

Fixing CityFHEPS

Domestic violence is the [#1 cause](#) of family homelessness in New York City. While the [City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement \(CityFHEPS\)](#) program has been a lifeline for domestic violence survivors and other New Yorkers in need of rental assistance, and there have been some recent system improvements, significant issues remain that delay move-ins, prolong shelter stays, frustrate landlords, and seriously threaten housing stability.

We welcome the reforms in the city's May 2026 [SPEED report](#) — several of which reflect longstanding New Destiny recommendations — and we urge the city to make them permanent and comprehensive while closing the eligibility gaps the report leaves open.

The following recommendations do not address every concern or opportunity for improvement, but they reflect some of the most significant and/or consistent issues experienced by New Destiny's clients and the navigators supporting them in their housing search. New Destiny is ready to partner with the city to effectively address these hurdles.

1. Implement the Set of Laws Passed to Expand CityFHEPS

The sooner the administration complies with the 2025 court ruling and implements the set of laws passed by the City Council in 2023, the faster we can reduce the number of households entering shelter. This will not only save funding from the expensive shelter system, but it will help save the lives of domestic violence survivors without a Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter history.

Under current rules, eligibility remains largely tied to a stay in the DHS system — which excludes survivors who fled to domestic violence shelters operated by the Human Resources Administration (HRA), outside the DHS system, despite the same experience of homelessness and the same housing need. Implementing the expansion laws — which broaden eligibility beyond a prior shelter stay — would reach these survivors directly, letting them move from safety into permanent housing rather than entering the DHS system simply to qualify.

Notably, the SPEED report's reforms target the speed of placement, not eligibility — making implementation of these laws all the more urgent for survivors who cannot yet qualify.

2. Invest in Housing Navigation to Expedite Placements

Utilize the services of housing providers who have navigation experience and can focus solely on finding voucher holders safe, affordable homes. This will help move people out of shelter faster and lift the burden of housing search assistance off the shoulders of shelter staff who do not have the capacity, skill set, and/or experience. The city's new MATCH pilot — empowering nonprofit partners to match clients with available homes — is a welcome step in this direction; we urge the city to make it permanent, extend it beyond targeted developments, and partner with population-specific providers. This would involve:

- a. Contracting with housing providers to offer navigation and time-limited aftercare to ensure voucher utilization and long-term stability — modeled after New Destiny's successful [EHV Program](#). This is an enormous cost-saving measure, costing only \$4,250 per household placed, about 4% of the average annual shelter costs for a family with children.
- b. Making these housing navigation providers, plus HUD Continuum of Care funded navigation providers, *Department of Social Services (DSS) Qualifying Providers* with *full access* to CurRENT and other systems (akin to Homebase providers' access). SPEED commits to expanding CurRENT access to marketing agents, property managers, and owners by 2027; that access should also extend to nonprofit housing navigators.

c. Where possible, contracting with population-specific providers that can offer the experience, wraparound services and service networks, specific to their needs.

3. Remove Unnecessary Disruptions to Receiving the Shopping Letter for Move-In

Currently, move-ins are often delayed for months due to inconsequential changes to a CityFHEPS-eligible household's circumstances, triggering a new letter or type of voucher. This could be improved by:

- a. Allowing CityFHEPS eligibility and tenant share to be *valid for at least one year* to prevent disruptions in housing search and applications and/or allow for changes post-move since it will almost never affect eligibility.
- b. Avoiding shifting households from CityFHEPS to FHEPS, i.e. when they are cycling between shelter and "community" but without a permanent home yet. It is a distinction without a difference and has the adverse effect of significantly disrupting moves.

4. Streamline the New Rent Review Process

As of April 1, 2026, DHS requires that rent reasonableness be assessed during preclearance, before a CityFHEPS package can be submitted. While ensuring reasonable rents is a sound goal, the new step has created a backlog: preclearance requests are sitting without approval — in some cases pending state review of rent-stabilization information — while tenants are already matched to available units that may not stay available in a record-tight market. We recommend streamlining this review, so it does not hold up package submission:

- a. Establish a firm turnaround for rent review decisions (e.g., seven (7) days, consistent with our inspection recommendation below).
- b. Adopt processes similar to those used by NYCHA and HPD, which request the rent rolls if the unit is rent stabilized as part of the rental package.

5. Urgently Invest in Technology

Many of the delays with CityFHEPS could be reduced through technology, specifically by automating more elements, increasing visibility, and reducing system glitches. The SPEED report's commitments to expand Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for CityFHEPS payments and increase payment visibility in CurRENT are encouraging; the following would build on them:

Model online application packages after the Section 8 program to increase transparency for applicants and landlords and allow for quick correction of minor errors, like typos. Additionally:

- i. Utilize online, fillable forms to ensure that information is not left blank.
 - ii. Ensure tenants and landlords can see lease-up status in real-time and sign documents electronically.
- b. Make shopping letters directly accessible to households through a user-friendly online portal and, with client consent, give viewing access to their housing navigators.
 - c. Identify and mitigate the most common system glitches that stop payments and cause unnecessary arrears and eviction proceedings. Currently, the most frequent disruption is at the 4-month mark, the point at which landlords should start automatically receiving the rental subsidy and shelter allowance portions.
 - d. Implement the landlord portal, which allows information to be saved for future use.

6. Reduce Length of Time to Submit Packages through Interagency Data Integration

Reduce submission time by giving DSS digital access to documentation already generated or collected by other city agencies, such as deeds, rather than requiring providers to resubmit records first created within the DSS system. The city's planned STEP system — integrating homeless placements across HPD, DHS, and HRA — is a promising vehicle for this; we urge that housing navigation providers be given visibility and access within it.

7. Expedite the Inspection Process

The move-in timeframe could also be reduced by various improvements to the inspection process. We welcome the SPEED report's commitment to create a third-party inspection process for CityFHEPS lease-ups and to allow minor, non-life-safety repairs to be cleared virtually — reforms New Destiny has long recommended. To realize their full benefit, we urge the city to:

- a. Pass and implement Intro 1458 (Brewer), which offers solutions for quick fixes, documentation of inspection results to owners, a process for follow-up inspections, and virtual verification of repairs, and more.
- b. Establish a seven (7) day timeframe to complete inspections and any re-inspections from the date of request.
- c. Meet the seven (7) day expedited timeframe by expanding the workforce responsible for conducting inspections. If the city establishes a standardized training/certification process for DSS Qualifying Providers, those providers can perform inspections at no additional cost to the city.

8. Preserve Committed Units by Continuing to Provide “Unit Hold” Incentive Payments

With a record low vacancy rate in the city, it is critical to keep families from losing the apartments that were so hard for them to find. To that end, we advise keeping the Unit Hold Incentive for landlords until the median lease-up time is less than one month from the time of *initial* package submission (i.e., not from final package submission since that doesn't capture the months of delays while packets are getting rejected for immaterial reasons).

