

January 20, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Mayor Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Commissioner Michael P. Hein
New York State Office of Temporary and
Disability Assistance
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12243

Commissioner Louise Carroll
New York City Department of Housing
Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Commissioner RuthAnne Visnaukas
New York State Division of Homes and
Community Renewal
38-40 State Street
Albany, NY 12207

Commissioner Steven Banks
New York City Human Resources
Administration
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007

Senator Brian Kavanagh
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing,
Construction and Community Development
LOB 512
Albany, NY 12247

Councilmember Robert Cornegy Jr.
Chair, Committee on Housing and Buildings
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz
Chair, Assembly Committee on Housing
LOB 943
Albany, NY 12248

Commissioner Bill Chong
New York City Department of Youth and
Community Development
2 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10007

Commissioner David Hansell
New York City Administration for Children's
Services
150 Williams Street
New York, NY 10038

RE: Policy Recommendations for One Shot Deals, FHEPS and CityFHEPS

Dear Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Hein, Commissioner Visnaukas, Senator Kavanagh,
Assemblymember Cymbrowitz, Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Carroll, Commissioner Banks,
Councilmember Cornegy Jr., Commissioner Chong and Commissioner Hansell,

The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified housing insecurity across New York State to an unprecedented degree. As New Yorkers struggle to pay rent, the City and State face an eviction crisis, with over 220,000 New Yorkers currently defending eviction proceedings and no blanket moratorium in place. Statewide, over 700,000 renter households have indicated they had no confidence to pay rent in the month of December, putting them at risk of eviction when the partial moratoria lift. The brunt of this crisis is being felt disproportionately by communities of color, who have experienced more Covid-19 related job losses and are much more likely to have fallen behind on rent payments than white New Yorkers. The inability of struggling tenants to afford their rent in turn impacts landlords and the city's affordable and rent stabilized housing stock. Owners of smaller buildings, who are more likely than owners of larger buildings to be Black and Latinx and people with disabilities, tend to lack sufficient capital or access to credit to weather months of missed rent payments.

The local, state, and federal responses to Covid-19 have failed to meet the unprecedented and long-term demand for rent relief. As a result, we face the prospect of a dire spike in homelessness once moratoria lift. The current crisis has taught us that we are only as safe as the most vulnerable among us. It is a moral and public health imperative that we work together to provide robust rent relief.

Over the last several months, a diverse group of property owners and operators, tenant advocates, and legal service providers came together as the Eviction Prevention Roundtable to develop up-stream solutions to prevent evictions. The Roundtable has created a set of recommendations to streamline and expand eligibility for existing assistance programs, align them more closely with the cost of housing, and address growing economic need. It is widely understood that housing instability and eviction lead to a wide range of negative health effects or exacerbating existing health issues, including trauma, stress and increased likelihood of emergency room visits. Therefore, these recommendations have the potential to reduce negative health effects beyond the current pandemic.

The City and State should:

1. Waive the requirement for a Housing Court proceeding or eviction filing for FHEPS and CityFHEPS (in community) eligibility, while expanding FHEPS and CityFHEPS eligibility to include adults with disabilities, seniors, those aging out of foster care, runaway and homeless youth, domestic violence survivors, hospital discharges and those discharged from incarceration who would otherwise go to shelter, and long-term tenancies (15 years or more in current location). For CityFHEPS, fully implement in community eligibility for youth aging out of foster care and runaway and homeless youth by drafting clear referral procedures from administering agencies.
2. Raise the rent ceiling for FHEPS and CityFHEPS. FHEPS should be raised to Section 8 payment standards and inspection standards, and CityFHEPS should be raised to Fair Market Rent, as determined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), while encouraging high-quality housing for all New Yorkers through new appropriations for inspection resources and better administrative coordination between

agencies to improve and prioritize inspection infrastructure for homeless or extremely low-income New Yorkers.

3. Waive the requirement to repay One-Shot Deals and provide flexibility on the future ability to pay assessment, at least for the duration of the Covid-19 emergency, by approving applicants with strong future job prospects, or parties who have reached a mediated agreement attesting to the viability of future ability to pay in order to help more people remain stably housed as a bridge to employment.
4. Fully implement HRA's decision to end the *de facto* eviction-filing requirement for One Shot Deals (OSDs). We commend HRA for being explicit that tenants are eligible for one-time rental assistance payments, but we must ensure this is widely known by providing training and awareness for property owners, and guidance to HRA workers on situations that are eligible for One Shot Deals.
5. Clarify the eligibility criteria for One Shot Deals and ensure expenses and income are considered holistically when developing a viable future plan to pay rent going forward, factoring in living expenses before rent payment.
6. Adopt explicit priorities for awarding One Shot Deals to promote bias-free outcomes that are commensurate with the economic pressures facing applicants, and designate a single point of contact or window within HRA to expedite applications for applicants seeking assistance prior to the commencement of eviction proceedings.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure that New Yorkers can avoid eviction during this unprecedented crisis.

Signed,

The Eviction Prevention for Non-Payment Solutions Roundtable, consisting of:

Enterprise Community Partners (Convener of Roundtable and co-convener of Family Homelessness Coalition)

Bronxworks

Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA)

Hon. Fern Fisher, Special Assistant for Social Justice Initiatives to the Dean of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law, Hofstra University

Homeless Services United

Housing Court Answers

The Legal Aid Society

Jason Boroff Esq. of Jason Boroff & Associates, PLLC

Jocelyn Morales, tenant

LISC NYC

L+M Development Partners
The New York State Association for Affordable Housing (NYSFAFH)
The New York Peace Institute
Phipps Houses
The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)
WIN

And aligned partners:

ANHD
Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association
BFC Partners
Benchmark Title Agency LLC
Breaking Ground
Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)
CAMBA
Care for the Homeless
Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens
Catholic Charities Community Services
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Center for New York City Neighborhoods (CNYCN)
Center for Urban Community Services
Church Women United in New York State
Citizens' Committee for Children (Co-convener of the Family Homelessness Coalition)
Coalition for the Homeless
Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)
Community Housing Innovations, Inc.
Community Preservation Corporation
Construction & General Building Laborers' Local 79
The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

Curtis + Ginsberg Architects
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
Designing the WE
Douglaston Development
Dunn Development Corp.
Emergency Shelter Network
Fair Housing Justice Center
Fetner Properties
The Fortune Society
Fountain House
Gateway Housing
Goddard Riverside
Gotham Organization
Health & Housing Consortium, Inc.
Henry Street Settlement
Help USA
Housing Opportunities Made Equal Inc. (HOME)
Housing and Services, Inc.
Housing Rights Initiative
The Hudson Companies
IMPACCT Brooklyn
Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing
LISC New York State Housing Stabilization Fund
LiveOn NY
Long Island Coalition for the Homeless
Long Island Fair Housing Services
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
Mary Lupien, Councilmember, City of Rochester

MBD Community Housing Corp.
Metropolitan Realty Group
MLappin & Associates LLC
Neighborhood Restore HDFC
New Destiny Housing
New York State Council of Churches
Neighborhood Care Team, Inc.
Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter, Inc.
Neighborworks America: Northeast Region
The New York Housing Conference (NYHC)
Omni New York LLC
The Osbourne Association
The Partnership for the Homeless
Providence House, Inc
Rabbi Marc Margolius, Senior Program Director, Institute for Jewish Spirituality
Red Stone Equity Partners
Rent Stabilization Association (RSA)
Reverend Monshin Paul Naamon, Tendai Buddhist Institute
Reverend Steven Price, Community Christian Church
Riseboro
Rockabill
Safe Horizon
Samaritan Daytop Village
SCO Family of Services
Selfhelp Realty Group
Services for the UnderServed, Inc. (S:US)
Settlement Housing Fund
Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation

Sunita Viswanath, Cofounder, Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus

Supportive Housing Network of New York

University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP)

United Neighborhood Houses of New York, Inc.

Upstate Downstate Housing Alliance

Urban Architectural Initiatives (UAI)

Urban Pathways

Volunteers of America-Greater New York

Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County

Youth Action Programs and Homes Inc.