



new destiny  
housing

## TESTIMONY OF NEW DESTINY HOUSING TO THE NEW YORK STATE JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET HEARING ON HUMAN SERVICES

**Gabriela Sandoval Requena, Director of Policy and Communications  
February 12, 2025**

Thank you, Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair Pretlow, Senate Finance Committee Chair Krueger, Social Services Committee Chairs, Assemblywoman Davila and Senator Persaud, and members of the State Legislature for the opportunity to testify on behalf of New Destiny on Governor Hochul's Fiscal Year 2025-26 Executive Budget Proposal.

My name is Gabriela Sandoval Requena, Director of Policy and Communications at New Destiny Housing. I am here today to underscore the urgent need to protect survivors of domestic violence residing in supportive housing.

### **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 a leading advocate in the effort to increase housing resources for New Yorkers impacted by domestic violence.

We are also a co-convenor of the [Family Homelessness Coalition \(FHC\)](#), a collective of mothers with lived experience of homelessness and organizations committed to tackling homelessness among families in our city. New Destiny is a member of the Supportive Housing Network of New York and the Human Services Council.

### **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](#), more than 1 in 3 New Yorkers across the state will experience abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime. New York has the [highest demand for domestic violence services in the country](#), yet not all survivors are able to access resources and services, especially when it comes to permanent housing. In fact, most of the unmet requests from domestic violence survivors in New York State are housing related.

Without a safe place to rebuild their lives, survivors may be forced to remain in abusive situations, putting their lives at risk. In New York State, [1 out of every 6 homicides](#) were

domestic violence homicides, where the victim was either an intimate partner or a family member, according to the most recent data.

Survivors who can flee may spend years in shelter before securing appropriate housing and face a myriad of challenges to keep it. In New York City, where domestic violence has been the leading cause of family homelessness for years, survivors with children in Human Resources Administration (HRA) domestic violence shelter are [nearly 8 times more likely](#) to move to another shelter than to an apartment of their own upon reaching the state-mandated limit of 180 days.

Permanent affordable housing, coupled with support services, is critical for domestic violence survivors to rebuild their lives and thrive. Governor Hochul included additional protections for New Yorkers impacted by domestic violence, as well as increases for supportive housing programs and capital funding, in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Executive Budget Proposal. While we are grateful for these investments, they do not meet the need to ensure the long-term housing stability of survivors and their families.

## **PROTECTING SURVIVORS IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

Supportive housing provides survivors of domestic violence, and other vulnerable populations who have experienced the trauma of homelessness, abuse, and loss, with a safe, affordable place to live alongside services to help them rebuild their lives. The New York State Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP) has funded this housing since 1987, but at a rate that has barely changed since its inception.

NYSSHP is administered by the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to provide funding specifically for direct services tied to housing. More than 20,000 households across the state – all of whom are formerly homeless or at high risk – live in NYSSHP housing. Because of virtually flat funding for nearly 40 years, nonprofits are no longer able to pay their staff living wages and provide the level of security and services that our vulnerable families need to remain safe and stably housed. Since 2003, 33% of NYSSHP nonprofits have closed, left the program, or been absorbed by another agency.

New Destiny operates 5 NYSSHP buildings, with a total of 177 apartments where we house hundreds of children and adults impacted by domestic violence. The program is supposed to fund basic case management and security, but it falls tragically short.

NYSSHP provides annual service rates of \$2,964 for single households and \$3,900 for families, which average \$91,697 per New Destiny building. Simply put, NYSSHP only pays for 1 case manager (with benefits) and 0 building security.

If New Destiny relied on NYSSHP only to provide 24-hour building security and maintain the generally accepted case management ratio of 15:1, with 3 case managers to support survivors and their children, our staff would earn \$5.51 per hour, a third of the [minimum wage](#).

Like the other NYSSHP nonprofits across the state, we are forced to constantly fundraise from private donors to try to offset the state's disinvestment to pay staff a livable wage and benefits. Yet, it is impossible to make up the difference. New Destiny can provide some front-desk



security and 1 case manager, with the supervision of a part-time program director. This means that our case managers must oversee a workload of about 56 households, nearly 4 times the recommended case management ratio (1:15).

This enormous shortfall leaves NYSSHP staff chronically underpaid and domestic violence survivors unsafe and without the services needed to recover from the trauma.

Survivors in NYSSHP buildings need 24-hour building security to be safe; they need social and mental health services to thrive. **We are incredibly grateful that the Governor included an additional \$17.8 million for NYSSHP in her budget proposal. However, that is not enough to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors, including survivors of domestic violence, have a home to live safely and heal. We urge the Assembly and the Senate to increase NYSSHP funding by \$32 million in their One House budget resolutions, and to pass the Supportive Housing Modernization Act (Senate 136/Assembly 2134).**

### **INCREASE ESSHI FUNDING AND INDEX RATES TO INFLATION**

The more recently created Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) is the engine for new supportive housing across the State. Unlike NYSSHP, ESSHI provides both operating and service funding to support operating costs. While ESSHI rates are significantly higher than NYSSHP rates, ESSHI contracts deeply subsidize all the supportive housing apartments, which enables tenants to pay only 30% of their income in rent. Since the rate hasn't changed since the program's inception nearly a decade ago, we are now at a standstill being able to underwrite ESSHI buildings in New York City. This isn't conjecture. New Destiny has been told by our government capital funder that they cannot finance our pipeline project at the current ESSHI rate.

**In her Executive Budget Proposal, Governor Hochul increased the ESSHI annual per unit rate from \$25,000 to \$34,000 in New York City and \$31,000 elsewhere in the state. New Destiny fully supports this increase. We ask the Assembly and the Senate to include this increase in their One House budget resolution, as well as indexing the rates to inflation to ensure the long-term sustainability of the program.**

### **INCREASE HHAP FUNDING TO CREATE MORE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

OTDA's Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) has provided capital for supportive housing and other projects for over four decades. HHAP is a vital capital funding source for new construction and preservation, and the only one in many regions across the state.

In 2024, HHAP funding was depleted in less than 4 months. New Destiny was one of the many nonprofits who were not able to submit their completed proposals, which has consequentially stalled our new supportive housing developments for almost a year.

**We are grateful that the Governor included an additional \$25 million for HHAP in her budget proposal. However, this increase is not enough to meet the need. The supportive housing community is calling on the state to double funding for HHAP to \$256 million.**

## **INVEST 7.8% IN HUMAN SERVICES**

As a member of the Human Services Council, New Destiny is one of the hundreds of supporters of the [Just Pay campaign](#), which is calling for a 7.8% contract rate increase for nonprofit human services workers. Government contracts have not kept up with the Consumer Price Index. Providing nonprofits with a 7.8% increase on the total value of their state contracts will enable them to cover inflationary increases related to program costs and wages.

We commend Senator Persaud and Assemblyman Hevesi for introducing a legislation that would include NYSSHP and other human services programs in this overdue adjustment to wages (Senate 1580/Assembly 2590). NYSSHP has been excluded from previous increases, which has contributed to the program's deep underfunding. Fixing this, after correcting the historic inequities by passing the Supportive Housing Modernization Act, will ensure that the NYSSHP program remains stable into the next generation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

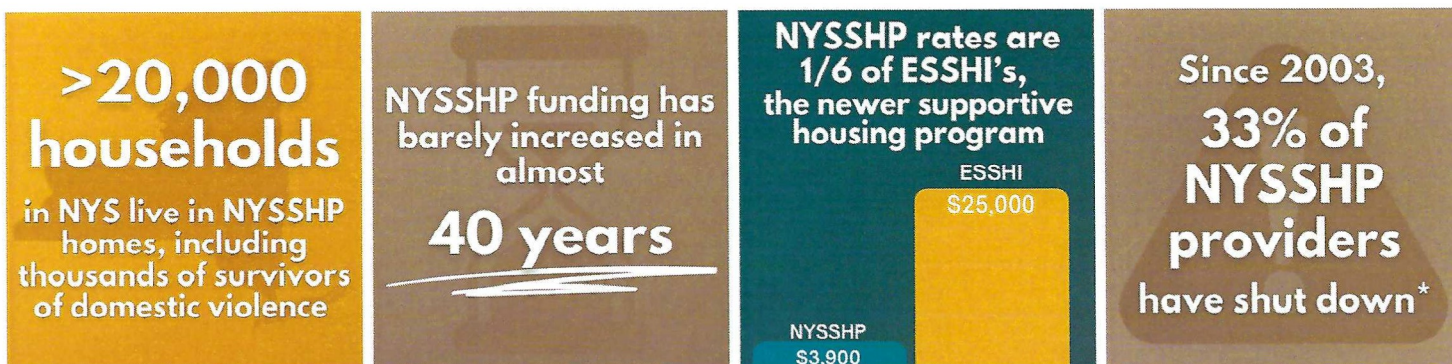


# Protect Domestic Violence Survivors in Supportive Housing #SaveNYSSHP

## WHAT IS NYSSHP?

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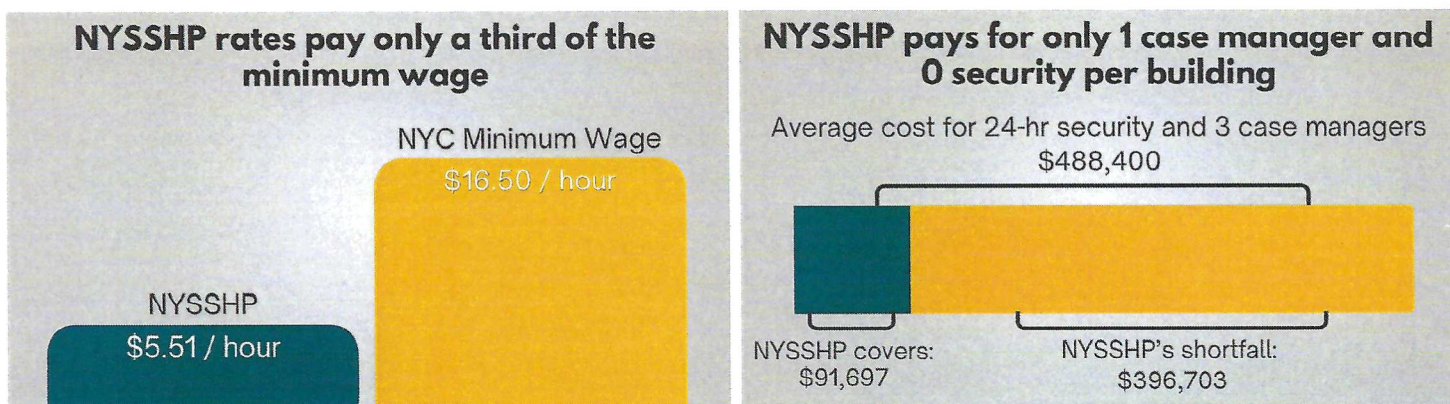
## NYSSHP NEEDS ADDITIONAL FUNDING URGENTLY



## NYSSHP AT NEW DESTINY

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## Governor Hochul and the NYS Legislature Must Save NYSSHP:

- Increase funding for NYSSHP by \$32 Million in FY26
- Pass the Supportive Housing Modernization Act (S136/A2134) to increase NYSSHP contract rates up to ESSHI levels over 5 years

\*Nonprofits had to close their doors, merge with another agency, or stop providing supportive housing.