

To: Members of the New York State Senate and Assembly
From: Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled
Mental Health Association in New York State
Mobilization for Justice
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
The Alliance for Rights and Recovery

Date: March 6, 2026

Re: **NYS Budget re: Adult home residents' rights and quality of life**

We were profoundly disappointed that the Executive Budget **eliminated funding for adult home resident advocacy and the EQUAL program**. New York State licenses and regulates adult care facilities and has an obligation to protect the wellbeing of adult home residents.

We urge the legislature to restore these lines:

- 1. A long-standing \$75,000 NYS Department of Health line item for the Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled (CIAD), which provides direct advocacy with residents in adult homes. We also urge you to add \$250,000 for CIAD to ensure full funding for this organization.**
- 2. \$230,000 for the Adult Home Advocacy and Adult Home Resident Council Projects**
- 3. \$6.5 million for the EQUAL program.**

Over twenty years ago, New York faced a crisis in adult homes: deaths, dangerous living conditions, and an appalling lack of basic medical care and social services for residents. A wrenching [Pulitzer Prize winning New York Times series by Clifford Levy](#) brought much of it to light, with attention to the State's significant failures. Hearings were held, task forces convened, and residents organized, filed, and won a lawsuit against New York State. Through these efforts, funding and processes were established to attempt to improve conditions, enable some residents to transition from these facilities, and importantly, give residents a voice in where and how they live.

Adult home residents are low-income adults, most covered by Medicaid, many elderly and/or experiencing mental health challenges or other conditions that make independent living difficult without support. These circumstances leave them particularly exposed to abuse and neglect. Individuals are often referred to adult homes because other housing alternatives are either unavailable or inappropriate for their needs.

Please restore funding for adult home residents' quality of life and self-advocacy:

1. Funding for Adult Home Advocacy (CIAD)

The Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled (CIAD) provides adult home residents with information and skills they need to advocate for themselves within their facilities and in the policy arena. **CIAD organizers are the only advocates who regularly visit adult homes in New York City.** They train and support resident leaders, organize resident councils, and educate residents about their rights. CIAD's agenda and organizing objectives are set by a committee of residents and a Board of Directors including current and former residents. **Last year the Legislature restored \$75,000 and added \$225,000** so residents could have adequate representation as compared to well-funded adult home operators. We request that funding be restored this year.

2. Adult Home Advocacy and Adult Home Resident Council Projects

Nearly three-quarters of the state's "transitional adult home" residents live in facilities in New York City and Long Island.ⁱ Residents in these and other adult care facilities rely on the information, organizing, legal representation, and advocacy funded through the Adult Home Advocacy Program to prevent evictions, access public benefits, and improve quality of life and care in their facilities.

The Executive's cut of \$230,000 eliminates residents' rights trainings and will severely limit advocates' ability to respond to residents' requests for support. The funding enables community-building through resident councils, provides representation at benefit hearings and eviction proceedings, and supports impact litigation and policy advocacy that improve residents' lives and independence.

Defunding this critical advocacy activity erases decades of effort to promote resident rights and ensure justice for this underserved population.

3. EQUAL Program Funding

The EQUAL program began more than a decade ago to address substandard living conditions in adult homes. The program has two components: quality of life assistance and capital improvements.

EQUAL enables residents to identify specific needs: clothing, coats, air conditioners for rooms, better food, and other essentials. Grants support independent skills training, mental health staff training, and capital improvement projects. Core to EQUAL is the requirement that residents have voice in how operators spend these funds. Information about how each adult home spent 2024-25 EQUAL funding is available on the [Department of Health website](#).

The Executive Budget eliminates all \$6.5 million in EQUAL funding. New York needs to continue making systemic improvements in adult home regulation and oversight, not eliminate funding that protects residents and provides a minimally-decent quality of life.

We are deeply concerned that the State is stepping back from its commitment to protect this population, a commitment hard-won through residents' advocacy and litigation.

Without this funding, these programs will reduce or discontinue advocacy for and with this already marginalized, under-represented population. The consequences will be considerable, and we risk returning to the conditions we fought so hard to overcome 25 years ago.

Thank you. If you would like to discuss further, please feel free to contact Theresa Young at CIAD (tayoung@ciadny.org); Glenn Liebman at MHANYS (gliebman@mhanys.org); Kevin Cremin at Mobilization for Justice (kcremin@mfjlegal.org); Kate Breslin at Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (kbreslin@scaany.org); or Luke Sikinyi at The Alliance for Rights and Recovery (lukes@rightsandrecovery.org).

ⁱ "Transitional adult homes" are adult care facilities with 80+ beds where at least 25% of residents are persons with a serious mental illness and fewer than 55% of beds are designated as Assisted Living Program beds. Transitional adult homes are subject to oversight by New York State's Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs. The Justice Center oversees and administers the Adult Home Advocacy Project.