

Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2026 Executive Budget Proposal:
Topic Human Services
February 5, 2026

Good morning Chair, Ranking Member and Members of the Assembly and Senate Ways and Means Committees.

Good morning. I am Barbara Baer, Program Director of New York Foundation for Senior Citizens' Home Sharing and Respite Care Program. On behalf of our Board of Directors and our President, Linda Hoffman, we would appreciate your ensuring the continuation of our program by providing \$500,000 within the 2026-2027 State-Wide Budget through the Assembly and Senate and from your individual discretionary budgets.

Our program provides the only services of their types in New York City.

Our free home sharing service is implemented by Social Workers who use their professional skills to successfully match older adult "hosts" with extra space in their apartments or houses to share with responsible, compatible "guests" in need of affordable housing. One of the "matchmates" must be age 60 or over.

During the first 7 months of fiscal year 2026, the program has already matched 70 hosts and guests in 35 home sharing arrangements and currently has two matches pending. At this rate, the program is on its way to exceeding

last year's record of matching 100 hosts and guests in 50 shared living arrangements at the one-time cost of \$3,991 for each host and guest matched.

Our respite care service is also implemented by professional Social Workers. They arrange affordable, short-term, in-home care at the low cost of \$19.65 per hour, paid directly to the home care workers by the frail elderly, who are attempting to manage at home alone or with the help of others, and, thereby, prevent their need for nursing home care.

Although the cost of private agency home care is \$30 per hour, our respite care service provides the lowest cost, highest quality home care at \$19.65 per hour and free of charge under emergency circumstances.

During the past 45 years, we have provided over 12,315 frail older adults and many more thousands of their caregivers with respite care services plus jobs for hundreds of Certified Home Health Aides. The one time per person cost of providing respite care services during the last 2025 fiscal year was only \$553.

Findings from our study of the July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 fiscal year demonstrate that New York State provided our Home Sharing and Respite Care Program with a total of \$415,498. In turn, the program saved New York State \$2,639,674.25 in Medicaid expenses by preserving and providing affordable housing and preventing the need for the institutionalization of frail elderly.

Along with providing the State significant annual savings in Medicaid and other expenses, our home sharing and respite care services: enable the City's older adults to maintain and remain in their homes, obtain affordable housing, prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness and prevent institutionalization in nursing homes and homeless shelters and provide jobs for Home Health Aides.

Our program is totally dependent upon government refunding, each and every fiscal year, to continue to fulfill an ever-increasing number of requests for its services. To ensure that the program remains fiscally viable throughout each fiscal year, our program must receive sufficient New York State Budget and privately raised funds to cobble together with New York City Budget funding.

To continue our program city-wide requires the inclusion of \$500,000 within the 2026-2027 State Budget through the Assembly and Senate and allocations from your individual discretionary budgets.

Thank you very much, in advance, for hopefully providing these desperately needed funds.