Volunteers of America® GREATER NEW YORK

NEW YORK STATE

FY27 POLICY PRIORITIES

Volunteers of America-Greater New York (VOA-GNY) is an anti-poverty organization working to end homelessness in Greater New York by providing housing, health and wealth-building services to individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. We deliver services to more than 35,000 adults and children annually through 70+ programs in New York City, Westchester County and Northern New Jersey.

1. Strengthen NY's domestic violence safety net

Domestic violence (DV) programs are in financial distress and over 1,700 people were denied services in 2024 due to a lack of resources. Single survivors are particularly underserved as NY's DV shelter system was designed primarily for families. The **SAFE Shelter Act (A3264B/S7738A)** will immediately ensure equitable access to shelter for single survivors by changing the funding model that creates a disincentive to serve them.

Large cuts and competition for **Office of Victim Services (OVS) funding**, followed by only partial restorations, have made long-term planning nearly impossible. The state must restore, expand, and stabilize funding for OVS with a multi-year, needs-based model that preserves the capacity and continuity of crisis services statewide.

2. Help households avoid and exit homelessness

Housing affordability is a top concern for New Yorkers. In New York City, 1 in 7 public school students are homeless, and looming federal cuts jeopardize the housing stability of thousands more. New York State must add $250M to the **Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)** to help more households maintain housing stability and exit shelters.

3. Invest in the supportive housing continuum

Every year, more people are found eligible for supportive housing, yet acceptance and placement rates decrease—despite an 8% vacancy rate in NYC supportive housing apartments. Investments in the **Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP)** and **Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI)** to renovate and preserve units in disrepair—and provide adequate funding for services—can help maximize existing capacity and ensure providers are equipped to serve all eligible clients. Additionally, further simplifying supportive housing categorization and interviews will help house more eligible people.

HHAP also supports purpose-built housing, yet funding is quickly exhausted, staggering production. Bolstering HHAP funds in the 5-year Capital Plan and restoring its use to include shelter development will maintain the affordable housing pipeline and create a means to replace outdated shelter facilities.

For more information, contact Catherine Trapani, VP of Public Policy & Government Affairs at ctrapani@voa-gny.org or (917) 658-0435

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NEW YORK CITY

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1. Ensure timely payments to DHS shelter providers

Chronic late payments to nonprofit shelter providers threaten the safety net that upholds NYC's right to shelter. As of April 2025, the City had 4,000 outstanding invoices totaling $861 million owed to non-profits, a lion share through DHS contracts. MOCS must implement **Local Law 11 of 2026** prior to FY27 to restore providers to fiscal solvency.

2. Streamline access to housing

Replicate VOA-GNY's Street to Home Program

Many people experiencing homelessness take refuge on the streets and in subways, unable to navigate the complex process of obtaining housing. Street to Home allows them to bypass shelter and immediately move into permanent supportive housing.

Fully fund City rental assistance

NYC must budget for continued growth of CityFHEPS and provide additional funding for CHAP to meet the need of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

Simplify access to supportive housing

Intro 0346 will simplify arduous 2010e applications and ensure only necessary materials are required. Additionally, further simplifying supportive housing categorization and interviews will help more eligible people move into otherwise vacant units.

Ensure timely access to rental assistance

CityFHEPS is one of the most effective tools we have to end homelessness, but administrative delays leave people stuck in shelter for months or even years. Addressing delays in application, payment, and renewal processing will reduce the number of people in shelter and save the City money.

3. Restore dignity to DHS shelters

NYC's shelter system is made up of aging, converted buildings rarely designed to accommodate the needs of people experiencing homelessness. NYC must undertake fiscal and structural interventions to ensure the stability and well-being of people living in its shelters. A DHS/HRA capital needs assessment will identify shelters for reinvestment, while adjustments to the DHS model budget and dedicated renovation funds can support quality-improvement projects.

Where appropriate, transferring ownership to nonprofit operators can enable direct investment and independent financing for renovations and repairs.

4. Support the human services workforce

While helping address poverty, many nonprofit human service workers face financial hardship themselves—and earn 30% less than their government counterparts. **Wage Equity Legislation (Intro 0452)** will close this pay gap.

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