



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

**Testimony by Win for the New York State Senate Committees on Housing, Social Services,
and Aging Joint Hearing on State Rental Assistance
February 18th, 2025**

Thank you to Chairs Kavanagh, Persaud, Cleare, and the esteemed members of the State Senate Committees on Housing, Social Services, and Aging for the chance to submit testimony. My name is Chris Mann, and I am the Assistant Vice President of Policy & Advocacy at Win. Win is the largest provider of shelter and supportive housing in New York City. We operate 16 shelters and nearly 500 supportive housing units across the five boroughs. Each night, more than 7,000 people call Win “home,” including 3,800 children. Win is also a proud member of Housing Access NY (HANY), a broad coalition of more than 70 organizations from across New York State. HANY brings together advocates for tenants’ rights, landlords, children, immigrants, criminal justice, and more who are all united around the common goal of passing the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP).

As the State grapples with the worst homelessness crisis in its history, we are urgently requesting that you pass and fund HAVP in this year’s budget at \$250 million. The desperate need for HAVP is clear. There are nearly 160,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in New York State, a staggering increase of more than 50% from the previous year, making up nearly 20% of the nation’s homeless population. Even more alarming, the number of homeless children has more than doubled since 2022, reaching over 50,000 in 2024. Families with children account for more than 60% of the State’s homeless population, something we are acutely aware of at Win. But the crisis is not just a New York City issue—regions across the state have seen significant increases in homelessness, including a 138% increase in Glens Falls and Saratoga Springs, 130% in Orange County, and 82% in Rensselaer County.ⁱ In addition to the staggering numbers of people currently experiencing homelessness, there are many more at risk of losing their homes. In 2024, there were a total of 195,795 eviction filings Statewide.ⁱⁱ Additionally, more than half of all renter households (2.9 million) statewide are rent-burdened and 20 percent are severely rent burdened, paying 50 percent or more of their income on rent.ⁱⁱⁱ

HAVP is a targeted, cost-effective solution that addresses both homelessness prevention and rehousing. Although similar to the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (also known as Section 8), HAVP is a more flexible state-level program that ensures rental assistance reaches those in need, regardless of immigration status or criminal justice involvement.^{iv} It can provide stability for families at risk of eviction and a direct pathway out of homelessness for those already in shelter. In addition to stabilizing individuals and families, HAVP will provide financial stability to building owners, ensuring a steady stream of rental income from low-income tenants. We also know that housing vouchers reduce child poverty. For that reason, Governor Hochul’s own Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council (CPRAC) tasked with reducing child poverty by 50% in ten years, voted on recommendations that include a statewide housing voucher program.

Research shows that housing vouchers reduce homelessness and housing instability,^v improve



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outcomes for children,^{vi} and promote beneficial outcomes for family well-being, including *halving* intimate partner violence.^{vii} Federal Housing Choice Vouchers reduce the poverty rate for recipients by 43%^{viii} and provide long-term benefits to households that previously experienced homelessness.^{ix} State and local rental assistance vouchers have a similarly stabilizing effect: in New York City, during FY23, 81% of families with children who exited shelter did so with subsidies – mostly the City’s local rental assistance voucher, CityFHEPS – and those that exited with subsidies were 53 times less likely to return to shelter in the subsequent year compared to families who exited without assistance.^x

From a fiscal standpoint, HAVP is a common sense investment that will save the state hundreds of millions in downstream costs. Research by both the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy^{xi} and Win,^{xii} found that a \$250 million investment in HAVP would provide close to 13,000 households with vouchers, helping thousands of New Yorkers and their families move out of and avoid homelessness. The savings are substantial—by moving families out of the costly shelter system, New York City alone would save approximately \$40,000 per household annually. In regions outside of New York City, annual savings per household in shelter would be around \$18,000.^{xiii} In total, the program is projected to save New York State nearly \$96 million in emergency shelter costs alone in its first year.^{xiv}

Beyond direct shelter savings, HAVP will reduce costly public expenditures related to homelessness and eviction. We need to be honest, ignoring the homelessness crisis is not free. In fact, evictions and homelessness have substantial associated costs on top of the immeasurable human cost caused by the trauma of homelessness. Studies show that housing instability leads to increased healthcare costs, child welfare interventions, and criminal justice involvement. Win’s analysis found that if implemented, HAVP could save New York an estimated \$39 million on indirect downstream healthcare, youth incarceration, and child welfare costs.^{xv} The impact is even more profound when considering long-term savings—over five years, HAVP will generate over \$1 billion in net savings for the state.^{xvi}

Regionally, HAVP’s benefits are transformative. Win’s analysis found that in Western New York, HAVP could reduce sheltered homelessness by 82%, in the North Country by 50%, and in the Mid-Hudson region by 47%. If allocated strategically, HAVP could potentially eliminate sheltered homelessness all together in some areas.^{xvii} These reductions would not only improve lives but also relieve pressure on emergency shelter systems and social services statewide.

HAVP is a necessary tool to address New York’s housing crisis and prevent further escalation of homelessness. Rental assistance programs are among the most effective means of keeping families stably housed, reducing evictions, and ensuring economic security for thousands of low-income New Yorkers. As New York continues to face record levels of homelessness, this committee has a crucial opportunity to invest in a proven solution that will save lives, stabilize communities, and generate significant cost savings.



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We urge you to include \$250 million for HAVP in your one-house budget and ensure that it is fully funded in the final FY26 budget. Passing HAVP would provide the critical support needed to address the housing crisis head-on. Thank you for your time and commitment to ensuring all New Yorkers have access to safe and stable housing.

ⁱ New Yorkers in Need: Homelessness in New York State Report: Office of the New York State Comptroller. *New Yorkers in Need: Homelessness in New York State*. Albany, NY: Office of Budget and Policy Analysis, January 2025.

ⁱⁱ NYS Unified Court System “*State Wide Eviction Information*,” *January 2025*
<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiZGE3NzljYmItYTBMZC00OGI2LTliYTgtYzY5ZjI0N2U0MwYxIiwidCI6IjMONTZmZTkYLNWZDEtNDA2ZC1iNWEzLTUzNjRiZWMwYTgzMyJ9>

ⁱⁱⁱ “New Yorkers in Need – The Housing Insecurity Crisis,” *The Office of Budget and Policy Analysis, New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli*, February 2024, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/new-yorkers-need-housing-insecurity-crisis>

^{iv} The Housing Access Voucher Program Report: Tager, Hannah, Martin Gamboa, and Chris Mann. *The Housing Access Voucher Program: Saving New York State \$200 Million and Preventing Homelessness for Tens of Thousands of New Yorkers Every Year*. New York: Win, February 2024.

^v Ingrid Ellen Gould, “What Do We Know About Housing Choice Vouchers?,” *The NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy*, July 2018, https://furmancenter.org/files/fact-sheets/HousingChoiceVouchers_ige.pdf

^{vi} <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20150572>

^{vii} Douglas Rice, Major Study: Housing Vouchers Most Effective Tool to End Family Homelessness, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 2015, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/major-study-housing-vouchers-most-effective-tool-to-end-family-homelessness#:~:text=Major%20Study:%20Housing%20Vouchers%20Most%20Effective%20Tool,to%20report%20incidents%20of%20domestic%20violence;%20and>

^{viii} Sophie Collyer, et. Housing Vouchers and Tax Credits: Pairing the Proposal to Transform Section 8 with Expansions to the EITC and the Child Tax Credit Could Cut the National Poverty Rate by Half,” Center for Poverty and Social Policy, Columbia University Population Research Center, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5743308460b5e922a25a6dc7/t/5f7dd00e12dfe51e169a7e83/1602080783936/Housing-Vouchers-Proposal-Poverty-Impacts-CPSP-2020.pdf>

^{ix} Family Options Study: 3-Year Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families,” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/family-options-study-full-report.pdf>.

^x Analysis of data from Mayor’s Management Report 2023, NYC.gov. Page 242, (https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2023/2023_mmr.pdf)

^{xi} Hayley Raetz, Jiaqi Dong, Matthew Murphy, Vicki Been, “A State-Level Rent Voucher Program,” *The NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy*, https://furmancenter.org/files/publications/2_A_State-Level_Rent_Voucher_Program_Final.pdf

^{xii}The Housing Access Voucher Program Report: Tager, Hannah, Martin Gamboa, and Chris Mann. *The Housing Access Voucher Program: Saving New York State \$200 Million and Preventing Homelessness for Tens of Thousands of New Yorkers Every Year*. New York: Win, February 2024.

^{xiii} Ibid
^{xiv} Ibid
^{xv} Ibid
^{xvi} Ibid
^{xvii} Ibid