data undermines the program's overall effectiveness.

Inaccurate or delayed data not only obscures the true scope of RTC providers' work but also undermines the program's accountability and strategic planning. When RTC providers must divert time and resources toward meeting burdensome reporting requirements, they have less capacity to focus on their clients' urgent legal needs. OCJ must adopt less burdensome and more flexible reporting practices that align with the operational realities of nonprofit legal service providers.

Recommendation

OCJ must adopt less burdensome and more flexible reporting practices that align with the operational realities of nonprofit legal services providers, who expend excessive resources attempting to comply with OCJ's changeable yet rigid reporting requirements.

VI. CONCLUSION

As we move through the many stages of NYC's housing crisis, we as providers remain on the frontline of efforts to ensure that the needs of New York's marginalized communities are met. We will continue to make the case for justice and equity and we urge the City to adopt the recommendations provided throughout this testimony. As our clients undergo this unparalleled crisis, we stand right there beside them. On behalf of Bronx Defenders, Bronxworks, Inc., Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, CAMBA Legal Services, Inc., Housing Conservation Coordinators, Legal Services NYC, Mobilization for Justice, Neighborhood Defender Service, New York Legal Assistance Group, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, Queens Defenders and The Legal Aid Society, we thank you for your continued support, and for allowing us to testify today.

If you want to learn more about RTC and the issues discussed in the testimony, we invite you to read the RTC Concept Paper authored by the Legal Services Providers which can be found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/14Vtdi7vfdw67YbnlUtYq9OkXP9WE55sAx24ZTjbVv38/edit?usp=sharing> and is attached to the version of this testimony submitted on-line.

LEGAL SERVICES PROVIDERS

BRONX DEFENDERS

The Bronx Defenders (“BxD”) is a public defender nonprofit that is radically transforming how people in the Bronx are represented in the legal system, and, in doing so, is transforming the system itself. Our office’s staff of over 450 includes interdisciplinary teams comprised of civil, criminal, immigration, and family defense attorneys, as well as social workers, benefits specialists, legal advocates, parent advocates, investigators, team administrators, and policy, organizing, and community engagement specialists who collaborate to provide holistic advocacy to address the causes and consequences of legal system involvement and push for systemic reform at the local, state, and national level.

Through this integrated, comprehensive, referral-based structure, we have pioneered a groundbreaking, nationally-recognized model of direct services representation we call “holistic defense” that achieves transformative outcomes for the people we represent. Each year, we defend over 20,000 low-income Bronx residents across civil, criminal, immigration, and family legal systems, and reach thousands more through our community intake, youth mentoring, and outreach programs. We take what we learn from the people we represent and communities that we work with and launch innovative programs designed to bring about real and lasting change.

Our Civil Action Practice

The Civil Action Practice provides comprehensive civil legal services to clients and their families by integrating civil representation. Our goal is to actualize the civil right to counsel – including for tenants – and minimize the severe and often unforeseen fallout from housing, criminal, family, and immigration court proceedings and facilitate the seamless reintegration of our clients into the community. Our Civil Action Practice attorneys, social workers and benefits & legal advocates represent clients in every forum in New York City – administrative, state, and federal – to address these problems and assist our clients in overcoming civil legal barriers to housing, eviction, employment, and public benefits, as well as addressing instances of police misconduct, criminal record errors, and civil forfeiture.

An Example of Our Work:

Mr. P’s landlord brought a non-payment eviction case against him in 2022. Mr. P fell behind in rent after his uncle, who helped pay the rent, died during the pandemic. In addition, Mr. P struggled with a range of health issues, including memory problems and seizure disorder, that severely limited his activities of daily living. Although the rent for his rent-stabilized apartment was well-below market rate, at approximately \$920.00 per month, he was unable to afford it.

Mr. P’s case was referred to our office through the UA Intake process, after Mr. P defaulted in appearing in the case and filed an Order to Show Cause to stay the eviction. A social worker from our office immediately identified Mr. P’s health challenges, and, with Mr. P’s consent, referred him to Adult Protective Services (“APS”) for services and supports, including potentially a referral for a CityFHEPS rent supplement. APS opened a case for Mr. P, and referred him for CityFHEPS. In the meantime, an attorney from our office filed another Order to Show Cause to stay the eviction, pending HRA’s processing of Mr. P’s CityFHEPS application. Subsequently, Mr. P was approved for CityFHEPS, including rental arrears assistance in the

amount of approximately \$49,000.00, the eviction case was discontinued, and Mr. P remained stably housed, with the assistance of a home health aide and financial management from APS.

BRONXWORKS, INC.

BronxWorks helps individuals and families improve their economic and social well-being. From toddlers to seniors, we feed, shelter, teach, and support our neighbors to build a stronger Bronx community. In all aspects of our work, BronxWorks strives for the highest ethical and performance standards. We are guided by the belief that people must be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their present situation or past experiences. We have over 65 locations throughout the Bronx providing a variety of programs that assist in the areas of family, children and youth support, educational services, senior services, homelessness, financial empowerment, and workforce development, among others. With over 50 years of experience supporting Bronx communities, we are an employer of choice for those seeking a meaningful career in the public interest and social services field.

The BronxWorks model aims to break the cycle of poverty through a holistic approach, helping individuals and families transition from crisis to self-sufficiency. A key component of this continuum of support is BronxWorks Legal Services, which provides free legal assistance to those facing eviction, seeking immigration stability, and survivors of domestic violence and other crimes. Within BronxWorks Legal Services, the new Tenant Defense Program plays a vital role in securing housing stability for low-income tenants. The program will support New York City's groundbreaking Right to Counsel initiative which, as implemented, ensures low-income tenants the right to full legal representation in eviction proceedings.

An Example of Our Work:

Ms. J and her family were on the brink of eviction, with the City marshal scheduled to remove them from their home. Thanks to the rapid and effective efforts of our legal team, we intervened just in time to stop the eviction and secure a court order that ensures the family can remain safely housed while their case proceeds. In our motion, we are asking the court to vacate the eviction judgment due to procedural defects, set aside a prior stipulation Ms. J signed without legal representation, and provide her with additional time to secure alternative housing and access supportive services. This critical victory not only prevented the trauma of displacement but also gave the family an opportunity to stabilize and access essential supportive services. It demonstrates how timely, expert advocacy can transform lives and uphold housing stability for those facing urgent crises.

BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION A

Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A (Brooklyn A) believes all New Yorkers should have equal access to legal services to seek justice, make their voices heard, and overcome systemic racism and oppression. We represent low- and moderate-income individuals and families throughout New York City. Our clients live in rapidly-gentrifying neighborhoods where many residents and small business owners have been displaced or are facing displacement and harassment. For more than half a century, Brooklyn A has provided high-quality, low-barrier neighborhood-based legal services to individuals, families, nonprofit community-based organizations, community development corporations, coalitions, and small business owners,

interested in developing and sustaining vibrant, healthy communities. Our Preserving Affordable Housing (PAH) Program uses legal and advocacy strategies to preserve and protect affordable housing, prevent evictions, combat tenant harassment and discrimination, and ensure that working families, individuals, older adults, and others live in stable environments and within their financial means. Brooklyn A's PAH Brooklyn and Queens Programs have 46 staff attorneys, paralegals, social workers, and supervising attorneys, in addition to other supporting staff.

An Example of Our Work:

A client in Brooklyn was facing more than \$13,000 in rental arrears. The client had been withholding rent because the apartment had a worsening ceiling leak that went unrepaired for years. During the nonpayment trial, Brooklyn A's cross-examination of the landlord's witness proved critical: our team revealed that the landlord had known about the leak for four years and never repaired it—even when he did finally attempt to make the fix the past summer, he couldn't find the source of the leak. The judge ruled in favor of our client and removed 95 percent of the rental arrears.

CAMBA LEGAL SERVICES

CAMBA Legal Services, Inc. (CLS) is a community-based law practice in Brooklyn and Staten Island that provides free civil legal assistance to low-income New York City residents. Our mission as a dedicated and diverse staff of lawyers and paralegals is to provide our clients with the highest quality of legal representation while standing committed with our communities in the fight for racial, social, and economic justice. CAMBA Legal Services' Housing Unit provides anti-eviction legal services to tenants, including legal advice and representation in non-payment proceedings, holdovers, HP actions for repairs, HCR overcharge complaints, administrative hearings (NYCHA and HPD), Article 78s and other related proceedings. The CLS Housing Unit has a staff of more than 56 attorneys and paralegals. CLS prides itself on being guided by the following principles; compassionate case handling, decentering the attorney to empower the client, tenacious advocacy, collaborative learning, and a commitment to legal excellence.

An Example of Our Work:

Our organization represented an octogenarian who was being overcharged in her rent-stabilized apartment. Her landlord had taken a rent increase based on an alleged individual apartment improvement that her landlord had substantiated by forging our client's signature. At trial, we were able to demonstrate to that court that her signature had in fact been forged and that she was accordingly being overcharged. The court made a finding of fraud on the part of the landlord and dismissed the case against her.

HOUSING CONSERVATION COORDINATORS

Housing Conservation Coordinators (HCC) is a community based legal services organization that was founded over 50 years ago to "advance social and economic justice and fight for the rights of poor, low-income and working individuals and families." HCC provides comprehensive services on housing-related matters, including preventing displacement, accessing public benefits, and preserving the limited stock of affordable housing, immigration matters, consumer protection and elder law to help stabilize the lowest income households.

HCC has served income eligible residents in Manhattan through the Right to Counsel Program since 2017.

An Example of Our Work:

HCC first began representing Ms. C in November 2019. Ms. C, who is a senior and disabled veteran, lives alone in her late aunt's NYCHA apartment, located in East Harlem. Ms. C originally moved into the apartment in the early 1950s as a young child. After completing her military service, Ms. C moved out of the apartment but in the early 2000s, she moved back into the apartment to care for her elderly aunt. After her aunt passed away in 2019, Ms. C submitted a NYCHA Remaining Family Member ("RFM") claim to request a lease in her name for the apartment. This request was denied, and NYCHA brought a holdover proceeding against her.

Initially, HCC represented Ms. C in her licensee holdover housing court case, but as time went on HCC provided representation in multiple other related matters: requesting a second-step hearing; by filing a successful Article 78 after NYCHA determined that Ms. C was not entitled to an administrative hearing; and in the subsequent hearing itself. During the course of the hearing, we realized that Ms. C may have additional rights under NYCHA's temporary modification to its RFM policy that was put into place during the Covid-19 pandemic, and we submitted a request for consideration under that policy. In August 2024, we learned that NYCHA approved this request, and Ms. C was recognized as the head of household and the original holdover proceeding was discontinued.

Because of HCC's advocacy over the course of nearly five years, Ms. C was able to remain in the apartment she lived in for most of her life without the threat of eviction.

LEGAL SERVICES NYC

Legal Services NYC's (LSNYC) is the largest civil legal services provider in the country, with a mission to fight poverty and seek racial, social, and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers. For over 50 years, LSNYC has helped New Yorkers obtain the basic necessities of life, including housing, economic security, family and immigration stability, education, health care, and challenge the systemic injustices that trap people in poverty. At LSNYC, we pride ourselves on our deep community roots, our holistic, trauma-informed approach to advocacy, and our ability to work creatively, strategically, and collaboratively with our clients.

An Example of Our Work:

LB, 74, lived in his rent-stabilized apartment in Mt. Hope, Bronx for over 23 years. He shared the apartment with the tenant-of-record, whom he considered a sister, and her disabled son, GR. When the tenant-of-record passed away, the landlord brought a licensee-holdover seeking to evict LB and GR. LB's case was referred to Legal Services NYC through judicial referral.

Upon investigation, Legal Services NYC quickly uncovered multiple procedural defects in the landlord's petition and filed a Motion to Dismiss. While that motion was pending, we worked on substantively ensuring LB's claims were protected, gathering an abundance of documentation

demonstrating LB's right to succeed to the tenant-of-record's tenancy as a non-traditional family member.

We worked with LB to ensure the apartment would remain affordable to him once he obtained succession, by assisting him to succeed to the tenant-of-record's Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption as well.

Ultimately LSNYC was able to leverage the procedural defects in the petitioner's case as well as utilize the abundance of proof gathered demonstrating LB's right of succession to secure a lease for LB at pre-trial conference, without payment of \$16,000 in alleged arrears the landlord has previously sought. As a result, LB was able to remain in his home of over two decades.

MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE

Mobilization for Justice's (MFJ) mission is to achieve justice for all. MFJ prioritizes the needs of people who are low-income, disenfranchised, or have disabilities as they struggle to overcome the effects of social injustice and systemic racism. We provide the highest-quality free, direct civil legal assistance, conduct community education and build partnerships, engage in policy advocacy, and bring impact litigation. MFJ has a staff of more than 150 attorneys, paralegals, social workers, and support staff. It is a diverse, unionized, and collegial workplace where staff share the organization's mission to achieve social justice.

MFJ's housing practice is honored to engage in Right to Counsel work in the Bronx and Manhattan, where we deploy a wide array of litigation and advocacy strategies to prevent eviction and to protect tenants' rights.

An Example of Our Work:

Mobilization for Justice received through OCJ a court referral involving a case in the trial part. Landlord brought a squatter/licensee proceeding seeking possession of a project-based Section 8 apartment. The respondent was the surviving son of the deceased tenant-of-record. Respondent's mother failed to certify his yearly income or add him to the household composition prior to her death. Under project-based Section 8 rules, the landlord determined the respondent was ineligible to succeed to the tenancy. The court deemed respondent to have interposed an entitlement to succeed to the tenancy as his defense, whereupon the matter was referred to MFJ. MFJ represented respondent in a two-day trial of respondent's succession defense. Respondent testified on his own behalf and called his cousin and brother as witnesses. MFJ submitted voluminous evidence that respondent resided in his apartment for at least the two years preceding the death of the tenant of record.

After receipt of the parties' post-trial memoranda, the court issued a decision restating the law permitting certain respondents to succeed to project-based Section 8 tenancies even when not listed on the lease. The court found that respondent's witnesses and documentary evidence "...established his co-residency with his mother at least two years prior to her death as the evidence shows he was born in the apartment and lived there his entire life." It granted succession rights to the respondent and dismissed the petition. Notably, the court came to this conclusion, even though the respondent "...admitted his mother took him off the lease because

the rent was too high.” The decision supports the proposition that courts are disinclined to punish remaining family members in subsidized housing for possible improprieties by deceased tenants.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDER SERVICE OF HARLEM

Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS) is a community-based public defender office that provides high-quality legal services to residents of Northern Manhattan and a member of the LEAP coalition. Since 1990, NDS has been working to improve the quality and depth of criminal and civil defense representation for those unable to afford an attorney through holistic, cross-practice representation. With the early implementation of Right to Counsel in key Northern Manhattan zip codes, NDS joined the Right to Counsel Coalition and began serving the community through the Right to Counsel Program. As a holistic public defender office, NDS is particularly familiar with the collateral consequences of homelessness, including an increased chance of entering the criminal legal system.

An Example of our Work:

NDS recently won a case for two tenants in a non-primary holdover against Steve Croman, one of New York’s most notorious landlords. After years of litigation and on the eve of trial we were able to force Mr. Croman to settle and recognize our clients’ entitlement to a renewal lease. We also forced Mr. Croman to agree to a conditional waiver of the \$10,000 in arrears and, critically, to catch up on years of uncompleted repairs, including increasing the electricity amperage and providing a working refrigerator.

NEW YORK LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP

New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) uses the power of the law to help New Yorkers experiencing poverty or in crisis combat economic, racial, and social injustice. We address emerging and urgent needs with comprehensive, free civil legal services, financial empowerment, impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community partnerships. We aim to disrupt systemic racism by serving clients whose legal and financial crises are often rooted in racial inequality. Our Tenants’ Rights Unit (TRU) fights for housing justice: fair, safe, and affordable housing for adults and families so that they can stay in their communities and thrive.

An Example of Our Work:

NYLAG prevailed on a motion to dismiss an illegal sublet holdover in which the landlord attempted to evict Client O, a 56-year-old Russian-speaking woman, who has resided in an affordable rent stabilized apartment in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn for 13 years. The NYLAG attorney, who speaks Russian, successfully moved to dismiss the proceeding based upon the insufficiency of the predicate notices. Client O is the long-term partner of the tenant of record who has been stuck abroad in Belarus for several years due to illness. The predicate notices contained no facts regarding the claim of illegal sublet. The judge dismissed the proceeding, finding that the landlord did not rebut the statements Client O made in her affirmation in support of the motion. After the order dismissing the case, the landlord moved to renew and reargue with an affidavit from its agent, which (falsely) claimed our client had no relationship with the tenant of record. The judge denied the motion to renew, holding that an affidavit from an agent is not new evidence. This outcome preserved our client’s affordable long-term home and demonstrates the immense value of language accessible legal services.

NORTHERN MANHATTAN IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) is a community-based, settlement house and not-for-profit organization founded in 1979. NMIC is a leading multi-service agency with over 140 staff members serving New York City, with a focus on residents of upper Manhattan and the Bronx. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of the people in our communities on their paths to secure and prosperous futures. Integration is the cornerstone of NMIC's programs, and our staff can identify and address a broad array of immediate needs through comprehensive crisis intervention services. Clients may then move seamlessly to capacity building services through our holistic programs designed to transition individuals and families to safer, healthier, and more stable futures.

NMIC's Legal, Organizing, and Advocacy (LOA) unit meets community members' basic needs including legal representation, immigration assistance, housing advocacy and tenant organizing, eviction-defense representation, financial-planning and tax preparation services, services for survivors of domestic violence, and health and mental health related programming. NMIC serves about 14,000 clients each year across the LOA programs and its Education and Career Services unit.

NMIC's advocacy for the housing rights of its community began with the founding of the organization, nearly 45 years ago. NMIC's representation of tenants in New York City housing courts reaches back decades and it is an original RTC provider, since the program's inception.

Example of our work:

Senior citizen, RL, lived in her rent-controlled apartment for many decades. The quality of her apartment deteriorated due to the landlord's failure to make adequate repairs. Subsequently, a serious mold problem developed. RL eventually began withholding rent in an attempt to have the conditions corrected and repairs completed.

Upon NMIC taking RL's case, we moved the court to issue an Order to Correct. After making our motion, the landlord performed the necessary repairs and we settled the case, with the client obtaining a 16% rent abatement on her outstanding arrears. NMIC then advocated with HRA and helped RL secure a One-Shot Deal to cover the entire remaining arrears amount. With the assistance of NMIC, this elder, rent controlled tenant is now able to remain in her affordable home and live in safe and healthful conditions.

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

The Legal Aid Society (LAS), the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, was founded in 1876 to provide free legal representation to marginalized New York City families and individuals. The Legal Aid Society's legal program operates three major practices – Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights – and through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel. Each year, LAS handles more than 250,000 cases and legal matters for clients, taking on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States.

Our Civil Practice works to improve the lives of low-income New Yorkers by helping vulnerable families and individuals to obtain and maintain the necessities of life - housing, health care, food and self-sufficiency. We serve as a “one-stop” legal resource for clients with a broad variety of legal problems, ranging, among others, from government benefits and access to health care, to immigration and domestic violence. Our depth and breadth of experience is unmatched in the legal profession and gives the Society a unique capacity to go beyond any one individual case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals, and broader, more powerful systemic change at a societal level.

Our work has always taken an explicit racial and social equity lens, and the current housing crisis has further focused our efforts to advocate for the needs of New York’s marginalized communities.

An Example of Our Work:

DC, 60, lives alone in the Pelham Gardens neighborhood of the Bronx, in an apartment he has lived in for ten years. His primary language is English. DC lives with HIV and receives benefits from the HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA). We received his chronic nonpayment holdover case as a referral from the Court. We agreed to represent him in his Holdover case based on chronic nonpayment of rent, as well as two additional underlying nonpayment cases. When we took on the case, we discovered that DC’s landlord had illegally deregulated the building and increased the rent approximately 100%. Due to this rent increase, the landlord alleged that DC owed \$99,274.41 in owed arrears. However, because the stipulations in the two prior nonpayment proceedings were based on the illegally high rent, we moved to vacate the stipulations and the judgments for the two underlying nonpayment cases, and to seek leave to file an amended answer that raised the issue of the overcharge. To prevent DC’s chronic nonpayment holdover from moving towards eviction while we litigated the prior cases, we also moved to stay the holdover case.

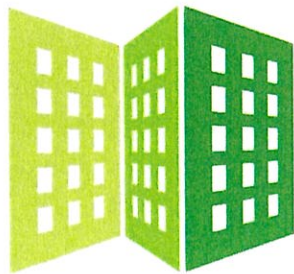
While we litigated those motions, we also successfully sought retroactive payments that needed to be re-issued by HASA, totaling \$24,276.97. Furthermore, during the representation, we obtained significant repairs to the apartment, including repairing the defective stove, exposed wires, defective smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and wall/ceiling leaks.

We successfully resolved all three cases in a stipulation dated April 23, 2024. The stipulation states that the landlord had illegally increased DC’s rent, sets a new monthly rent amount of \$1,272.61, and provides that DC will receive all protections as a rent stabilized tenant. The stipulation further agrees that DC has a rent credit of \$7,107.89. In total, we got DC’s landlord to agree to waive \$99,274.41 in alleged arrears, thus successfully preserving an affordable apartment and DC’s tenancy.



TAKEROOT JUSTICE

TakeRoot Justice provides legal, participatory research and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic and social oppression.



STABILIZING NYC

*fighting predatory equity and tenant harassment
organizing nyc tenants for the right to stay in our homes and communities*

Testimony Concerning:

Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 24, 2025

Presented Before:

NYC Council Committee on Contracts Chair Julie Won
NYC Council Speaker Adrienne Adams

Presented By:

Jackie Del Valle

[Stabilizing NYC](#) Coordinator

[TakeRoot Justice](#)

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St. Nicks Alliance/ UNO
HOPE/ UHAB
Woodside on the Move

Scope of the problem

For this current fiscal year TakeRoot Justice was awarded a little over \$2 million in discretionary funding. We were also awarded the same amounts for FY24 which started on July 1, 2023 and is also the start of our multi year contracting. For our DSS and SBS contracts, we only just got those contracts registered. We have not received any of FY25 money - no invoices have processed- and just got our FY24 money last month. Our HPD awards, which include that SNYC Initiative, are not registered, nor are any of the SNYC groups we work with.

Stabilizing NYC is a \$3.70 million City Council Discretionary Initiative funding 20 groups, administered through HPD. For FY25, the Stabilizing NYC Coalition organizing members must complete a minimum of \$160,000 of tenant organizing deliverables. We must pay and support staff to do outreach, develop tenant associations and run building campaigns. We must pay and support staff to manage the burdensome administrative work of registering the contracts and reporting on deliverables. Yet the groups are waiting on our FY24 money, which began on July 1, 2023.

As of late March 2025

- None of the multi-year contracts have been registered
- Several groups are still waiting to be paid for their FY23 work

This is unacceptable and immediate action needs to be taken.

The solutions potentially fall into two buckets- 1) addressing the backlog of contract registrations and payments and 2) ensuring the process is better for FY26. To that end,

- 1. Groups should immediately receive a significant portion of owed money through advances from 7/1/2023 through 12/31/24**
- 2. Going forward, groups should receive an advance of at least 50% of their contracts at the start of the year.**
- 3. HPD must be properly funded to hire more contract managers to process contract registration and invoicing**
- 4. MOCS must be properly funded to do their part in the contract registration process and address the issue in PASSPort**



*fighting predatory equity and tenant harassment
organizing nyc tenants for the right to stay in our homes and communities*

Testimony Concerning:

The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

Presented To:

The New York City Council's
Committee on Housing and Buildings

March 26, 2025

Presented By:

Jackie Del Valle

Stabilizing NYC Coordinator

TakeRoot Justice

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FY 2026 Initiative Funding Requests

- **\$5 million for Stabilizing NYC (SNYC)**
- **\$3 million for Community Land Trust (CLT)**
- **\$4.95 million for the Community Housing Preservation Strategies Initiative**

+ we ask the Council to advocate for capital funding for community land trusts and preservations purchases to buildings out of the speculative cycle

The cycle of predatory equity has ravaged our communities for too long. Lenders make large loans to ill intentioned landlords whose businesses are predicated on reducing services and raising rents, especially in low income communities of color. Recently collapsed Signature Bank was a main culprit of predatory equity, lending to NYC's worst landlords. The tens of thousands of tenants living in the rent stabilized housing stock suffered.

We have an opportunity of a generation. The FDIC, CPC, the NYC Comptroller, and others, have stepped in to hold the mortgages on thousands of distressed Signature-financed rent stabilized buildings where low income tenants call home. With the mortgage in the hands of willing partners, communities have the leverage we need to repair buildings and bring hundreds of them into tenant and community control. Tenants deserve to see material change, and with organizing, they can make it happen.

NYC City Council must invest in the organizing needed to fully meet the moment. With hundreds, possibly thousands, of rent stabilized buildings on the brink of default we cannot waste a single minute.

Status of FY24 and FY25 Awards:

- None of the multi-year contracts have been registered for SNYC, CLT and CHPSI
- this means no groups have seen FY24 & FY25 money
- Many groups still waiting on FY23 money

The SNYC has been exploring asking for a larger increase (our current ask covers COLAs) so that we can best respond to the emerging crisis from the Signature Bank collapse, which involves thousands of units. However, we feel conflicted-- city funding is badly delayed, cumbersome, and does not cover indirect costs and COLAs. There have been record level cost increases since the pandemic on top of years of "nonprofit" starvation where we only get funding for program staff, and our IT, HR, office, etc. shrinks instead of growing in these dynamic times.

In all the years our organization has received and managed discretionary funding awards, we have *never* experienced having these contracts registered in the same fiscal year as the award. It typically takes an additional 4-6 months *after* the fiscal year ends if not longer.

For this current fiscal year TakeRoot Justice was awarded a little over \$2 million in discretionary funding. We have not received any of this money since 7/1/23.

As the council and my colleagues have testified today, nonprofits receiving discretionary funding are asked to perform vital services, meet deliverables, run programs, pay and manage staff yet we do not see the money until long after the fiscal year has ended. This has been happening year after year- and these multi-year funding delays have compounded.

The nineteen other SNYC nonprofits are in this same sad, frustrating boat.

As of late March 2025

- None of the multi-year contracts have been registered
- Several groups are still waiting to be paid for their FY23 work

This is unacceptable and immediate action needs to be taken.

The solutions potentially fall into two buckets- 1) addressing the backlog of contract registrations and payments and 2) ensuring the process is better for FY26. To that end,

1. Groups should immediately receive a significant portion of owed money through advances from 7/1/2023 through 12/31/24
2. Going forward, groups should receive an advance of at least 50% of their contracts at the start of the year.
3. HPD must be properly funded to hire more contract managers to process contract registration and invoicing
4. MOCS must be properly funded to do their part in the contract registration process and address the issue in PASSPort

Since the mitigation of contract registration and invoicing to PASSPort, processes have slowed down. The system is full of glitches and it takes weeks, if not months, to resolve issues.

The introduction of the multiyear contract gave us hope. The idea of cutting down on the enormous amount of paperwork required and time it takes to register contracts was exactly what we asked for. Yet we have seen no benefits. As I said, at the moment, things are worse than before.

With funding cuts on the horizon and a federal administration hostile to the work of nonprofits, especially those organizing tenants, we cannot continue to be in this position and desperately need the money owed to us.

I have been directly working in **procuring awards for discretionary funding** for almost 20 years and it's always been long and painful. I have *never* experienced getting my contracts registered in the same fiscal year we were designated the money. It typically takes an additional 2-6 months *after* the fiscal year ends.

I have been testifying for the last three years that things got even slower in the pandemic. As the council and my colleagues have testified today, nonprofits receiving discretionary funding are asked to perform vital services, meet deliverables, run programs, pay and manage staff yet we do not see the money until long after the fiscal year has ended. This has been happening year after year- and these multi-year funding delays have compounded.

In conclusion, years of egregiously late payments on the HPD discretionary contracts have compounded and are jeopardizing the impact of my organization and the SNYC coalition. Organizations lose resources fighting not for their missions, but cash-flow solutions. These multi-year funding delays hurt the low-income communities of color the Council intends to empower.

Further background on our ask

For the past several years, the City Council generously awarded us \$3,700,000 to continue our work. *With the additional increase of \$1.3 million, we can protect more homes, win more building improvements and strengthen community organizing across the City. Stabilizing NYC, collectively, is asking for an increase of \$1.3 million dollars, or \$65,000 per organization. SNYC has not seen an increase in funding in over 6 years, despite inflation and cost of living increases*

TakeRoot Justice provides legal, participatory research, and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic, and social oppression. TakeRoot has a twenty one year history of partnering with grassroots and community-based organizations that build leadership and power within New York City's low-income communities, particularly communities of color, immigrant communities, and others traditionally excluded from policymaking.

TakeRoot Justice works side-by-side with community organizations, tenants & community leaders as they fight against gentrification to demand better living conditions, affordable rents, and a voice in the policies that shape their neighborhoods. This advocacy has resulted in millions of dollars' worth of repairs in low-income housing and has kept New Yorkers in their homes.

TakeRoot is a founder and coordinator of Stabilizing NYC, a coalition of grassroots organizations that combines tenant organizing with legal representation to combat tenant harassment and preserve affordable housing for the New Yorkers who need it most. The City Council has funded Stabilizing NYC every year since 2014.

Further, our work would not be possible without funding from the **Community Housing Preservation Strategies Initiative (CHSPI)**, and **Community Land Trust (CLT)** and we ask for your continued, and enhanced support for these initiatives. My colleague Paula testifying today on the (CLT) initiative, whose work is critical to help build equity and limit speculation in our neighborhoods. With CHSPI, we fight alongside 45+ CBOS to prevent evictions, win repairs, empower tenants and protect homes. With CHSPI, we run a warmline on tenant rights for Council District (CD) 4; hold NYCHA accountable for repairs with resident leaders in CD5; and conduct monthly tenant clinics and workshops with Goddard Riverside SRO Project in CD6.

TakeRoot Justice and the 19 grassroots groups that are part of Stabilizing NYC form and strengthen hundreds of tenant associations to fight against predatory equity tactics. Despite the limits of the pandemic, SNYC groups continued to organize tenant associations and represent tenants across the City. Many groups organized outreach programs aimed at those vulnerable to evictions, ensuring that tenants in the communities not only know their rights about housing court, evictions, and accessing rent arrears funds like ERAP and the Excluded Workers Fund, but also had hands-on assistance to access these and other resources.

As a result, the tenant associations we organize won rent strikes, held their landlords accountable for incorrect rent amounts and received the ERAP protections that they're entitled to in housing court. Through organizing, tenants are stopping evictions from moving forward in court and fighting to keep one another in their homes. Tenants connect their individual building experiences to the wider fight for housing justice. Through mass rallies and trips to Albany, tenant leaders connect with fellow members of the working class to fight for racial and economic justice and to build power for the tenant movement.

Despite all these efforts, tenants and communities still find themselves under attack. Safe, affordable housing continues to be threatened as we emerge from the pandemic. **Courts have been overwhelmed with eviction cases since the moratorium was lifted and tenants struggle to pay rent.** SNYC tenants grapple with predatory landlords who:

1. use a variety of harassing tactics to displace tenants to flip buildings out of regulatory status in order to maximize profits over people.
2. aggressively pursue eviction cases
3. refuse to make repairs, forcing tenants to live in dangerous & unhealthy conditions
4. warehousing vacant apartments, hoping to ultimately circumvent rent regulations

Our organizing across portfolios targets bad lenders as well. Predatory Equity would not exist without the highly speculative loans. Signature Bank, who is in the news today for unscrupulous banking practices, has been one of the more egregious multi-family lenders, having provided loans to Steve Croman, Raphael Toledano and Ved Parkash. Landlords who faced allegations of tenant harassment from the Stabilizing NYC tenants.

Additionally, I am opposed to the cuts made to the housing and buildings budget by Mayor Adams!

I support #CareNotCuts and a #PeoplesBudget, and oppose the deep cuts and reductions proposed by Mayor Adams in the budget.

Housing justice is racial justice. Decades of government disinvestment in communities of color has been exacerbated by redlining, speculation, and overleveraging. Landlords continue to benefit from systemic racism by going unpunished, face little accountability, and are rewarded for their negligent behavior. Landlords wield power over communities through denial of services, neglect repairs, illegal construction, etc and are rarely held accountable by city and state agencies. Private equity companies and speculators are working every day to find "opportunities" in this crisis as they commodify housing and seek to displace our communities for their profit.

Organizing is essential to keep tenants safe and to address the unjust impacts on the communities we organize.

STABILIZING NYC MEMBERS:

Manhattan:	CAAAY: Organizing Asian Communities • Cooper Square Committee • Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) • Housing Conservation Coordinators • Met Council on Housing
Bronx:	Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) – New Settlement • Mothers on the Move • Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition • Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association
Brooklyn:	Fifth Avenue Committee • Flatbush Tenant Coalition • IMPACCT Brooklyn • Neighbors Helping Neighbors • St. Nicks Alliance • Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB)
Queens:	Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) • Catholic Migration Services • Chhaya CDC • Woodside on the Move

Citywide:	TakeRoot Justice
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Tenant organizing builds community, where people with varying levels of vulnerability or marginalization, including immigration status, support each other. Members organizing Tenants on the ground creates lasting networks that are crucial when our communities face crises - such as COVID-19 - and need access to resources and information beyond housing as well. **Funding will continue to allow SNYC to fight speculation & displacement, develop dynamic tenant leadership and neighborhood structures.**

www.stabilizingnyc.org

[@stabilizingnyc](https://twitter.com/stabilizingnyc)



organizing nyc tenants for the right to stay in our homes and communities

FY 2026 Initiative Funding Request For \$5,000,000

Stabilizing NYC requests \$5 million in City Council initiative funding for the eleventh year of our highly successful program to combat harassment, evictions, and the loss of affordable housing at the hands of predatory equity and speculative investors.

Stabilizing NYC (SNYC) is a citywide coalition combining legal, advocacy and organizing resources to organize tenant associations and landlord coalitions. SNYC members organize tenants to build power through outreach, tenant rights education, leadership development, and legal defense and support.

Safe, affordable housing continues to be under threat in NYC. Real estate speculation runs rampant and the landlord lobby is working to dismantle the tenant protections won in the NYS legislature.

The cycle of predatory equity has ravaged our communities for too long. Lenders make large loans to ill intentioned landlords whose businesses are predicated on reducing services and raising rents, especially in low income communities of color.

The recently collapsed Signature Bank, who lent to NYC's worst landlords, has further destabilized affordable housing and underscores the need for strong tenant organizing and protections.

Courts have been overwhelmed with eviction cases since the moratorium was lifted and tenants struggle to pay rent. It has been reported that there have been over 100,000 eviction cases in NYC since the moratorium was lifted in 2022.

SNYC tenants grapple with landlords who use a variety of harassing tactics to displace tenants to flip buildings out of regulatory status to maximize profits over people

- ★ aggressively pursue eviction cases
- ★ refuse to make repairs, forcing tenants to live in dangerous & unhealthy conditions
- ★ warehouse vacant apartments, hoping to ultimately circumvent rent regulations

Impacts & Highlights over past 11 years



Grew from 12 to 20 groups, \$1 mil to \$3.7 initiative

Provided **Brief Counseling** for over **7,000 people**



Door-knocked almost **3,000 buildings**

Held over **5,000 Meetings, Trainings and Workshops**



Built over **200 Tenant Associations**

Tenants participated in almost **500 Direct Actions**



Across all boroughs, groups built trusted networks which were lifelines during the pandemic- and have built back organizing programs



Supported and trained dozens of organizers

Developed a Scope of Work with HPD to quantify the building blocks of organizing

Tenants organized and represented by the SNYC members have won in courts and in the streets and work with the City Council to pass stronger laws and policies.

Protecting our NYC communities from landlord abuse and rampant speculation will be all the more critical under the current federal administration.

Our work results in an **improved and well-maintained NYC housing stock** that's kept affordable for our working-class families and seniors.

For the past several years, the City Council generously awarded us \$3,700,000 to continue our work. *With the additional increase of \$1.3 million, we can protect more homes, win more building improvements and strengthen community organizing across the City.*

The coalition has not seen an increase in funding in over 6 years, despite inflation and cost of living increases. ***The last year of our multi-year contract, SNYC members have not had their contracts registered and are still waiting on FY24 and 25 funds.*** The contract delays experienced by the nonprofits groups have made the need for COLA and inflation increases all the more critical.

STABILIZING NYC MEMBERS:

Manhattan:	CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities • Cooper Square Committee • Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) • Housing Conservation Coordinators • Met Council on Housing
Bronx:	Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) – New Settlement • Mothers on the Move • Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition • Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association
Brooklyn:	Fifth Avenue Committee • Flatbush Tenant Coalition • IMPACCT Brooklyn • Neighbors Helping Neighbors • St. Nicks Alliance • Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB)
Queens:	Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) • Catholic Migration Services • Chhaya CDC • Woodside on the Move
Citywide:	TakeRoot Justice

Housing justice is racial justice. Predatory Equity & Speculation disproportionately forces out tenants in BIPOC communities. Decades of government disinvestment in communities of color has been exacerbated by redlining, speculation, and overleveraging. Landlords & Lenders continue to benefit from systemic racism by going unpunished, face little accountability, and are rewarded for their negligent behavior. Landlords & Lenders wield power over communities through denial of services, neglect repairs, illegal construction, etc and are rarely held accountable by city and state agencies. Private equity companies and speculators are working every day to find “opportunities” in this crisis as they commodify housing and seek to displace our communities for their profit.

Please contact SNYC Coordinator Jackie Del Valle at idelvalle@takerootjustice.org for more information



TAKEROOT JUSTICE

Testimony Concerning:
The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026
March 25, 2025

Presented by:

Pilar DeJesus
Senior Advocacy Coordinator/Paralegal
TakeRoot Justice
123 Williams Street, 4th Floor
NY, NY 10038
(646) 459-3000 • Fax: (212) 533-4598

My name is Pilar DeJesus, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of TakeRoot Justice. TakeRoot Justice provides legal, participatory research, and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic, and social oppression. TakeRoot has a twenty-year history of partnering with grassroots and community-based organizations that build leadership and power within New York City's low-income communities, particularly communities of color, immigrant communities, and others traditionally excluded from policymaking.

I work as part of our Housing Rights Team. Our work is deeply rooted in the fight to prevent tenant displacement and preserve affordable communities for New Yorkers who need it most. We work side-by-side with tenants as they fight against gentrification to demand better living conditions, affordable rents, and a voice in

the policies that shape their neighborhoods. This advocacy has resulted in millions of dollars' worth of repairs in low-income housing and has kept New Yorkers in their homes.

Our work would not be possible without critical funding from the NYC Anti-Harassment Tenant Protection Program (AHTP), Right to Counsel (RTC), Stabilizing NYC, and the Community Housing Preservation Strategies Initiative (CHPSI). These programs are not just numbers in a budget—they are lifelines for thousands of tenants who face unlawful evictions, harassment, and uninhabitable living conditions. My colleague Paula Segal is testifying today on the (CLT) initiative, whose work is critical to help build equity and limit speculation in our neighborhoods.

TakeRoot Justice is also the founder and coordinator of Stabilizing NYC, a coalition of grassroots organizations that combines tenant organizing with legal representation to combat tenant harassment and preserve affordable housing. Since 2014, the City Council has recognized the value of this coalition by funding it annually. Stabilizing NYC has been instrumental in preventing displacement and ensuring landlords are held accountable for their actions.

To illustrate the significance of this funding, I want to highlight the story of a group of tenants in East Harlem, who we have been supporting since 2021. This is a 30-unit building with more than 200 code violations. HPD has had to spend more than \$33,000 in emergency repairs to make up for the landlord's neglect. The building is home to families who have lived there for decades—families who helped build and sustain this city. Our involvement began when our community partners reached out, alerting us that the tenants in this building were dealing with severe neglect from their landlord, who had failed to maintain the property for over 20 years. These tenants endured inadequate heat, no hot water, rat and roach infestations, lead, mold, a crumbling façade, and even landlord violence. At the time we were contacted, some tenants had suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty boiler. After the Department of Buildings shut down the boiler and ordered repairs, the landlord simply turned its back on, releasing more carbon monoxide and sickening tenants a second time. The tenants sought to understand their rights. With our support, they fought back. Through organizing, legal action, and unwavering determination, they held their landlord accountable

and now – after 4 years of struggle - are on the verge of securing a legally enforceable agreement guaranteeing critical repairs, lease protections, and a significant rent abatement. Their story is just one of many—without continued funding, these victories would not be possible, and more New Yorkers would endure harassment and risk losing their homes.

New York City is in the midst of an unprecedented housing and economic crisis. Over 100,000 adults and youth are currently homeless. The lack of healthy stable housing is not just a housing issue—it is a public health crisis. Housing instability leads to severe mental health consequences for families, workers, and especially children. When families do not have a safe, stable place to live, children struggle in school, parents struggle to maintain jobs, and entire communities suffer. We cannot expect our city to thrive when so many of its residents are living in fear of displacement.

The City's commitment to tenant protections must be unwavering. We urge the Council to fully fund AHTP, RTC, Stabilizing NYC, and CHPSI to ensure that organizations like ours can continue to provide essential services. Communities that have long been the backbone of this city deserve stability, dignity, and the right to remain in their homes. Another critical HPD program is the City Council's Community Land Trust initiative, which funds community residents to take their neighborhood back from speculators and permanently preserve affordable housing and community space through a proven ground lease structure, where terms are enforced in perpetuity by grassroots organizations representing community interests. We ask for your continued support to keep this work alive and if we are serious about addressing this crisis, we must go beyond temporary fixes—we must take root and address the problem at its core.

Thank you for your time and dedication to housing justice.

Additional Comments by

Paula Z. Segal, Esq., Senior Staff Attorney, **Equitable Neighborhoods Practice**

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today as Staff Attorney in the Equitable Neighborhoods practice of TakeRoot Justice. TakeRoot works with grassroots groups, neighborhood organizations and community coalitions to help make sure that people of color, immigrants, and other low-income residents who have built our city are not pushed out in the name of “progress.”

My testimony focuses on the Community Land Trust (CLT) Initiative, the need for robust staff support for CLT projects at Housing Preservation and Development and an impact of the City of Yes Zoning Resolution edits on retail/storefront conversions that is poised to extract huge costs from both the agency and from our community-based organization clients.

We are also a member of the Abolish the Tax Lien Sale Coalition and are grateful to the partnership of the Council in monitoring the administrative agencies’ compliance with promises they made to induce the Council’s reauthorization of the lien sale in 2024, including annual funding of \$2 million for outreach to property owners and tenants in each year that a lien sale is scheduled. It’s not obvious from the preliminary budget documents published this year that this money has been allocated, or to which agency: HPD? Or possibly the Department of Finance? Or is the administration signaling that there will be no lien sale in 2026 thus no need for funding outreach?

Funding for CLT operations through the City Council CLT Initiative

Please see the attached two-page summary of the Initiative request. As articulated there, the speaker initiative for CLTs this year should be \$3M, an increase that was promised last year and will allow groups already in the initiative to expand their capacity and to expand CLT development capacity to new neighborhoods where they are badly needed. This should be in addition to any other operations funding from the State that was negotiated as part of City of Yes.

HPD staff and capital support for CLTs

The HPD Capital Allocation should include dedicated funding for CLT projects to make the City's commitment to prioritizing permanent affordability and community control tooth-ful. The agency must also reduce Office and Management and Budget delays that lead to capital not being practically available even where it has been allocated.

HPD's staffing challenges must also be addressed urgently lawyers and compliance staff dedicated to the CLT program, so that delays in agency response are not the cause of project delays that keep renovations and new housing from reaching tenants that badly need them. A dedicated legal team for the CLT projects would be extremely helpful to achieving results.

City of No for Storefront Offices

There is a provision of the building code that is explicitly written to make it easy to convert storefronts to office use and back. Picture the spaces occupied by neighborhood dentists, lawyers, community-serving organizations, and even our City Council members' constituent services teams. Those business establishment office uses of retail spaces have been facilitated since the 1961 zoning resolution by a specific interplay between it and the NYC Building Code.

Unfortunately the big rewrite to the zoning resolution has disrupted this practice without any evidence that this council or the City Planning Commission had an intent to do that. The Building Code has not changes is now and has been explicit that it

“shall not be interpreted to require an issuance of a new or amended certificate of occupancy for a change from a mercantile establishment to a business establishment, or from a business establishment to a mercantile establishment.. **provided that the change is within the same zoning use group.**”

Last summer's COY zoning resolution changes have created an unexpected problem with how this section of the building code is read by DOB. Under the

new code, retail, formerly 6A, is VI and office, formerly 6B, is VII, the first time ever in the history of the zoning resolution that they have been in different use groups.

On the basis of the COY renumbering and the new Roman numeral use group sections, TakeRoot's client was denied a Department of Buildings Letter of No Objection regarding using a retail space as a welcoming community-facing office. We were told that since these are differently numbered use groups now, the only way the office space use would be allowed is getting a new Certificate of Occupancy, which would be expensive for both my client and the agency.

There was of course no legislative intent to undo the section of the Building Code that explicitly allows mercantile-to-office conversions without a new Certificate of Occupancy to facilitate community serving and facing offices during the COY process, but here we are. We urge the Council to do what it can to clarify with the agency and facilitate continuing NYC's history of enabling vibrant neighborhoods.



Community Land Trust Initiative

FY2026 Discretionary Funding Request

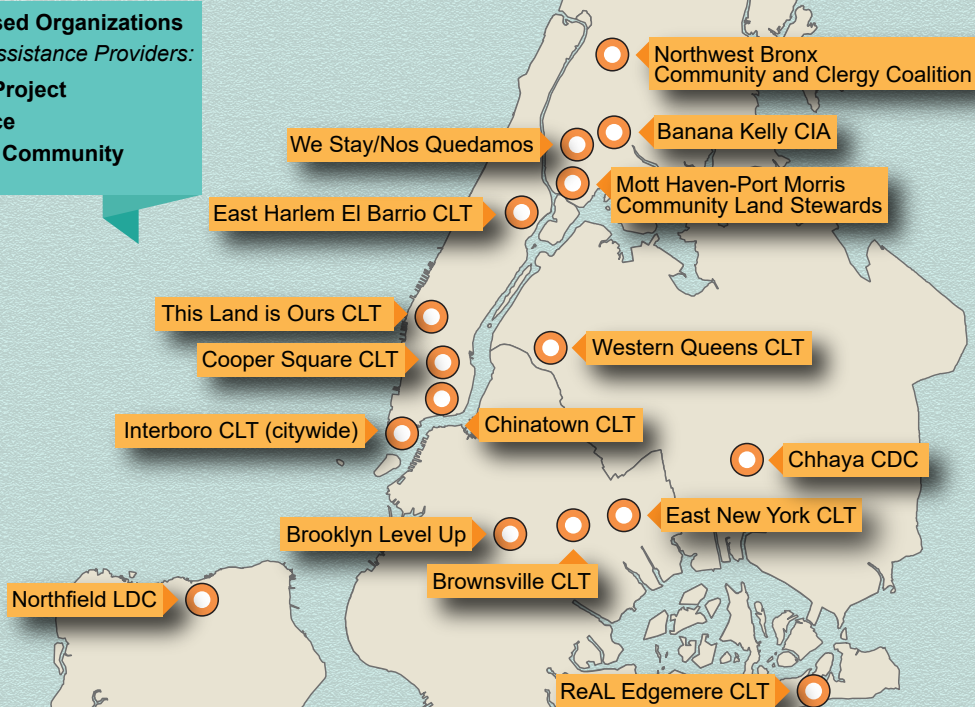
The **citywide Community Land Trust Initiative** seeks **\$3 million** in FY2026 City Council discretionary funding to support 19 organizations working to develop community land trusts (CLTs) and permanently-affordable housing, commercial and community spaces. The CLT Initiative delivers in-depth education, organizing, and legal and technical assistance to support the formation and expansion of CLTs in low-income, Black and brown neighborhoods. By taking land and housing off the speculative market, CLTs combat displacement and address root causes of NYC's deepening affordability crisis.

Launched in FY2020, the CLT Initiative has catalyzed the growth of grassroots CLTs across the five boroughs; organized and educated thousands of New Yorkers; and brought land and housing into permanently affordable community control.

NEW! Explore our interactive map of CLTs, including their catchment areas, properties, and community demographics: neweconomy.org/cltmap.

FY2026 Citywide Community Land Trust Initiative

- Community-Based Organizations
- Citywide Technical Assistance Providers:
- New Economy Project
- TakeRoot Justice
- Pratt Center for Community Development

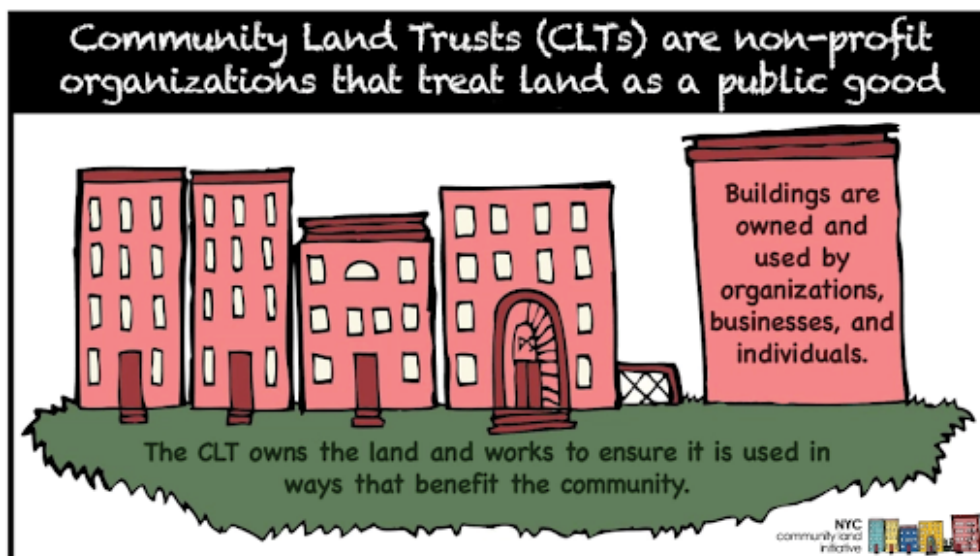


Enhanced funding of \$3 million in FY2026 will help us meet the growing demand for CLTs. In FY26, the CLT initiative will:

- ◆ Support the growth of 16 CLTs, half of which are stewarding or in active stages of acquiring property for deeply affordable housing and other needs.
- ◆ Expand organizing and technical assistance for emerging and established CLTs citywide.
- ◆ Provide 65 legal and technical assistance engagements to CLTs on matters, such as incorporation, bylaws, property acquisition, developer partnerships, and financing
- ◆ Conduct 200+ organizing, education, and planning sessions – in multiple languages – for tenants, homeowners, small businesses, and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Train 100 CLT leaders and residents on community and tenant governance, and produce popular education material to support intergenerational organizing.
- ◆ Organize with tenants seeking to take collective ownership of buildings, in partnership with Stabilizing NYC and other coalitions.

The CLT Initiative is urgently needed to address New York’s affordability crisis and combat displacement. With Initiative support, CLTs will continue to create and preserve thousands of permanently affordable homes – including rental, shared equity, and supportive housing. CLTs also will develop community and cultural spaces, affordable storefronts for small and worker-owned businesses, community solar projects, and other infrastructure.

CLTs preserve public investment and affordability over generations. Manhattan's Cooper Square CLT and East Harlem El Barrio CLT steward more than 400 deeply affordable apartments, as well as storefronts for two dozen community-serving small businesses. East New York CLT, Mott Haven Port Morris Community Land Stewards, Bronx CLT, ReAL Edgemere CLT, and others are stewarding their first properties – stabilizing multifamily buildings, developing vacant City land, and more.



New Economy Project coordinates the citywide CLT initiative.
For more information, contact Will Spisak at will@neweconomynewyork.org.

Learn more about NYC’s CLT movement at nyccli.org



The Community Preservation Corporation

220 East 42nd St, 16th Floor
New York, New York 10017

**New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing
Housing and Buildings Committee
March 25, 2025**

Testimony on behalf of The Community Preservation Corporation

This testimony is submitted on behalf of The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC), a nonprofit community development finance institution that was formed in the early 1970s to help New York City and State restore and rebuild communities that had been devastated by deterioration and abandonment. As a fifty year old affordable housing lender with a significant footprint in New York City, CPC is proud to provide testimony on the resources needed to best address the City's housing crisis.

The work undertaken by New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has been and continues to be critically important to New York City, and while we were encouraged by HPD's progress rebounding in full-time employment from its pandemic losses, HPD's vacancy rate has unfortunately been increasing again. From HPD's peak vacancy rate of 18.3% in August 2022, the Department's vacancy rate reached a low of 6.8% in September of 2024 but has since risen back to 13.8% as of the end of February 2025¹. As the City heralds in a new chapter of development with the passage of City of Yes, it is critical to have a fully staffed high-capacity housing agency to review, approve, and advance development. We urge the Council to continue prioritizing the hiring and retention of the housing staff needed to ensure smooth program implementation and efficient development.

Turning to the preliminary budget, we are thrilled to see that the Mayor's FY2026 Preliminary Budget sets a new all-time high for New York City's investment in housing capital, with a proposed FY25 capital budget of \$3.268B for HPD and \$1.074B for NYCHA for a combined City housing capital funding total of \$4.343B. These funds will generate affordable housing units via preservation, new construction, senior and supportive housing, in addition to supporting the conversion of NYCHA developments through the PACT Program. We also applaud the joint City and State funding commitment of \$5B, made in support of the passage of City of Yes and in alignment with City for All, to support the housing capital and infrastructure needs that will come with these new zoning text amendments. Overall, CPC is supportive of the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for housing and we encourage the Council to pass it.

¹ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/authorized-vs-actual-staffing-with-vacancy-rates/>



The Community Preservation Corporation

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In conclusion, it is important to note that given the drastic and fast moving actions taking place at the federal level, local action on housing preservation and production are more important than ever. Potential reductions in federal funding could elevate the demand for programs like CityFHEPS and underscore the need for local development incentives. We urge the Council and the Mayoral administration to maintain a sharp focus on the evolving federal landscape and coordinate with the New York City Congressional Delegation to mobilize additional support should the need arise.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of CPC. We look forward to working with this Council to implement the FY26 budget.

About CPC

The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) is a nonprofit affordable housing and community revitalization company that was formed in the early 1970s to help New York City and State restore and rebuild communities which were devastated by deterioration and abandonment. Today, CPC uses its unique expertise in housing finance and public policy to expand access to quality housing, drive down the costs of affordable housing production, advance diversity and equity within the affordable housing development industry, and address the effects of climate change in our communities through the financing of sustainable housing. Since our founding, CPC has invested over \$15 billion to finance the creation and preservation of more than 230,000 units of housing through our lending and investing platforms. CPC is a permanent lending partner to the New York City Retirement Systems (NYCRS) and we are also an equity partner in the PACT Renaissance Collaborative, the team selected by NYCHA to renovate and preserve 16 NYCHA properties located in Manhattan. On behalf of New York State HCR, CPC is also administering the Climate Friendly Homes Program, a \$250 million program to electrify 10,000 units of housing across the state in the next four years.

Most recently, CPC again answered the call to support our government partners in reinvesting in communities following the collapse of Signature Bank. Alongside partners Neighborhood Restore HDFC and Related Fund Management, CPC is leading Community Stabilization Partners (CSP), the manager of a joint venture partnership with the FDIC to manage the rent stabilized portion of now defunct Signature Bank's multifamily commercial real estate portfolio. CPC on behalf of CSP is now the servicer of record for 1,100 buildings encompassing approximately 35,000 units in New York City, the majority of which are rent stabilized. We understand the unique role that rent regulated housing plays in New York City, the distinct financial challenges facing its owners and operators in today's market, and its importance as a haven of affordability to its tenants. As a partner with the FDIC and servicer of the stabilized loan portfolio, CSP and CPC are proud to be preserving the long-term affordability as well as the physical quality and financial stability of these buildings.

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Ending NYC's HIV Epidemic is Within Our Reach - Let's Finish the Job Proposed Additional NYC Investments for the FY 2026 Budget

New York City (NYC) and New York State (NYS) have made significant progress implementing the historic 2015 Ending the Epidemic (EtE) Blueprint recommendations developed collaboratively by HIV community members, providers, advocates, and public health authorities. Our EtE efforts enabled us to “bend the curve” of the epidemic by the end of 2019, decreasing HIV prevalence for the first time since the epidemic began, and despite an increase in new HIV diagnoses in NYC in 2023, the estimated number of new HIV infections in the City declined 17% from 2022 to 2023.

However, while HIV health outcomes have improved across all communities, stark and unacceptable disparities persist in HIV's impact on Black and Latino/Hispanic communities, transgender New Yorkers, and young men who have sex with men, with Black and Latino/Hispanic New Yorkers accounting for 84% of people newly diagnosed with HIV in NYC in 2023, and 39% of people newly diagnosed with HIV lived in high- or very-high poverty ZIP codes. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated barriers to HIV prevention and care, suppressing uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), HIV testing, and connection to care, and progress on improving HIV care outcomes have remained flat in recent years.

Together with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department), community-based providers have worked hard to regain momentum lost due to COVID-19 and to continue the work necessary to end our HIV epidemic. Confronting the challenges to end the HIV epidemic in all NYC communities and populations requires both sustained EtE efforts and new action to advance health equity, including continued improvements to our HIV service delivery systems, meaningful investments on the social and structural determinants that we know drive HIV health inequities, and concrete efforts to improve drug user health, support sexual health and wellbeing, and end the co-occurring hepatitis C epidemic.

The end of NYC's HIV epidemic is within our reach. Now is the time for renewed efforts and innovative approaches if we are to end our HIV epidemic for all NYC communities and populations and advance health equity.

URGENT PRIORITIES:

The End AIDS NY Community Coalition is a group of over 90 health care centers, hospitals, and community-based organizations across New York City and State that are fully committed to realizing the goals of our historic NYS Blueprint for Ending the Epidemic (NYS Blueprint) for all New Yorkers.

While each of the investments and policy changes set out in this document is necessary to fully implement the NYS Blueprint's recommendations to end the AIDS epidemic in NYC, the End AIDS NY Community Coalition highlights five critically important immediate priorities required to address the stark and persistent HIV health inequities that undermine our NYC HIV response, leaving individuals and communities behind:

Urgent End AIDS NY Community Coalition Priorities For the NYC City Council		Funds Required
<p>1. Sustain and Increase Funding for the NYC City Council's Ending the Epidemic Initiative</p>	<p>Organizations funded through the NYC City Council EtE Initiative provide community-based, culturally competent HIV prevention and care services that are critical to ensure continued and equitable progress towards EtE goals. These services are more essential than ever as we continue to overcome the barriers to engagement and retention in effective HIV prevention and care presented by the COVID-19 crisis. Efforts funded include innovative approaches to improve health care coordination and data-to-care strategies, targeted services designed to meet the unique needs of members of priority populations, and efforts to expand equitable access to comprehensive HIV prevention, including PrEP.</p> <p>We ask the NYC City Council to sustain funding of its EtE Initiative and increase its FY25 funding of \$9,373,342 by a total of \$3.2 million – to \$12.5M in total – to enhance and expand the EtE Initiative with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.1M in additional EtE initiative funding for implementation and sustainability of the New York City Health Department's new Hook Up and Bridge (HUB) program, which will succeed the NYC Health Department's <u>PlaySure Network 2.0</u> to provide comprehensive HIV prevention and care services; • \$1M in additional EtE Initiative funding for the NYC PEP Hotline, to ensure sustainability and wider promotion of 27/7 access to services that can prevent new HIV infection after exposure; • \$1M and to implement a citywide Peer Workforce Initiative. <p>Hook Up and Bridge (HUB) is a forthcoming NYC Health Department program designed to ensure New Yorkers have access to the HIV and sexual health services they need to be healthy and thrive. Clinical and nonclinical agencies will receive funding to utilize the <u>GOALS Framework</u> to provide or provide referral to the following HIV and sexual health services utilizing a client-centered, pleasure-based approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV testing 	<p>\$12.5M annually baselined</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate initiation of HIV treatment and HIV primary care • HIV prevention, including PrEP and emergency PEP • STI testing • STI treatment • STI prevention, including doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy PEP) and vaccination (e.g., mpox vaccine) • Hepatitis B and C testing • Hepatitis B and C treatment <p>Agencies will also integrate screening and education related to mental health, harm reduction, and supportive services, and offer linkages to services, as needed. All agencies will select three priority populations and focus their HUB service delivery – including targeted outreach (e.g., drop-in groups, street and non-traditional outreach, social media outreach) – on these populations.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$1,100,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to support HUB. HUB is slated to be partly supported with CDC funding, and given recent threats to federal funding streams, supplemental CTL funding will ensure its implementation and sustainability. HUB, which will succeed the NYC Health Department’s <u>PlaySure Network 2.0</u>, will serve as many New Yorkers’ primary source of HIV and sexual health services.</p> <p>The NYC Health Department’s NYC PEP Hotline is a 24/7 service that connects New Yorkers potentially exposed to HIV to PEP, emergency medicine that can prevent a new HIV infection if taken within 72 hours of exposure. The hotline (phone number: 844-3-PEPNYC, also 844-373-7692) is staffed by trained coordinators who evaluate potential HIV risk and connect callers to same-day or next-day appointments to be evaluated by a medical provider and begin the 28-day course of PEP medicines. After business hours, the hotline is staffed by medical provider who can prescribe PEP starter packs (i.e., seven days of PEP medicine) to ensure PEP is started within the 72-hour window; the caller can then connect with a coordinator the next business day. Since its inception, the NYC PEP Hotline has served thousands of New Yorkers.</p>	
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	<p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$1,000,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to ensure sustainability and wider promotion of the NYC PEP hotline.</p> <p>The proposed citywide Peer Workforce Initiative will increase the effectiveness and impact of NYC's health care system and expand employment opportunities for people living with or at risk for HIV. Employment is a low-cost, high-impact, evidence-based strategy to increase health care access; intensify the impact of under-resourced organizations through job placement of well-trained and deeply committed frontline Peer Workers; and provide life-changing economic mobility opportunities for people living with HIV. A requested \$1M increase in the NYC City Council EtE Initiative would support estimated costs of \$750,000 to community-based organizations to hire people with HIV in paid Peer positions, and \$250,000 to Path to Jobs, Inc. to match Peer Workers to jobs, offer technical assistance and capacity building to CBOs, and provide ongoing support to ensure successful Peer placements.</p>	
<p>2. Protect New Yorkers with HIV From Harmful Federal Cuts</p>	<p>Federal funding through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (Ryan White) and Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program is a vital component of NYC's community-based HIV response potentially facing devastating cuts. NYC Health Department's <u>Ryan White Part A</u> program funds agencies to provide services to income-eligible people with HIV in NYC and Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester Counties. Ryan White Part A funding supports a range of service categories in NYC, including care coordination and medical case management, early intervention, emergency financial assistance, food and nutrition, harm reduction, housing, legal services, mental health, non-medical case management for currently incarcerated or recent released individuals, outpatient ambulatory services (for people ages 50 years and older), psychosocial support for TIGNCNB people, and supportive counseling and psychosocial support services. The HOPWA program is a vital component of the City's comprehensive approach to ensuring access to the stable housing required for New Yorkers with HIV experiencing homelessness or housing instability to benefit from antiretroviral therapy, which optimizes health and prevents ongoing HIV transmission.</p>	<p>\$10M backfill funding</p>

	<p>These community-based programs advance our EtE work and are crucial support for people with HIV in NYC. While we do not yet know whether and to what extent the Ryan White Part A and HOPWA programs are at risk of federal cuts, any reductions to resources for these vital programs would have a disastrous impact for people living with HIV in NYC and on our efforts to equitably end our HIV epidemic in every population and community.</p> <p>We already know that some individuals with HIV in NYC are likely to lose essential services. On February 19, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order directing “Federal departments and agencies to identify all federally funded programs currently providing financial benefits to illegal aliens and take corrective action.” The NYC Ryan White Part A and HOPWA programs are currently able to house and support people with HIV who are not administratively eligible for assistance provided by other City agencies, like NYC Department of Social Services (DSS)/Human Resources Administration (HRA)’s HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) program due to their immigration status. If federal support for these households with HIV is withdrawn, they will face homelessness or housing instability.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition will advocate strongly to prevent these federal cuts, but we ask the NYC City Council to step in and create a backfill fund, up to \$10 million, to support the community-based providers and New Yorkers with HIV who rely on these important programs in the event of federal cuts to Ryan White Part A or HOPWA or the withdrawal of critical HIV services based on the immigration status of individual New Yorkers.</p>	
3. Authorize and Expand Overdose Prevention Centers	<p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition calls on the NYC City Council to officially authorize the operation of Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) in NYC, and to fund at least five OPCs in addition to the two programs currently operating in upper Manhattan with \$1.5 million each annually in Opioid Settlement funding that supports approximately 90% of costs of the programs, excluding actual observation of participant injections. In light of recent public threats of federal action to try to shut down NYC’s two OPCs – that, together, have served 5,804 participants and intervened in 1,696</p>	\$7.5M annually baselined

	<p>overdoses since they opened in November 2021 – it has never been so important for government to exercise its power to authorize OPCs as an evidence-base public health intervention to address our opioid and overdoses crises. We call on the NYC City Council to exercise its oversight authority to require release of the prepared NYC Health Department request for proposals to operate these additional OPCs and call for at least \$1.5 million in annual funding for each of at least five additional OPCs, for a total of \$7.5 million annually to support expansion of this life-saving initiative.</p>	
<p>4. Enhance the Trans Equity Programs Initiative</p>	<p>Enhance and baseline funding for the Trans Equity Programs initiative, supporting a range of services to help empower the transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) communities. Funding supports education programs, workforce development, health care navigation, legal guidance, community workshops, and mental health programs, among other services. The unprecedented attacks on TGNC people and their rights nationwide, and this federal administration’s persistent actions through executive orders and directives to erase transgender identities, eliminate medically necessary health care for TGNB people, and threaten all support and care provided for the LGBTQ+ community, are meant to paralyze, frighten, and divide. As these new challenges exacerbate ongoing economic troubles (e.g., increased needs for mental health, substance abuse, and food supports), we expect the needs of TGNC service providers in NYC to increase dramatically in FY26. It is essential to strengthen the ability of these programs to serve transgender New Yorkers, including delivery of HIV and sexual health services to transgender New Yorkers, including HIV and STI testing, prevention, care, and supportive services.</p> <p>It is also imperative to empower trans-led programs with the funding necessary to sustain and grow their works. Currently, 62% of Trans Equity Programs funding goes to cisgender-led organizations. Since the creation of the Trans Equity Programs initiative, more trans-led organizations have been created, but due to the way initiative funding operates, it is nearly impossible for new groups to receive funding or for any trans-led funded groups’ award to increase.</p>	<p>\$10M annually baselined</p>

	<p>To meet real need and elevate trans leadership, the End AIDS NY Community Coalition calls on the NYC City Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Trans Equity Programs funding to \$10M • Make the application process more accessible by contracting a technical assistance provider to provide free support to eligible applicants who have been left out of past funding cycles • Prioritize trans-led organizations for funding 	
Urgent End AIDS NY Community Coalition Priorities For the NYC Administration		Funds Required
5. Fully Fund the NYC Sexual Health Clinics and Enhance Services	<p>The NYC Sexual Health Clinics are a core component of the City's status neutral EtE efforts, providing sex-positive, gender-affirming sexual, reproductive, and harm reduction services for New Yorkers, regardless of ability to pay, insurance coverage, or immigration status. Annually, these clinics serve more than 35,000 New Yorkers and provide over 60,000 visits. However, the reopening of some clinics closed after the COVID-19 has been delayed and two clinics, in Riverside and Crown Heights, remain closed. Consequently, the number of visits to the clinics has not returned to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic numbers, despite <i>increased</i> need, as rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are on the rise, PrEP uptake among Black and Latino/Hispanic communities disproportionately affected by HIV continues to trail uptake among White communities, and progress toward bringing down new HIV diagnoses each year has slowed. It is critical to reopen the two clinics that remain closed due to COVID-19. In addition, all Sexual Health Clinics must offer comprehensive, state-of-the-art sexual health and supportive services needed to effectively address the full range of overlapping sexual health needs. Additional investments are needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand clinic hours of operation and the services offered at each clinic, including PrEP initiation and continuity of care, medication abortion, contraception services, and supportive services (e.g., social work services, patient navigation, behavioral health services); • Launch new clinic services, including hepatitis B vaccine, hepatitis C treatment, syringe service programs (SSPs), and gender-affirming care; 	<p>\$10M annually baselined</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish youth-focused and women-focused practices at one or more clinics; • Establish “Quickie Labs” at additional clinics (currently, only Chelsea and Fort Greene have Quickie Labs) to provide “express,” automated and streamlined STI testing; • Make the minimal investment necessary to alter the COVID-19 Express testing equipment currently in use at the Riverside location to use the lab equipment to expand STI Express testing once the federal COVID emergency funding ceases at the end of 2024. • Increase awareness of clinic services, including expanded and new services, through social marketing campaigns and community outreach; • Support continued necessary facility and infrastructure renovations at clinic sites. 	
Additional End AIDS NY Community Coalition Priorities For the NYC City Council		Funds Required
Sustain and Increase the NYC City Council’s HIV/AIDS Faith and Community Based Initiative	<p>First funded by the NYC City Council in FY06, and formerly known as the HIV/AIDS Faith Based Initiative, this longstanding funding has an important role to play in EtE efforts, supporting HIV/AIDS prevention, education, outreach, advocacy, and support services in local religious institutions and community-based organizations that engage populations vulnerable to acquiring HIV and poor HIV health outcomes.</p> <p>Through this initiative, the NYC Health Department HIV Outreach to Faith-Based Communities program funds agencies to establish and support a network of dozens of faith-based organizations to deliver HIV outreach services to their congregations. Funded faith-based and community-based agencies disseminate health promotional materials and provide trainings, technical assistance, and capacity building support on a range of topics, including HIV, STI, and hepatitis C testing, treatment, and prevention; community mobilization; and reducing stigma and discrimination.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$2,200,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to ensure the sustainability of the HIV Outreach to Faith-Based Communities program.</p>	<p>\$2.2M annually baselined</p>

Support Human Services Agencies with Adequate Indirect Funding	<p>Non-profit human service organizations that have been on the front lines of the HIV, viral hepatitis, COVID-19, and mpox responses as NYC vendors face ongoing and new challenges as the result of years of severe underinvestment in essential infrastructure needs. The End AIDS NY Community Coalition welcomed the adoption by the City two years ago of a contracting agency's approved Federal indirect rate after years of inadequate funding. However, to date, total contract amounts have not been adjusted to reflect the additional infrastructure funding, and social service agencies employing their approved indirect rate have been required to cut direct services by an amount equal to the additional indirect costs covered. The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that the NYC City Council allocate the funding required to amend each existing NYC human services contract as soon as practicable to increase the total contract amount to reflect the contracting agency's approved Federal indirect rate "below the line" without impacting contract funding for direct services. For the EtE Initiative Contracts alone, we request approximately \$2M in additional indirect funding be added to existing contracts to afford providers their Federally approved indirect rates.</p>	<p>\$2M annually baselined</p>
Sustain the NY City Council's Opioid Prevention and Treatment initiative	<p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that the NYC City Council sustain the level of its FY25 funding for the Council's Opioid Prevention and Treatment initiative, which supports community-based organizations to serve New Yorkers affected by the opioid epidemic, including family members of people who use drugs, by conducting localized prevention and treatment efforts around opioid use disorder. This funding is critical to ensure the ongoing delivery of a range of essential services that currently support program participants.</p>	<p>\$3.075M annually baselined</p>

<p>Fill the Continuing Gap in Funding Resulting from Reduction of the NYS Article 6 Match</p>	<p>To be able to meaningfully protect and promote the health of New Yorkers, the NYC Health Department must have consistent and sustainable funding sources. In 2019, NYC's matching funds rate for NYS Article 6 Public Health Funding was reduced from 36% to 20%. This means that the City pays 80% of all costs for public health services, while other NYS counties only pay 64%. NYC is losing upwards of \$90 million dollars a year in state public health funding. This funding pays for vaccinations, tuberculosis, STI, and HIV testing and treatment, newborn home visits, chronic disease prevention activities, reproductive health care services, blood lead level investigations, and overdose prevention, among many other vital services. Withdrawal of state funding is an issue of health equity. NYC has the largest portion of Medicaid recipients, the largest populations of people of color, and the most low-income individuals in NYS. Half of NYC residents are on Medicaid or CHIP. Moreover, federal funding is now at risk for core public health activities, such as disease surveillance and investigations. To continue to keep NYC residents healthy and safe, Article 6 funding is critical.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition supports efforts to restore NYC's Article 6 reimbursement rate to 36% in the One-House bills as well as State Legislation S4801 (Rivera)/A2705 (Gonzalez-Rojas) to address this issue. However, if the State does not restore this funding in its FY25-26 budget, we call upon the NYC City Council to continue to mitigate the impact of Article 6 reductions on essential NYC public health programs, and in particular the impact on its EtE Initiative Viral Hepatitis Initiative, and other discretionary initiatives related to public health. This ongoing reduction would have a direct impact on community-based organizations and the health services they provide.</p>	<p>\$90M</p>
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<p>Additional End AIDS NY Community Coalition Priorities For the NYC Administration</p>		<p>Funds Required</p>
<p>Expand New York City Council's Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative</p>	<p>The NYC City Council's Viral Hepatitis Initiative established in 2014 has provided a strong public health response to NYC's hepatitis B and C epidemics. To adequately address NYC's viral hepatitis epidemic and fully implement the <u>Plan to Eliminate Viral Hepatitis as a Major Public Health Threat in New York City by 2030</u>, the</p>	<p>\$5.761M annually baselined</p>

	<p>End AIDS NY Community Coalition proposes that the City significantly increase the \$2.4M allocated by the Council for this initiative in FY25, and that the Administration baseline this funding to expand the NYC City Council's Viral Hepatitis Initiative as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to hepatitis C testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purchase Xpert® point-of-care hepatitis C RNA tests to distribute citywide, with a focus on areas with highest prevalence of undiagnosed hepatitis C ○ Purchase GeneXpert® Xpress IV molecular testing systems to process results of PCR testing for hepatitis C and other infectious diseases at the NYC Sexual Health Clinics and community-based sites in areas with highest prevalence of undiagnosed hepatitis C • Promote awareness of the importance of hepatitis B and C testing, treatment, and prevention, and of the 2024 amendment to the NYS hepatitis C screening law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and disseminate public-facing social marketing campaign and health promotional materials • Support citywide response to hepatitis A, B, and C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund 2 FTE float nurse staff lines to increase access to hepatitis A and B vaccines; deliver patient education on hepatitis B and C screening, diagnostic testing, treatment, and prevention; and deliver technical assistance and capacity building to providers on care coordination, treatment adherence, and other clinical matters related to hepatitis A, B, and C, citywide, with a focus on high prevalence areas • Build hepatitis B and C surveillance infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund 2 FTE staff lines to support the availability of case investigation, partner services, and response efforts for people newly reported with hepatitis B and C • Support Check Hep B patient navigation programs serving people with chronic hepatitis B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund 22 FTE staff lines to support patient navigators, plus 10-20% salary of existing staff line at each funded agency to support supervision and professional development of patient navigators ○ Fund 1 FTE staff line at the NYC Health Department to provide technical 	
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	<p>assistance and contract oversight for funded agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Check Hep C patient navigation programs serving people with chronic hepatitis C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund 28 FTE staff lines to support patient navigators, plus 10-20% salary of existing staff line at each funded agency to support supervision and professional development of patient navigators ○ Fund 1 FTE staff line at the NYC Health Department to provide technical assistance and contract oversight for funded agencies • Support Hep C Peer Program peer navigation program serving people with or at risk for chronic hepatitis C at syringe services programs (SSPs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund 30 FTE staff lines to support peer navigators, plus 10-20% salary of existing staff line at each funded agency to support supervision and professional development of peer navigators ○ Fund 1 FTE staff line at the NYC Health Department to provide technical assistance and contract oversight for funded agencies • Support hepatitis B and C clinical education and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fund 3 agencies to deliver clinical education and training to community-based providers, health centers, faith-based organizations, substance use providers, and immigrant health organizations ○ Fund 2 FTE staff at the NYC Health Department to support clinical education and training activities <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$5,761,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to expand the Viral Hepatitis Initiative as described above.</p>	
Wage Equity for Human Services Workers	<p>Inadequate NYC contract reimbursement rates have resulted in poverty-level wages for many human services workers, who are predominantly women and people of color. Essential human services workers are among the lowest paid employees in the NYC economy, resulting in high turnover and serious disadvantage in an increasingly competitive labor market. The End AIDS NY</p>	TBD

	Community Coalition join the #JustPay Campaign to call on the Administration to ensure a living wage for all City-funded human services workers by creating and funding a comprehensive wage and benefit schedule for City-contracted human services workers comparable to the salaries made by City employees in the same field.	
Invest in the Development of Housing with Deep Affordability	To meet the housing needs of New Yorkers living with or vulnerable to HIV infection, we must expand the City's affordable and supportive housing stock—one of the most critical issues facing New Yorkers. This requires substantial new City investments in housing with deep affordability, including supportive housing for those who need it. The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests at least \$2.5B in additional new construction financing each year for the next five years for apartments specifically built for homeless and extremely low-income New Yorkers, including: doubling the set-aside in new affordable housing developments for homeless households from 15 to 30 percent, to produce at least 6,000 new apartments per year; and building an additional 6,000 apartments per year for households with extremely low incomes. In addition, we urge NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development to accelerate the creation of 15,000 new NYC-funded supportive housing units, working towards a goal for their completion by 2026 rather than 2030.	\$2.5B annually, baselined through FY30
Fund Non-Profit Legal Services Organizations to Address Source of Income Discrimination	To maximize the effectiveness of existing NYC voucher programs, including HASA rental assistance and CityFHEPs vouchers requires more consistent and effective legal action to enforce the City prohibition on source of income discrimination. The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests funding to support contracts with non-profit organizations with a record of successful litigation to address the continued illegal discrimination by brokers and landlords who refuse to accept government-funded rental vouchers.	\$4.4M annually baselined
Housing Assistance as HIV Prevention	Evidence shows that lack of safe stable housing significantly increases vulnerability to HIV acquisition among populations already overrepresented among new HIV infections, including people of trans experience and Black and Latino young men who have sex with men. The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests funding to support housing assistance as HIV prevention for highly vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness, to enable them to benefit from comprehensive HIV prevention including PrEP.	\$10M, annually baselined

Support for Routine Testing to Address Congenital Syphilis	The dramatic and sustained increase in congenital syphilis in NYC underscores the need for additional action to identify new syphilis infections, particularly among women of childbearing age seen in emergency departments who might not otherwise present for prenatal care. The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests funding be allocated to the NYC Health Department to launch a program to deliver technical assistance to emergency departments on implementing routine syphilis testing among all people who are or could become pregnant who present in emergency departments.	\$200K
Health Services for Un/Underinsured LGBTQ New Yorkers	The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$980K be allocated to the NYC Health Department to support LGBTQ-affirming and culturally competent comprehensive health services – including primary, behavioral, sexual, and reproductive health services – for un/underinsured LGBTQ New Yorkers.	\$980K annually baselined
Harm Reduction as HIV Prevention	The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests funding to expand the number of sites that offer syringe service programs (SSPs), harm reduction education including on overdose prevention, HIV and hepatitis testing, HIV and hepatitis prevention education, linkage to HIV and hepatitis prevention and care services, and onsite supportive services, including behavioral and mental health services, drop-in services, food and nutrition services, and hygiene services.	\$9M annually, baselined
Free HIV Home Tests for New Yorkers	<p><u>TakeMeHome</u> is a partnership between Building Healthy Online Communities, NASTAD, and Emory University enabling local and state health departments to offer free in-home sexual health tests to community members.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$250,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to support a partnership with TakeMeHome to expand the NYC Health Department’s Online Home Test Giveaway (OHTG) and ensure that free HIV home tests are available to order online for delivery to locations in any of NYC’s ZIP codes.</p>	\$250,000 annually baselined
HIV and Aging	The NYC Health Department’s HIV and Aging program supports an agency to establish and support a network of organizations to strengthen their capacity to better serve older people affected by HIV. The funded agency disseminates health promotional materials and provides training, technical assistance, and capacity building	\$463,000 annually baselined

	<p>support on a range of topics, including HIV and STI testing, treatment, and prevention; community mobilization; coalition building to improve access to quality HIV services; and reducing stigma and discrimination.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$463,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to ensure sustainability of the HIV and Aging program</p>	
STI and Sexual Health Services for Uninsured New Yorkers	<p>The NYC Health Department funds agencies to provide to uninsured New Yorkers routine, quality sexual health care, including chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis screening, diagnostic testing, and treatment, and hepatitis A and B, HPV, and mpox vaccines.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$500,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to ensure the sustainability of this program.</p>	\$500,000 annually baselined
Mobile Sexual Health Clinic for Sex Workers	<p>Through this new program, the NYC Health Department would fund an agency to operate a mobile unit designed to serve sex workers and patrons of commercial sex venues and nightlife spaces across NYC. Located and scheduled to meet the needs of these communities, the mobile clinic would provide HIV and STI testing and provide or provide referral to other sexual health services, including HIV prevention (e.g., emergency PEP starter packs), STI prevention (doxy PEP, mpox vaccination), and linkage to HIV and STI treatment. The mobile clinic would also provide safer sex products, sexual health education, and health promotional materials tailored to the needs of these communities.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$275,000 (in fiscal year 1 only, in CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to cover the cost of the mobile unit to serve as the mobile clinic for the duration of the program.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$684,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to cover ongoing staffing and operational costs of the program, including \$600,000 for staff lines (e.g., medical providers, outreach specialists, data staff); \$55,500 for commercial vehicle liability insurance, malpractice insurance, and general</p>	<p>\$275,000 FY26 one-time funding</p> <p>\$684,000 annually baselined</p>

	liability insurance; \$12,000, \$10,000, and \$4,500, for mobile unit parking, maintenance, and gas, respectively; and \$2,000 for NYS Certificate of Need and other licensure costs. This funding would also cover minimal NYC Health Department administrative and fringe costs.	
Hepatitis C Micro-Elimination Program at Rikers Island	<p>This new program would support the development and implementation of a hepatitis B and C elimination plan for people in and recently released from Rikers Island correctional facilities. Activities would include the development and coordination of an advisory committee comprised of NYC Health Department and NYC Health + Hospital/Correctional Health Services staff, providers, and community partners; elimination plan development; increased screening and treatment for hepatitis B and C and tele-navigation programs serving people with chronic hepatitis B and chronic hepatitis C in Rikers Island correctional facilities; discharge planning; development and dissemination of health promotional materials, hygiene kits, pre-paid mobile phones, and incentives to support linkage to care and treatment adherence; and enhanced hepatitis B and C surveillance.</p> <p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests that \$800,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department and NYC Health + Hospitals/Correctional Health Services to support this initiative.</p>	\$800,000 annually baselined
Free Safer Sex Products for New Yorkers	<p>The NYC Health Department's <u>NYC Condom Availability Program</u> (NYCAP) distributes safer sex products – including male condoms, internal condoms, and lubricant packets – across NYC, including at traditional sites (e.g., hospitals, clinics, community-based organizations) and nontraditional sites (e.g., barber shops, beauty salons, nail salons, bars, clubs, liquor stores, churches, schools). NYCAP also fulfills orders for safer sex products placed via the <u>Safer Sex Portal</u>. The NYC Health Department funds agencies to recruit and maintain networks of nontraditional sites that actively distribute safer sex products. Funded agencies conduct extensive targeted outreach (e.g., drop-in groups, street and non-traditional outreach, social media outreach) to ensure products are reaching priority populations. In 2024, due to funding issues, there were interruptions in NYCAP's ability to fulfill orders, and given Without additional funding, product shortages and delays in fulfilling orders are likely to occur in the coming months.</p>	\$450,000 annually baselined

	<p>The End AIDS NY Community Coalition requests \$450,000 (per fiscal year, in baseline CTL funding) be allocated to the NYC Health Department to ensure an adequate supply of safer sex products and avoid interruptions in product distribution that occurred in 2024 due to funding issues. Safer sex product purchase and distribution are slated to be supported with CDC funding, and given recent threats to federal funding streams, supplemental CTL funding is critical to ensure sustainability of NYCAP activities.</p>	
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Testimony of The Legal Aid Society

on

Committee on Housing and Buildings at the New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2029 and The Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.

March 25, 2025

The Legal Aid Society ("LAS"), welcomes this opportunity to testify before the New York City Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings at the New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings about The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2029 and The Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report. We appreciate the leadership of Chair Sanchez in pushing for tenants' rights.

NEED FOR INCREASED FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION

HPD's focus seems to be development. We don't disagree with the need for more housing, although much of the new housing being built is unaffordable to tenants who really need the housing. However, the focus on development has resulted in a lack of focus on preservation of our decreasing affordable housing stock. HPD must refocus on the need to keep tenants in their housing.

City of Yes: We want to begin by thanking the City Council for securing the additional \$215 million to expand the CityFHEPS voucher program as part of the City of Yes legislation. We greatly appreciate the Council's dedication to ensuring that any housing plan moving forward prioritizes the needs of vulnerable populations—whether they are families facing eviction, individuals with disabilities, or elderly New Yorkers struggling to remain housed. It is important to remember that this funding was specifically intended to assist those most at risk of losing their homes, and part of the deal in the Council's approval of the legislation was to ensure these vulnerable groups receive the support they need. We urge the City Council to continue to fight to ensure that this money is allocated as promised, and that it is used effectively to protect those who are most at risk. We are eager to continue collaborating with the City Council to ensure that this funding is maximized to its

fullest potential. Keeping low-income tenants housed should be an important goal of this administration. Since it is not a goal of this administration, we count on the City Council to be focused on that important goal.

Elderly and disabled tenants: As per the Community Service Society’s analysis of the 2017 Housing Vacancy Survey (“HVS”), there are 9,463 rent-regulated apartments with low-income tenants who are severely rent-burdened and have a head of household over the age of 65. However, these households, some of which rely on public assistance, do not currently qualify for CityFHEPS. Demonstrating a continuation of this trend, the 2023 HVS further indicates that more than 38 percent of households with disabled or elderly family members are severely rent-burdened.¹ While all such households should qualify for vouchers, creating even just 5,000 vouchers for rent-regulated seniors and people with disabilities already living in the community would reduce homelessness, preserve affordable housing, and maintain community stability.

Keeping low-income tenants housed should be an important goal of this administration. Since it is not a goal of this administration, we count on the City Council to be focused on that important goal. City FHEPS is a critical part of ensuring we can preserve low-income housing.

INCREASED HOUSING VIOLATIONS/DECREASED HOUSING LITIGATION

Over the past year, the number of housing code violations has increased by almost 25% and the most serious violations have increased by 30%. [Housing Violations in NYC Jumped 24% This Year. We Mapped Them By Neighborhood. - City Limits](#) Every day, The Legal Aid Society attorneys are seeing increased violations and the impact it has on tenants. HPD’s housing litigation bureau has been decimated, and we see the result of that: fewer cases brought against landlords and less emphasis on forcing landlords to make repairs. The City must hire more attorneys to help with these important cases.

We’ve recently seen heat and hot water complaints dismissed administratively with no inspection and no repair. We hope that this is not a new trend but are concerned that this is a result of limited resources at HPD.

Conclusion

We thank the Housing and Buildings Committee for the opportunity to testify about the City’s spending priorities with respect to rental assistance and commend the Council for its dedication to addressing New York City’s need to preserve tenants in their homes.

¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdfs/about/2023%20NYCHVS%20Selected%20Initial%20Findings.pdf>

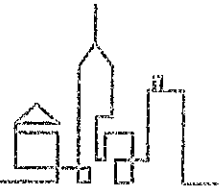
About The Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society (“LAS”), the nation’s oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, is more than a law firm for clients who cannot afford to pay for counsel. It is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal, and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform. This dedication to justice for all New Yorkers continues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Legal Aid Society has performed this role in City, State, and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of more than 2,00 attorneys, social workers, paralegals, and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, LAS provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel.

LAS’s legal program operates three major practices — Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights — and receives volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants that is coordinated by LAS’s Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, The Legal Aid Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession.

The Legal Aid Society's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of 300,000 individual cases and legal matters, LAS’s law reform representation for clients benefits more than 1.7 million low-income families and individuals in New York City and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a State-wide and national impact.



Testimony to the NYC Council
Committee on Housing & Buildings
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 25, 2025

Submitted on Behalf of the Supportive Housing Network of NY

Good afternoon, Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee. My name is Joelle Ballam-Schwan with the Supportive Housing Network of NY, a membership and advocacy organization representing over 100 nonprofits operating more than 40,000 units of supportive housing in New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the FY26 budget. I also want to thank the amazing supportive housing tenant advocates who testified earlier for their powerful testimonies who underscored the critical importance of our asks.

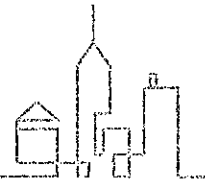
We'd like to thank the Council for its support of our NYC 15/15 reallocation proposal, and we ask that you work with us to codify and fund the proposal in FY26 and beyond. The city has exceeded its 7,500-unit target for congregate housing, but scattered site has fewer than 1,500 units awarded—leaving over 6,000 units left. Our proposal calls for reallocating the majority of these units to develop and preserve congregate supportive housing and are seeking **\$307 million in capital** to develop and preserve congregate units and **\$72.6 million** for the service and operating for both new and existing units operating under the program.

We also ask the Council to hold the administration accountable for late contract payments, especially as federal funding remains uncertain and paused for many providers. While we appreciate the proposals in the Speaker's State of the City, the urgency cannot be overstated—right now, five of our largest supportive housing providers are owed over \$318 million in late payments, including \$165 million from prior fiscal years. This funding gap puts providers at risk of closure, jeopardizing housing stability for formerly homeless individuals.

Additionally, the Network joins housing advocates in voicing our strong concern about a significant decrease in housing capital funding post 2026 proposed in the preliminary budget and recommend **continuing a baseline funding level of \$4 billion in housing capital**.

Finally, we ask the Council to continue supporting:

- \$4.8M in additional funding for the Justice-Involved Supportive Housing program (JISH)
- \$4.5 million in baseline funding for peer responders on B-HEARD teams to ensure compassionate, community-driven support for individuals in crisis.
- \$22M for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams, to provide care for the waitlist of people seeking vital mental health support.



Testimony to the NYC Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Tuesday, March 25, 2025
Submitted on Behalf of the Supportive Housing Network of NY

Good afternoon Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee. My name is Kenny Margarito Alvarez. I am a United States Marine Corps Veteran. And I served during the War On Terrorism from 2003 to 2008. I'm also a Supportive Housing Advocate in partnership with the Supportive Housing Network of New York. We're asking New York City to keep its commitment to building 15,000 units in 15 years.

I entered supportive housing in 2013 after moving back to New York and finding myself in crisis after crisis, entering the HASA program and acquiring emergency housing assistance. I was chronically homeless for 16 months in New York City, and longer in the months prior in other states, faced with steep odds and unimaginable challenges like abusive relationships, chronic health conditions, and a lifestyle involving heavy self-medication. Along the way, A Better Place, run by The Doe Fund, quite literally became available to me. It was the first step to anything resembling recovery. Yolanda Jones was a Program Director there. At the financially strapped facility, she and the ever-changing team became the lynchpin to my survival during my time in Supportive Housing.

Before that, my experience in the series of New York City single-room occupancy hotels was a horrifying mix of squalor, merciless staff and drug-related murder. Supportive Housing saved my life and slowly showed me there was a life worth saving in the first place. Thanks to the amazing social workers at ACQC in the Jamaica YMCA, it was the last place I stayed before entering the Supportive Housing system. Once in, I went back to school and completed my Masters. The level of spiritual encouragement and clarity I needed to get out of that abusive relationship toward salvation can't be overstated. Supportive Housing got me the redemption so many others seek. Now supportive housing and the people that make it work need support.

So we ask the City Council to ensure that the **NYC 15/15 supportive housing initiative is fully funded** and implemented so that every available unit can be developed or preserved. That means investing **\$307 million** to build and preserve more housing and **\$72.6 million** to ensure service and rent subsidies continue for both new and existing units.

Some supportive housing tenants were deeper in street life that I was. Some are also teetering the balance between making it and not making it. Now more than ever is the time to do everything we can to keep giving people the safe haven they deserve and the dignity to start over and move forward. Thank you for your time and consideration.



**UHAB Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Housing and Buildings**

March 25, 2025

Honorable Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Thank you for holding today's hearing and for the opportunity to testify. My name is Arielle Hersh and I am the Director of Policy and New Projects at UHAB. For 50 years, UHAB has empowered low- and moderate-income residents to take control of their housing and become homeowners in the buildings where they already live. We turn distressed rental housing into lasting affordable co-ops, and provide comprehensive training and technical assistance to keep these homes healthy and stable for the long term. UHAB has created over 25,000 cooperative homes across the five boroughs, predominantly in formerly redlined neighborhoods where rates of homeownership continue to lag behind the rest of the city. UHAB is also a founding member of Interboro CLT, the city's only citywide community land trust.

UHAB was proud to join the Council in advocating for historic investments in our housing programming and infrastructure through City for All. During that process, we were especially grateful to see funds allocated to the preservation of HDFC co-ops, alongside Mitchell Lamas. **Now, we need to ensure commitments from City for All turn into capital for investments in our communities, and recommit to preserving our existing affordable, social housing like HDFC co-ops.** Preservation programs continue to be underfunded compared to new construction programs, despite recent increases in investment and much hard work on the part of advocates and agency partners. Many of the programs UHAB works with to create and preserve HDFC co-ops are chronically underfunded and demand for them far outpaces capital commitments.

HDFC co-ops form a key bloc of stable, affordable homeownership for 25,000 New Yorkers across 1,200 buildings in New York City. The majority of shareholders are Black and Hispanic New Yorkers systematically excluded from traditional homeownership opportunities. Many HDFC co-ops were created from the abandonment and disinvestment of New York City's fiscal crisis, and received limited building repairs and training when they converted. For the last 30 years, shareholders have stewarded their buildings through deferred maintenance, fiscal uncertainty, and maintained their buildings despite too little investment from the City. Moreover, HDFCs have received a mere fraction of the investment similar programs financed with tax credits and other subsidies have. Resident owners are struggling to pay their bills and maintain quality housing amidst rising building maintenance costs and an escalating insurance crisis. They are also on the front lines of the effort to decarbonize our City, but cannot do so without funds and support.

We are calling on the Council and administration to commit \$80 million in City for All funds to preserve HDFC co-ops, primarily through capital for HPD's multifamily preservation programs. UHAB is currently supporting 40 HDFC co-ops that have applied for preservation loans like the Green Housing Preservation

Program (GHPP) and Multifamily Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program (HRP), yet are waiting to move forward due to lack of staff capacity. The agency has been clear that the highest demand for these programs is coming from HDFC co-ops, yet they routinely get pushed to the bottom of the list for OMB approval. HDFCs need their own dedicated pool of funds for capital needs that will allow the agency to expedite project approval.

To that end, **we also need dedicated funds for staffing to support an increased pipeline of projects.** There are 200 new staff lines at HPD and DOB under City of Yes, and it is imperative that a portion of those be used to fund project managers on HPD's multifamily preservation team working on preservation loan programs for HDFC co-ops.

We also continue to call on the City to **invest in programs that would support the creation of more HDFC co-ops and social housing like Open Door and Neighborhood Pillars.** Earlier this year, we heard a new Pillars term sheet was near final, but has sat with OMB waiting on approval. While we are confident agency staff are working their hardest to update their term sheets and get their programs moving once again, we need greater accountability from OMB regarding term sheet approval. We know this is possible because we have just received a thoughtful, much-needed update to the Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative (ANCP) term sheet that incorporates feedback from TIL tenants, advocates, and technical assistance providers into meaningful reform. Now, we need to see it happen for other long-promised programs like Neighborhood Pillars.

Our organization has been following the City for All commitments closely through multiple overlapping budget processes, and funds for HDFC preservation—while named in the original list of commitments—have slipped off subsequent reporting and tracking on these investments. They and other necessary investments are not mentioned in the Citywide commitment tracker at all, which lacks the specificity necessary to understand how funds will actually move into our communities.

Moreover, **we must ensure these commitments remain priority items beyond the current administration.** The City of Yes and City for All investments constitute some of the largest capital commitments to affordable housing in the last decade. They also are entering our ecosystem at a moment of heightened uncertainty at the federal and local level. We need better guarantees that these commitments will be kept to communities that are counting on these investments, and rely on our partners in the council to hold changing administrations accountable to ensure this happens.

Additionally, **we would like to uplift calls for more transparency and coordination between agencies to ensure nonprofits get paid for their essential work through City contracts.** UHAB was awarded the Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) contract for HDFCs in 2023, and while we are grateful to finally have the contract registered, the process took over 18 months and we still have yet to be paid. Having the Fund for the City of New York as a backstop to help cover some of that gap is an essential lifeline for nonprofits like ours that depend on these funds to pay our staff and keep our services running. However, nonprofits can't cover debt indefinitely. For our finances, bridging the gap is fundamentally different from getting paid to do our work, and adds significant constraints to our financial position to receive

other forms of funding and serve New Yorkers. We need a faster and smoother process to *both* register contracts *and* begin timely and consistent payments to nonprofits.

Finally, I'd like to highlight some alarming trends we are noticing on the ground in our work considering disinvested multifamily building stock. UHAB fields requests from tenants to help organize their building and understand if becoming an HDFC co-op is an option for them. In recent months, we have been seeing a significant uptick in outreach from two kinds of buildings: those that have extremely high levels of physical neglect that are tantamount to landlord abandonment, and those moving through a private foreclosure process. In both cases, there is a heightened need for proactive code enforcement to ensure tenants receive essential services like heat, hot water, utility connection, and repairs for hazardous conditions. **These situations also make it ever more urgent to reform the Third Party Transfer Program (TPT) and pass Int. 1063 to create a preservation pathway for buildings in extreme levels of physical and financial neglect.**

Overall, preservation programs provide the essential bedrock of our City's housing infrastructure. We were grateful to see the significant investment made in these preservation programs through City for All commitments, especially to key social housing models like HDFC co-ops. We would like to emphasize the following points:

- **The City must honor its commitments to HDFC preservation through City for All. We are calling on the City to commit \$80 million to HPD's multifamily preservation programs specifically for HDFC co-ops, plus staffing for more project managers.** These funds will ensure that the hundreds of low income shareholders fighting to preserve their homes receive the support and resources they need to thrive.
- **We are long overdue for Neighborhood Pillars funding and OMB term sheet approval.**
- **We must ensure City for All commitments are enshrined beyond the current administration** so this once-in-a-generation investment in housing truly makes a difference for our communities.
- **We need a faster and smoother process to *both* register contracts *and* begin timely and consistent payments to nonprofits** so organizations like ours can continue to provide essential services to low income New Yorkers.
- **We must pass Int. 1063 and ensure it receives the funding necessary** to move highly distressed multifamily buildings to preservation purchasers. We must also be vigilant and prepared to address the mounting foreclosure crisis impacting multifamily rent stabilized buildings, including intervening to transfer ownership to preservation purchasers and stabilize physical conditions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.



**New York City Council
Preliminary Budget Hearings - Public Testimony**

**Testimony of Manon Vergerio, Head of Data & Advocacy
Unlock NYC
March 25, 2025**

My name is Manon Vergerio and I am the Head of Data & Advocacy at Unlock NYC, a tech nonprofit led by women who have experienced source of income (SOI) discrimination. We design mobile tools that enable New Yorkers with rental assistance vouchers to create a paper trail when landlords illegally turn them away. The majority of tenants who use our tools are currently experiencing homelessness, either staying in a shelter (35%), living doubled up with family (23%), or on the street (4%). **SOI discrimination is a vicious barrier that keeps New Yorkers homeless.**

Since launching our reporting tool in 2021, **we have received more than 2,700 complaints of SOI discrimination, and referred over 850 of these reports to the NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) for further action.** As the enforcement agency tasked with protecting New Yorkers from discrimination in housing and employment, CCHR has effective tools at its disposal to combat SOI discrimination and house homeless New Yorkers. In 2023, recognizing the importance of combatting SOI discrimination to address our homelessness crisis, the city invested a historic \$1.3 million to staff up CCHR's specialized SOI Unit, which has since been staffed with 17 attorneys and interventionists.

Adding capacity to CCHR leads to direct, tangible results. In 2024, CCHR prosecuted and won a historic lawsuit against discriminatory Bronx landlord Parkchester, winning 850 "set-aside units" for voucher holders and \$1 million in civil penalties.¹ What's more, CCHR's SOI Unit has reversed hundreds of illegal denials through pre-complaint interventions (PCIs), offering voucher holders opportunities to view and rent apartments they were initially denied from. These mediation and litigation strategies are game-changing and directly aid in transitioning New Yorkers out of homeless shelters and into permanent housing, while holding bad actors accountable.

¹ NYC Office of the Mayor, press release: [Mayor Adams Announces Largest Civil Rights Settlement in City History, Protecting New Yorkers from Housing Discrimination](#) (August 22, 2024).

CCHR has proved that when it is resourced, it is incredibly effective. Still, advocates have to lobby each year to save the Commission from budget cuts and vacancy reduction. With the new federal administration hellbent on mass deportations, attacking LGQBT+ rights, and dismantling DEI initiatives, CCHR's work is more critical than ever to protect the human rights of all New Yorkers.

Our Ask: Protect the People, Fund the Commission

The City Council must stand firm in its support for the City Commission on Human Rights, and champion increased funding for CCHR to effectively do its job. To that end, Unlock NYC strongly recommends that the Council:

- **Fund CCHR at \$21 million dollars total, including:**
 - Increased funding for additional staff lines; both attorneys and other critical support staff positions
 - Increased funding for OTPS so that CCHR is able to run robust public education and outreach campaigns. This will allow CCHR to meet people who might otherwise be scared to report discrimination, in their own neighborhoods and among trusted partners, where they will be more comfortable.
- **The city must classify staff positions at CCHR as “critical” positions and exempt them from the hiring freeze and 2:1 allotment process.**
- **The Commission, whose budget is less than 1% of the total city budget, should be exempted from PEGS.**
- **Salaries at the Commission need to be raised to competitive rates in order to attract and retain experienced attorneys, and CCHR must be allowed to hire at the top end of position salary ranges.**

The city must not only increase funding for CCHR but also address significant staffing shortages within the Department of Homeless Services, the Human Resources Administration, and Homebase—all of which are responsible for administering or processing CityFHEPS vouchers. The severe lack of capacity in these agencies hinders their ability to adequately support voucher holders and also impacts CCHR's efficiency in resolving negotiations and closing cases promptly. Poor communication and delays in processing voucher packets can prolong the process of securing housing, delaying move-ins for voucher holders. To prevent unnecessary hardships for voucher holders, the city must:

- **Reverse PEGS and Increase Staffing In CityFHEPS Units at DHS and HRA**
- **Stop further PEGS to DHS/HRA and Restore Service Dollars for Shelters**
- **Increase Staffing at Homebase Offices**

As New Yorkers, we pride ourselves on our culture of acceptance - and CCHR is needed more than ever to combat bigotry, hate, xenophobia, transphobia, and racism in this historical moment. We look forward to continuing to work with our allies in the City Council to build a robust anti-discrimination landscape and house our homeless neighbors.

Sincerely,
Manon Vergerio

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Vergerio' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Co-founder and Head of Data & Advocacy, Unlock NYC
manon@weunlock.nyc



Testimony of Catholic Migration Services before the New York City Council Committees on Housing and Buildings

March 25, 2025

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Sanchez and members of the Housing Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jonathan Cohen, and I am the Housing Managing Attorney at Catholic Migration Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning critical funding for the programs, Stabilizing NYC and Community Housing Preservation Strategies (CHPS) Initiative that supports low-income tenants and the preservation of affordable housing in New York City.

Catholic Migration Services provides free legal services and information to low-income New York City residents in three main areas: immigration, workers' rights, and housing. Our agency's mission is to welcome "the stranger in our midst" by providing high quality legal services and education to empower and advance equality and social justice in New York City.

Stabilizing NYC and Community Housing Preservation Strategies, two programs that are funded by the NYC Council, fund the work of Catholic Migration Service's Housing Unit, which is comprised of both legal advocates and tenant organizers. Our lawyers represent tenants in eviction cases and files affirmative cases against Landlords. Our tenant organizers help tenants form tenant associations, build community leaders, provide education on tenants' rights, and organize rallies and actions in support of tenants fighting eviction.

Both CHPS and Stabilizing NYC have been a vital lifeline for New York City's most vulnerable communities for many years to protect low-income, BIPOC, and immigrant tenants from displacement and the loss of affordable housing at the hands of predatory equity and speculative investors.

Stabilizing NYC combines legal, advocacy and organizing resources to build tenant associations in buildings and coalitions across multiple buildings owned by the same landlords to fight for repairs through grassroots direct action, outreach, tenant rights education, leadership development, and legal defense and support. Over the past 11 years, tenants organized and represented by the SNYC members have withstood and won in courts and in the streets and have worked with the City Council and the State Legislature to pass stronger laws and policies.

Catholic Migration Services has organized active tenant associations in buildings owned by some of the most notorious landlords in neighborhoods throughout Queens. At a Jamaica rent stabilized building owned by a landlord named as one the "[Worst Landlord](#)" of New York City by then-Public Advocate Leticia James – tenants organized by Catholic Migration Services and Chhaya have been battling issues of lack of heat, broken elevators, rodents, roaches, leaks, and general lack of repairs. Since 2023, tenants, together with advocates from Catholic Migration Services and Chhaya have been escalating their efforts against this landlord – who owns more than 70 buildings between the Bronx and Queens, winning rent reduction orders for lack of basic services and getting rent abatements and some initial repairs in a lawsuit in Queens housing court.

For years, Catholic Migration Services and Chhaya have also been organizing and representing tenants in multiple buildings in Jamaica owned by Zara Realty. In great part due to their organizing and advocacy, Zara Realty was sued by the New York State Attorney General's office for violating rent stabilization law with illegal charges and tenant harassment.

Protecting our New York City communities from landlord abuse and rampant speculation that makes housing in New York City unaffordable for the vast majority of New Yorkers, is a vital task that the City Council should continue to support. We urge the City Council to take action by increasing funding for both CHPS and Stabilizing NYC. **Stabilizing NYC, collectively, is asking for an increase of \$1.3 million dollars, or \$65,000 per organization. SNYC has not seen an increase in funding in over 6 years**, despite inflation and cost of living increases. **Similarly, we are seeking an increase in CHPS funding to \$4.95 million.** This funding has also remained static since 2016, even as New York City's housing crisis has deepened significantly, with the majority of NYC households now rent-burdened and homelessness increasing. The requested increase will enable Catholic Migration Services, and other legal and community-based organizations that do this critical work, to meet the growing complexity of community needs and retain front-line staff by providing cost-of-living increases. It will also sustain essential services including fighting evictions, protecting tenants from unsafe conditions, supporting code enforcement, offering housing court assistance, and providing crucial housing-related education and support across all five boroughs.

We also implore the City Council to address systemic delays in city contracting and payment processes. A recent survey of CHPS organizations reveals that 100% of agencies are experiencing registration delays, with some contracts dating back to FY23 still unregistered, forcing organizations to front these programs with their own limited resources while waiting years for payment. The current system forces organizations to advance our own limited resources to maintain critical services while waiting years for contract registration and payment. This dynamic creates severe operational challenges, cash that needs to be paid out in the form of wages from day one, and uncertainty in financial stability and repayment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

Testimony of Helen Taylor
Committee on Housing and Buildings
Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 25, 2025

Good Afternoon Everyone. I'm so grateful to be here. I am here in my wonderful, supportive housing apartment and want to share why this apartment is so very important to me.

Having my apartment - the very first apartment I have ever had in my life - has made a difference in my life today because it is a step closer to fulfilling my mission to live a better life. It's not just a place to live. I have a tremendous amount of support and my existence, my humanity is acknowledged. I am a part of a community. There are people that check on me, my birthdays are celebrated, when I had Covid, people went out and brought me groceries, plus so much more.

Getting my apartment and working with such wonderful people at the Fortune Society allowed me to go from hanging out and sleeping in the park, to performing in Shakespeare in the park. Yes, that's right, the Creative Arts department at the Fortune Society connected me with the wonderful people of the Public Theater and the next thing I know, I'm acting on stage at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park with thousands of people watching me every night, when not to long before that, I had to sleep and seek refuge in a public park.

My apartment allows me now to only be in the park when I want to. To perform, to practice, and to sit on the bench and listen to the birds. I am very grateful for this apartment and the people at the Fortune Society. You really saved my life. And I am grateful that I am able to reach out and give back to those who are in the situation that I was in, by advocating for more resources for supportive housing.

My story should not be unique - I contain multitudes- everyone, everyone should have access to supportive housing. Access to the life they want and DESERVE to live. A life of dignity.

Thank you again.

Testimony to the NYC Council
Committee on General Welfare
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 25, 2025

Good afternoon to the chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about an issue that frankly saved my life, Supportive Housing. I'm Victor Lee Walker, and I've been a resident of supportive housing through Jericho Project since 2017.

I was born in Detroit, where I lived for 40 years. As a 10-year-old child, it had been a dream to move to New York and perform on Broadway. I'm proud to say the film Muppets Take Manhattan was my introduction to this great city.

However, I don't have to tell you how tough it is living in New York. Everything is expensive, food, transportation, housing. Were it not for the lifeline of supportive housing, I would not be able to thrive the way I have. Supportive housing provided me with more than a stable place to live. It gave me the confidence and freedom to change the trajectory of my life.

I struggle with multiple disabilities. Without having to worry about my living situation, I was able to focus on my mental and physical health. I was diagnosed with Bipolar II Disorder two years ago. I'm a stroke survivor, and I have end stage kidney disease for which I am currently receiving dialysis.

Stable housing has allowed me to keep up with all of my doctor appointments and improve the quality of my life. Supportive Housing literally saves my life every day.

But, don't pity me. With all the health challenges I have, there are some amazing things happening in my life despite them. I am happy to say that my mental health is stable, I have a community of friends and family who love and support me, and in January of this year, I returned to college after being out for 17 years. At age 49, I'm a student at Lehman College, studying Africana Studies. In fact, I am missing class right now because speaking on this issue is so important to me. I'm an excellent student, and I'm so proud of myself. I'm grateful for organizations like Jericho Project and the Supportive Housing Network.

I'm here today, to make a path for the thousands of New Yorkers who want the opportunity to improve their lives by encouraging you to protect and expand funding for supportive housing. Reallocating and fully funding the NYC 15/15 supportive housing initiative would allow for more mental health services, employment services, and case managers who are directly responsible for guiding me through my achievements.

The funding would allow the non-profit organizations who fight every day for people like me to be paid on time and impact more lives. You on this committee hold that key!

I haven't made it to Broadway, yet, but someday, I will, and I will be able to thank all of you for continuing to fund supportive housing and making my dream of living in the greatest city in the world a reality. Thank you.

Buenas tardes. Gracias, Concejal Sanchez por darme la oportunidad de testificar sobre el presupuesto anual de la ciudad.

Es de mucha satisfacción compartir mi experiencia con los miembros del Consejo Municipal, ya que por medio de estas vivencias les puedo testificar todo lo que pase como sobreviviente, quiero decirles que gracias a la ayuda ofrecida por New Destiny encontré una vivienda digna para mis hijos, donde nos sentimos libres de todo abuso y de maltratos. Mis hijos sienten lo que es un hogar libre de violencia y traumas.

Dentro de mi caso, viví con un hombre narcisista que odiaba a mis hijos y mi madre, que me maltrato en todos los sentidos, tanto emocional como psicológico, tanto a mí como a mis hijos, y me usaba para lo que él quería.

Con la ayuda del programa federal *Emergency Housing Voucher* (EHV), un vale de asistencia a la vivienda, pude lograr darles más estabilidad a mis hijos. New Destiny me ayudo con el proceso de búsqueda y el papeleo para encontrar mi departamento. Ahora mis hijos pueden seguir su desarrollo emocional más estable.

Los programas de vivienda, como EHV y CityFHEPS, ayudan a las familias más vulnerables; a personas que no pueden pagar una renta estable para sus hijos debido a sus ingresos y por violencia doméstica que han pasado.

Gracias al programa EHV, mis hijos y yo estamos estables. Quisiera que otras familias que están pasando por este problema encuentren un apoyo. El programa CityFHEPS puede llegar a hacer lo mismo, y darles a otras familias y sobrevivientes de violencia domestica un techo cómodo a sus hijos, al igual que los míos.

Señoras y señores del Consejo Municipal, le pido que expandan el programa CityFHEPS y que los fondos sean incrementados este año. Muchas familias lo necesitan. Muchos sobrevivientes están pasando por procesos duros.

Le doy gracias a Dios primero y a New Destiny, que durante mi proceso de violencia doméstica me dieron ese apoyo. Así también quisiera que toda familia que esté pasando por esta situación sea escuchada y ayudada, pero sólo ustedes pueden hacer eso realidad.

Creo en que le será posible.

Gracias 🙏 y bendiciones a todos.

Neoyorquina, madre, sobreviviente de violencia doméstica, e integrante del programa Voces de Cambio de New Destiny Housing

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/25/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GABRIELA SANDOVAL PEQUEÑA

Address: _____

I represent: NEW DESTINY HOUSING

Address: CITYWIDE

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/25/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cameron Molyneux

Address: _____

I represent: VAW Local 2325

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. preliminary Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/25/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: OKSANA MICARON

Address: 633 3rd Ave NY, NY 10017

I represent: CSA NY

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenny Alvarez

Address: _____

I represent: SUPPORTIVE HOUSING NETWORK TENANT PANEL

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Doreen Burton

Address: _____

I represent: SUPPORTIVE HOUSING NETWORK OF NY TENANT PANEL

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTOR WALKER

Address: _____

I represent: SUPPORTIVE HOUSING NETWORK OF NY TENANT PANEL

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HELEN TAYLOR (VIRTUAL)

Address: _____

I represent: SUPPORTIVE Housing Network of NY TENANT PANEL

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: helle Ballan-Schwartz

Address: 71 Engert Ave, 212, Brooklyn NY 11222

I represent: the supportive housing network of New York

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/25/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Cogel

Address: _____

I represent: The Center for Justice Innovation

Address: 520 8th Ave.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jackie DelValle

Address: Take Root Justice

I represent: A + Stabilizing NYC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eulalia Mares (tenant)

Address: Est Harlem

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gladys CRUZ (tenant)

Address: [REDACTED] NY N/10029

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pilar Dejesus (Legal Services Provider)

Address: _____

I represent: Take Root Justice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jimmy Adams

Address: Commissioner, Department of Buildings

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Guillermo Pardo

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Policy & Legal Affairs

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John S. Sweeney

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Department of Technical Affairs

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gian V. Garte

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Finance

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: Department of Buildings

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark S. Spangola

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Administration

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: Department of Buildings

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Poon

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Susan A. Murray

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yecel Shamash

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Enforcement

I represent: Department of Buildings

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/25/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11238

I represent: Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F

Brooklyn, NY 11238

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

*BARICA IS
NOT TELLING*

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-25-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Goldstein

Address: _____

I represent: Association of Neighborhood & Housing Development

Address: (ANHDS)

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-25-2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BARICA Williams

Address: _____

I represent: Association of Neighborhood & Housing Development

Address: ANHDS

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHRISTIE PEACE Center for NYC

Address: 60 BROADST NY NY Neighborhood

I represent: Center for NYC Neighborhoods

Address: 60 Broad, 24th FL, NY Q1 10001

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michelle de la Hoz

Address: 621 DeGraw Street

I represent: Fifth Avenue Committee

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3.25.25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julith Goldiner

Address: The Legal Aid Society

I represent: 49 Thomas St NY NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3.25.25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rutha Seale

Address: _____

I represent: Take Root Justice

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

tenant

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-25-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gladys Cruz

Address: _____

I represent: TAKE ROOT JUSTICE

Address: _____

Tenant

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-25-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eduardo Marrero

Address: _____

I represent: TAKE ROOT JUSTICE

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-25-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Pillar De Jesus

Address: _____

I represent: TAKE ROOT JUSTICE

Address: _____



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

20

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/25/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alison Wilkey

Address: 129 Fulton St.

I represent: Coalition for the Homeless

Address: 129 Fulton St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAMON GILBERT

Address: 151 W 30th St, NY 10001

I represent: NYLPI

Address: 11

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anthony Feliciano

Address: _____

I represent: Housing Worker

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lucy Joffe

Address: _____

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margy Black Whisman

Address: _____

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ahmed Tiganj

Address: _____

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Babak T. Gafar

Address: _____

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: En. Rosa Kelly

Address: _____

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberly Dargatz

Address: Rosa Kelly

I represent: HPD

Address: HPD

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: March 25th, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tanya Oros-Cunningham

Address: _____

I represent: Neighborhood Housing Services of NYC

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ann Marie Santiago

Address: _____

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: March 25th, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angela Cummings

Address: _____

I represent: Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: March 25th, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gladstone Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: Neighborhood Housing Services of Bronx

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms