

Testimony of the New York Housing Conference

New York City Council Committee on Public Housing

June 17, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Brendan Cheney. I am the Director of Policy and Operations at the New York Housing Conference (NYHC). I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify.

NYHC 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 are testifying about our concerns about the status of the 5,500 households that had received federal Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) through the New York City Housing Authority that are at-risk of losing their housing.

The Emergency Housing Voucher Program (EHV) was part of a package of COVID relief passed in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, appropriating \$5 billion to fund 70,000 rental assistance vouchers. Nationally, the program served the most vulnerable populations – including those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, domestic violence survivors, and survivors of human trafficking. Funding for vouchers was to remain available until September 30, 2030.

The program would have naturally phased out as families left the program because statute prevented vouchers from being reissued to another family. EHV's also came with additional funding that public housing agencies (PHAs) could use to implement housing navigator programs, landlord incentives and cover one-time costs such as deposits and moving expenses. New York State was issued over 9,400 vouchers, housing over 20,000 people with the vast majority allocated through the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA).

However, last March, HUD announced the original appropriation for the vouchers would be exhausted by this year - four years earlier than expected. In New York City, these vouchers keep the most vulnerable renters with the lowest incomes housed, including survivors of domestic violence, youth aging out of foster care and patients of our public hospital system experiencing homelessness.

These households cannot afford the market rent of their current apartment without the federal subsidy and the housing supply shortage means it would be next to impossible for them to find new homes. NYHC's 2025 analysis on the issue found that the average EHV household would need to increase their income by over 400% to stay in their current apartment. The average income of a household receiving an EHV was just over \$18,000 – too little to afford even \$500 in rent. Meanwhile, their average rent is about \$2,300 with the voucher covering about \$1,900 on average. Without a new form of support, many of these households will become homeless.

We are grateful that even though this was a crisis created by the federal government, both HPD and NYCHA have sought ways to keep EHV holders housed by identifying other federal funding sources such as HOME-ARP (serving all HPD-issued EHV households and 1700 NYCHA-issued EHV households) as well as HASA and vacancies in PACT and public

housing. At this time, it is unclear how many households will be able to move into PACT and public housing but it is likely that not all remaining EHV households will be accommodated. We urge the City to identify additional rental assistance supports to help households remain in place, otherwise there is a risk that families may lose their housing and enter homelessness.

We strongly support the resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.10992/S.9430-A to ensure that families at risk of losing their EHV are eligible for the state funded Housing Access Voucher Program. In addition, we strongly encourage the City to extend CityFHEPS eligibility to NYCHA EHV families and fund it in the FY 2027 Budget. While the City has made some progress on aiding EHV households, it is imperative that solutions protect and keep all EHV households stably housed.