

SUCCESS STORY

Where home means peace

Finding safety after recovery

Addiction has had a profound impact on Debra's life. Finding a home at HousingPlus came after a long journey through recovery, relapse, and lot of work on herself. But after that work, she knew that she would make it count. "You think you have the rest of your life to do the right thing," she says. "I'm grateful that I have a roof over my head. I know there are many who don't."

For years, Debra wanted to ignore her parents' drinking problems. Her parents were both alcoholics. She was the youngest of seven, and her siblings had moved away before she came of age. Caregiving for both her mother and her own children fell to Debra. "I used to have to throw a child in the car, go over to her house and bathe her and feed her," she says, describing how she helped after periods of her mother's binge drinking.

She pushed aside many bad memories, including abuse at the hands of a "so-called family friend." She wanted to forget. "My answer was to escape reality," she says.

One day, in a dark place in her addiction, she chose to get high instead of going to court to fight eviction proceedings with her landlord. "They gave me every chance they possibly could," she says of the housing court system, "but [addiction] takes over your life."

She was being evicted from the apartment she'd lived in for 20 years. This was a cycle she felt like she had been repeating for too long. She had gone through treatment before, and spent years at a time in recovery, but had relapsed as well. She says her mistake was that she never learned to grieve or work on her deeper trauma.

When she decided to go back to treatment in 2023, things had changed for the better—and so had Debra. "This time I felt ready like never before," she says.



Debra moved into a residential recovery program. She was fully committed. It got hard sometimes; she had eight other roommates. After 18 months, she knew she was ready to move on. She moved into permanent supportive housing at HousingPlus at the end of May 2025, not long after celebrating a birthday.

"My space is important," she says, "I can walk upstairs and close my door...I have learned not to take that for granted. My world has become safer to me."

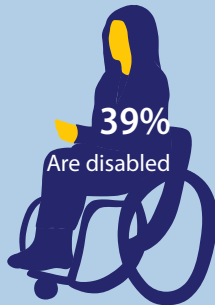
She makes a large meal at least once a week and saves the leftovers for meals throughout the week. She keeps her space extremely clean, and on a small whiteboard she marks down different plans for the month.

Debra says she has learned a lot in her time in treatment and at HousingPlus. She has also used her writing to express herself and help her through. Recently, an essay she wrote about her life experiences won her a scholarship to attend a recovery coach academy. As of January 2026, she has completed the program with 50 hours of training. Her long-term goal is to find work as a Certified Peer Recovery Advocate.

"I just want my life to move forward," she says. "And along the way, be able to help someone move their life forward." With a stable home, Debra knows it will be possible.

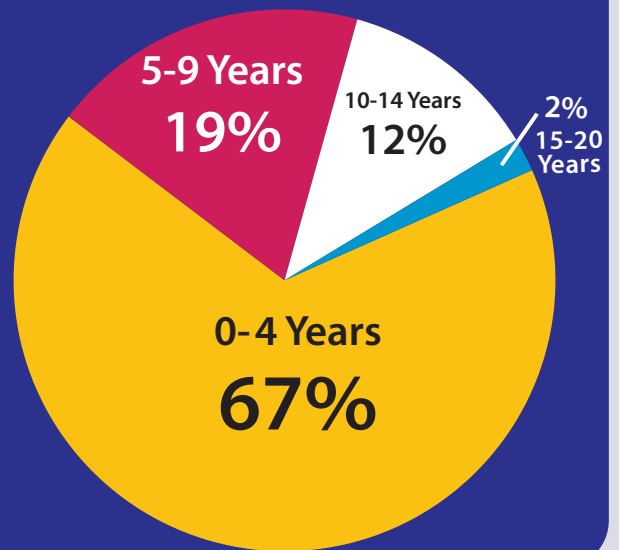
Your Impact In Action

Our resident demographics



Number of Female Veterans Housed

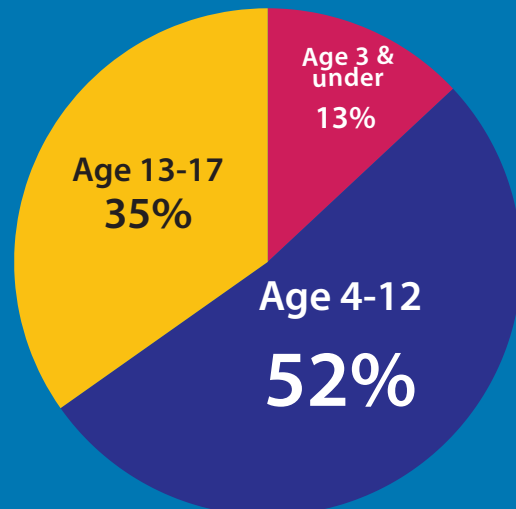
How long our supportive housing residents have remained in housing (all programs)



Children in HousingPlus supportive housing (all programs)

28%
of HousingPlus residents are under 17 years old

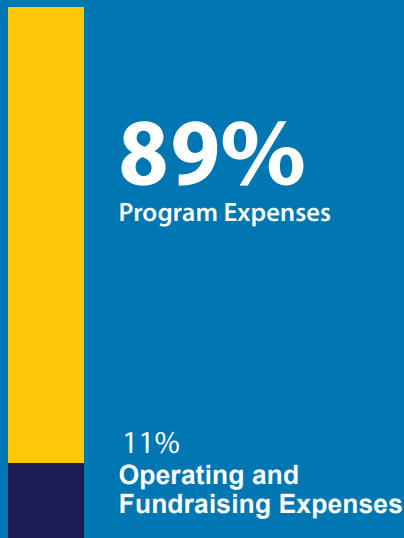
184
households have at least one child



Percentage of permanent supportive housing tenants who maintained at least one source of income last year

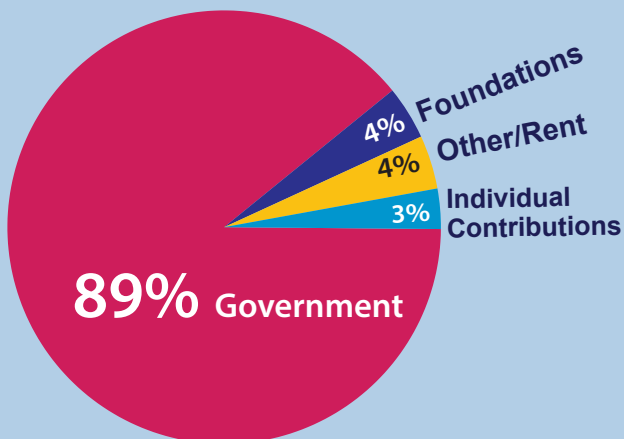
100%

Percentage of HousingPlus budget that is spent per activity



* Equivalent to an "A" efficiency rating, CharityWatch

Sources of our revenue



A Special Note To You

Every day, we see people—especially women and their children—who are finding a path out of temporary shelter and into permanent homes with HousingPlus.

Thank you for trusting us to make housing stability a reality for these women and their children.

As last year drew to a close, we hosted a Winter Holiday Party for our tenants. Looking at the faces in that room, I saw how having a stable home was impacting generations of people at HousingPlus. From Cathy, an older adult and formerly incarcerated tenant we told you about in a past issue, to the beautiful faces of children hugging their mom. All of these people, both old and young, have a home because of you.

Home is an opportunity for women, including those with children, to move forward. Our incredible staff members work with each tenant to identify and work towards goals. Every HousingPlus apartment represents a family that no longer feels the stress of where they are going to stay. In this environment, incredible things are possible.

Thank you for standing alongside HousingPlus and our tenants as we open new doorways to new possibilities for people who have faced housing instability.



A tenant family at our holiday event.

ACHIEVING GOALS

With your support, permanent housing is possible

Fighting for an alternative to life on Rikers Island, and a pathway home

The cost to house a woman on Rikers Island is upwards of half a million dollars per year. But the human cost is higher.

In the fall, we told you about Luz, who nearly gave birth on Rikers Island as she fought for compassionate release. Her charges were later dropped.

In March, HousingPlus CEO Karen Ford joined allies, impacted families, and Rikers survivors at New York's City Hall to speak on the need for funding programs like Justice Works, which provides an alternative to costly incarceration and a path away from Rikers.

Staff gathered alongside Karen on March 24, 2026 in front of City Hall. Joined by organizations like Freedom Agenda and the Women's Community Justice Association, HousingPlus stood up to advocate for the closure of Rikers Island. In so doing, we are, with Karen's leadership, carrying forward the commitment of Rita Zimmer who has campaigned for closing the Rose M. Singer women's facility on the Island for many years.

Alternatives to incarceration are one way to reduce the number of individuals who have to live in the unsafe environment of that jail complex. At the rally at City Hall, Karen forcefully reminded us that, "We all know what works: treatment, housing, services, and care," said Karen, "Last year, over half of the women in our program for formerly incarcerated individuals transitioned into permanent housing."

Alternatives to Incarceration have also been proven to work. They are not just lowering costs, they encourage individuals to safely reenter their communities with resources and support.

Take the example of another tenant who found her way home with the help of HousingPlus' Justice Works program. Christie joined the Justice Works program in February 2025. She resided at Providence House, a member of the Justice Works consortium, during her transitional housing period.

She recently reached a major milestone by securing permanent housing at HousingPlus. She has now moved into one of our buildings in East New York.

In 2024, Christie was facing uncertainty following a plea deal. One of her goals was to find permanent housing before she gave birth in February. Through incredible resilience, grit, and ambition, she secured her new home ahead of her goal.

Today, Christie has the stability and peace of mind needed to focus on her health and her growing family. She has built a strong foundation for her future.

Christie's new home is possible because of donations from individuals like you: From the welcome mat outside her apartment door to the supportive staff working with her on her goals, all aspects of our program are made possible with financial support.



Staff of HousingPlus gather at a rally in support of a City Budget that will expedite and facilitate the closure of Rikers Island jail.

Receiving recognition for leadership in Brooklyn

Karen Ford is a Brooklyn Power List Honoree

We are proud to share with you that Karen Ford has been honored as a member of the Brooklyn Power List by Schneps Media, thanks to her leadership in the supportive housing space.

For over 20 years, Power Lists have recognized the business leaders, civic champions, and elected officials who move the region forward, represent the next generation of leadership, and demonstrate extraordinary achievement.

Less than one year into her role as CEO of HousingPlus, Karen has successfully led our organization to greater recognition.

Among the other honorees of the Brooklyn Power List were Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn (District 42), Dr. Patricia Ramsey, President of Medgar Evers Colleges, and New York Attorney General Letitia James.



How YOU can help

You put the Plus in HousingPlus

Make a bigger difference by becoming a sustaining monthly donor: A HousingPlus Hero!

By giving to HousingPlus, you help to provide safe, secure, supportive, and permanent housing for women, children, and families while they build stable lives and realize their goals.

Our housing-first model provides tenants with a stable place to live while overcoming everything from poverty, homelessness, addiction, trauma, and the effects of incarceration.

Can we count on you to add the “plus” New York City women, children, and families need today? Donations like yours can help an apartment become a home for tenants like Cathy, who was incredibly touched when she saw that her new kitchen was fully outfitted on move-in day. You can make a donation on our website <https://housingplusnyc.org/donate/> or use the QR code shown here!



Scan Code to Donate

ARTWORK IN PROGRESS

A mural for Shepherd Avenue takes shape

For the past few months, we have had the incredible honor of working alongside student artists on a project to bring artwork to life in a communal space in our newest congregant permanent housing building.

Working with Groundswell—a nonprofit that brings together artists, youth, and community organizations to create art as a tool for social change—our team assisted in creating a colorful mural design that will be located at our building on Shepherd Avenue.

To make this artwork possible, HousingPlus invited tenants and staff to work collaboratively with the student artists and staff at Groundswell to envision a mural that would affirm our mission, uplift our tenants, and be beautiful to look at. We are in awe of what all of us working together accomplished. Our immense gratitude to Groundswell for creating this project with the input of our community.



Watching the mural come to life. Photos credit of Isabella Piccici, Groundswell.

HOUSING PLUS NEWSLETTER

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