



**Memorandum in Support:**  
**Home Stability Support (HSS)**  
**A.1620 (Hevesi) | S.2375 (Krueger)**  
**March 6, 2020**

Urban Pathways supports the creation of a state-wide housing subsidy program through the Home Stability Support (HSS) legislation, A.1620 (Hevesi) and S.2375 (Krueger). HSS would act as a tool to both prevent and end homelessness for low-income households, by creating a long-term solution for individuals and families to either stay in their homes or exit shelter into permanent housing.

New York is facing a homelessness and affordable housing crisis. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, there are 91,897 homeless individuals in New York State (based on the 2018 Point-in-Time count), and most of these individuals, 78,676, are in New York City. These numbers do not include the many additional New Yorkers who live doubled up, are couch-surfing with friends or family, or live in inappropriately sized apartments for their family.

At the same time, vacancies of affordable housing units are virtually non-existent. According to findings from the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, the vacancy rate for units with asking rents of less than \$800 per month was just 1.15%, and apartments ranging between \$800 and \$999 per month had a vacancy rate of only 2.1%. These vacancy rates mean affordable housing is next to impossible to come by for low-income individuals and those on a fixed income, as well as for those working minimum wage jobs. This is evident by the fact that the average stay for both single adults and families with children in NYC Dept. of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters is over one year, which costs the government far more than it would to place households in permanent housing with a subsidy.

Urban Pathways is a nonprofit organization that provides services to homeless and at-risk single adults through a unique continuum of care and housing first model. Some of our services include street outreach teams, a drop-in center, and safe havens that serve chronically street homeless New Yorkers, supporting their first steps to coming inside. These programs find it increasingly challenging to place individuals into permanent housing.

The ability to move clients into permanent housing with greater speed and success rates through an effective housing subsidy would not only positively impact the voucher recipient, but would also have the positive effect of allowing service models to be used as intended and serve more individuals each year. Currently, our safe haven beds are sometimes occupied by individuals for long periods of time because they cannot find housing. An effective subsidy program to move people forward would open safe haven beds for those chronically homeless individuals who need them as they begin the process of transitioning off the streets, while ensuring that their stay need be only the intended three to six months, or the amount of time they need to feel ready for housing of their own.

We are confident that a state level voucher would be an effective tool to combat homelessness and lengthy shelter stays by making apartments on the private market more accessible. HSS would pay 85% of the Fair Market Rent (FMR), with local districts having the option to pay up to the additional 15%. This would make private market housing accessible to homeless New Yorkers and those at-risk of losing their homes due to eviction, domestic violence, or hazardous conditions, which would effectively lower the shelter census and the number of households entering homelessness to begin with.

Urban Pathways strongly supports this legislation and urges its adoption.

*For questions or additional information, please contact Nicole McVinua, Director of Policy at Urban Pathways at [nmcvinua@urbanpathways.org](mailto:nmcvinua@urbanpathways.org) or 212-736-7385.*