



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

How can New York fix the housing crisis and support new migrants? Expand access to vouchers.

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Anyone following the news knows that New York City is experiencing an unprecedented homelessness crisis, which has been exacerbated by the arrival of over 160,000 migrants over the last year and a half. Today, over 150,000 people in the city call shelters 'home' — 50,000 more than the population of Albany, NY. Let us say that again: there are more homeless New Yorkers than there are residents of our state capital. But while some see this crisis as a threat to the City, it is an incredible opportunity for New York if our leaders take the right steps to welcome these newcomers and integrate them into our communities. One critical step is the statewide [Housing Access Voucher Program \(HAVP\)](#), which was included in the one-house budgets for the New York State Senate and the Assembly. This is a monumental step forward that will enable migrant families to move out of shelter and find stability, advance school and community integration across all of New York State — [one of the nation's most racially and economically segregated states](#) — and [save our government billions of taxpayer dollars](#).

Housing advocates across New York City and State support voucher programs like the statewide [HAVP](#) because [research shows](#) that housing vouchers are a critical tool for providing stability for families experiencing homelessness and are economically prudent for local governments. Removing citizenship barriers to accessing vouchers would give even more families the ability to stabilize upon arrival and acclimate to the community without interruption. **For example, [Win estimates that the state of New York could save over \\$1 billion dollars over the course of five years](#), in addition to the countless positive impacts of housing stability on families, if it adopted the HAVP model currently in the state legislature.** Furthermore, these programs would target many families that have been in shelter for years, aiding in creating more capacity in the shelter system for future new arrivals.

Voucher programs also have the potential to desegregate New York State communities and schools while simultaneously promoting long-term community integration. Today, about a third of New Yorkers are living in segregated counties. Specifically, 95% of the Black and African-American residents are living in a county that is highly segregated from white households, according to a [2023 report released by Gov. Kathy Hochul's office](#). Unfortunately, segregated neighborhoods result in segregated schools. [Studies](#) over the past two decades show that New York City schools are among the most segregated schools in the country. Black and Latine students are [more than three times as likely](#) as white students to be enrolled in high-poverty schools. Given that the majority of the new immigrants arriving in New York since 2022 have come from Latin America, siphoning these predominantly Black and brown migrants off to just a handful of schools near the emergency shelters they are housed in only further segregates New York schools and prevents adequate choice for those families.



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Desegregating New York schools isn't just the right thing to do, but it has a tremendous benefit for all students across our state. [Research](#) shows that when students attend school with peers from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, they develop stronger empathy, critical thinking, and communication skills. Expanding voucher eligibility to newly arrived families will not only provide much-needed stability to their lives in New York, but it will also help ensure Black and Latine students are integrated into our school system, improving outcomes for all of our kids.

Despite their tremendous benefits, vouchers are a bridge to a more permanent solution like affordable housing and they address a small part of the larger issue. The City must still continue to invest in affordable housing options that are available to more families and individuals by tearing down the arbitrary barriers to housing that are experienced disproportionately by communities of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable New Yorkers. We recognize the City cannot shoulder the financial burden of this moment on its own. The federal government must also provide work authorization for all new migrants upon arrival and create a pathway to citizenship so that migrants can work, find financial stability, and integrate into their new communities as welcomed neighbors. The federal government should also expedite the delivery of funds to school districts and other City agencies supporting migrants this year and at any time when there are influxes of newcomers.

Expanding statewide voucher programs such as [HAVP](#) is the smart, common sense, and human thing to do—not just to stave the financial woes of this current wave of migration, but for the long-term stability and dignity of all families in our State's shelter system, many of whom are Black and Latine and undocumented, looking to achieve their dreams like every New Yorker. The New York State Senate and Assembly made the humane and cost-effective decision to enact this program into their budget. Now, as the race to finalize the budget continues, it is time for Governor Hochul to do the right thing and commit to a budget with thousands of homeless and migrant New Yorkers in mind by expanding HAVP.