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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Statement on Budget Agreement Establishing the Housing Access Voucher Program Pilot

(ALBANY, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement in response to lawmakers establishing a [\\$50 million pilot](#) for the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP), a rental assistance initiative designed to help New Yorkers who are unhoused or at risk of being unhoused secure and maintain stable housing in the private market through rental subsidies:

“The Legal Aid Society applauds the Legislature for taking this critical first step toward addressing New York’s homelessness and housing crises by creating a pilot for the Housing Access Voucher Program.

“For far too long, the lack of accessible, affordable housing has left countless New Yorkers trapped in shelters, living on the street, or teetering on the brink of eviction. HAVP has the potential to transform lives by providing New Yorkers who are unhoused or at risk of being unhoused with the rental support necessary to secure safe, stable housing in the private market.

“While the creation of this pilot is a meaningful and commendable start, it cannot be the end. To realize the full promise of HAVP, it must be fully funded, swiftly implemented, and expanded in the years to come to meet the true scale of need across our state. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers are depending on real, lasting action. We look forward to working closely with the Hochul Administration, the Legislature, and our partners in advocacy to ensure that HAVP reaches as many New Yorkers as possible.

“Lastly, this moment would not have been possible without the tireless advocacy of Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senator Brian Kavanagh, Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, and the many other lawmakers who have long championed this legislation. Their steadfast leadership and refusal to waver in the face of obstacles ensured that this pilot was included in the final budget, offering hope and opportunity to thousands of families across New York.”

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For nearly 150 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org