Supportive housing is one of the safest and most cost-effective housing solutions for survivors of domestic violence. Yet, the New York State Supportive Housing Program (NYSSHP), on which thousands of survivors rely on, has been shockingly underfunded for decades. We call on our state leaders to protect survivors in supportive housing and increase NYSSHP funding by $150 million.

The annual NYSSHP rate is $2,736 for single households and $3,672 for families. This is 20% of what providers receive under the newer supportive housing program, the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI). ESSHI funds $25,000 per household annually, of which usually half (or $12,500) is used for direct services.

At New Destiny, NYSSHP provides about $86,000 per building – 25% of what’s needed to provide 24 hour building security and deliver the services the program needs to help survivors and their families. The NYSSHP rate pays the equivalent of $5.18 per hour, 33% the minimum wage, while ESSHI pays an average of $29 per hour.

Like the other 126 nonprofits participating in the program across the state, we are forced to constantly fundraise from private donors to try to offset the state’s disinvestment and bridge the shortfall to pay staff a livable wage and benefits. Yet, it is impossible to make up the difference. This is not a sustainable solution. Our staff and tenants deserve better.

Survivors in NYSSHP buildings deserve the same access to the health and healing resources that those in other supportive housing can access. It is time for our state leadership to step up and create parity between the two programs. By allocating an additional $150 million to NYSSHP, the state would increase rates to ESSHI levels and ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors, including survivors of domestic violence, have a place to live safely and heal.

New Yorkers experience abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime