



NYSAC
— NEW YORK STATE —
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

April 10, 2026

Hon. Kathy Hochul
Governor, State of New York
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader, NYS Senate
907 Legislative Office Bldg
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Carl Heastie
Speaker, NYS Assembly
932 Legislative Office Bldg
Albany, NY 12248

RE: Addressing New York State’s Affordability Crisis with Rental Assistance

Dear Governor Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie,

As budget negotiations continue, we write to urge you to include **\$250 million for the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)** in the enacted SFY 2026–27 State Budget to help address the state’s growing affordability crisis.

Many considerations are on the table regarding how best to address the affordability crisis for New Yorkers. We are grateful to see the HAVP program reach implementation in our cities and counties. The rental assistance distributed through this program is already allowing New Yorkers across the State to find permanent, stable homes.

However, without increased funding for the program, the vouchers cannot go nearly as far as we need them to. In the crises exacerbated by federal cuts, well-funded solutions are scarce for people in search of homes, and many are at risk of losing the housing they have. We must contend with the vast scale of the problem in New York State:

- There are over 158,000 people experiencing homelessness, including 50,733 children.
- Of all tenants, 46% are rent burdened and 20% are severely rent burdened – one unplanned event away from becoming homeless themselves.

To address chronic homelessness, and stop the cycle before it begins, there must be resources to prevent evictions and supply pathways to stable, permanent housing.

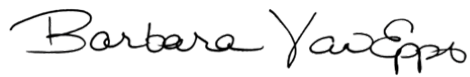
Clearly, the affordability crisis is felt by low-income individuals across the State, and the uncertainty is acute for hundreds of thousands of households. HAVP is a solution that helps, but with just under 2,000 vouchers allocated from the \$50M budget, we miss an opportunity to do more. For example, Westchester County reported 1,611 people experiencing homelessness as of the most recent Point-in-Time Count, but can only distribute 78 vouchers with the current budget allocation. The pilot is a strong strategy that will, unfortunately, be unable to meet the immense and urgent needs across the state without a larger investment.

Particularly in municipalities with limited resources, greater access to rental assistance is a crucial piece of the puzzle. While building more affordable and supportive housing is a necessary step for these communities, it should be coupled with increased investment in rental assistance to holistically address the problem. Cities and counties need the additional tools to address the interconnected crises of affordability, homelessness, and eviction.

As statewide municipal associations representing local leaders striving to support struggling and low-income households, we ask you to take the needs of our communities into account by including \$250M for the Housing Access Voucher Program in this year's enacted state budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Barbara Van Epps in black ink.

Barbara Van Epps
NYCOM Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Stephen J. Acquario in black ink.

Stephen J. Acquario, Esq.
NYSAC Executive Director