

Social Workers and Homelessness Researchers Support the Campaign for NY/NY Housing

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

February 21st, 2017

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We are writing to express support for the Campaign for NY/NY Housing. We join the many community members and state and local agencies advocating for the housing agreement necessary to establish 35,000 units of supportive housing across New York State over the next ten years. With roughly 67,000 men, women, and children staying in shelters at any given time - and countless more on the street, in cars, and doubled up - the state must take action now.

As social workers and homelessness researchers, we are intimately familiar with the frontlines of homeless services in New York, and we know the value of supportive housing. There is a large body of research demonstrating the effectiveness of supportive housing, and communities across New York and the United States have drastically reduced chronic homelessness and Veteran homelessness through supportive housing initiatives. Access to housing and flexible support services is the state's best option for ending homelessness among high-need and high-cost groups, such as those with complex and chronic health conditions. In addition to promoting housing stability, supportive housing has been shown to reduce the use of costly services, such as shelters, emergency room services, and inpatient hospital stays.

Supportive housing can also be used to advance many of your other budget priorities, including eliminating barriers to HIV/AIDS care; reducing healthcare costs, including high-cost institutional care for seniors; and increasing access to community-based services for vulnerable populations. Effectively targeting supportive housing to those with the greatest needs - including individuals with disabilities, chronically homeless adults, individuals exiting institutions, and homeless families with complex needs - has the potential to positively impact these other priority areas.

New York State has an opportunity to set a national example. We urge you to work with municipalities across the state to establish agreements to fund these 35,000 units. Finally following through on the supportive housing promise will send a clear message to the community that the state is committed to ending homelessness.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Amanda Aykanian, Research and Project Lead at the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services, at amanda.aykanian@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

The New York-New Jersey Regional Network of the National Homelessness Social Work Initiative
[Network member schools and faculty contacts are listed on the following page.]

The New York-New Jersey Regional Network of the National Homelessness Social Work Initiative

Binghamton University, Department of Social Work
Cassandra Bransford, MSW, PhD

College at Brockport, Department of Social Work
Barbara Kasper, MSW

Daemen College, Department of Social Work and Sociology
Diane Bessel, PhD

Hunter College, Silberman School of Social Work
Dan Herman, MSW, PhD

Lehman College, Department of Social Work
Carl Mazza, MSW, DSW

Long Island University, Department of Social Work
Ilene Nathanson, DSW & Donna Wang, MSW, PhD

Nazareth College, Social Work Department
Leanne Charlesworth, MSW, PhD, Virginia David, MSW, & Jed Metzger, MSW, PhD

New York University, Silver School of Social Work
Deborah Padgett, PhD

Roberts Wesleyan College, Department of Social Work
Laura Ribbing, MSW

Rutgers, School of Social Work
Emmy Tiderington, MSW, PhD

Stony Brook, School of Social Welfare
Joel Blau, DSW

Syracuse University, School of Social Work
Keith Alford, PhD & Carrie Jefferson Smith, MSW, DSW

Touro College, Graduate School of Social Work
Shakira Kennedy, MSW, PhD

University at Albany, School of Social Welfare
Amanda Aykanian, MA, PhD Candidate, Keith Chan, MSW, PhD & Wonhyung Lee, MSW, PhD

University at Buffalo, School of Social Work
Elizabeth Bowen, PhD

Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work
Heleen Van Raan, MSW, PhD