

**Testimony Opposing The Elimination of the CityFHEPS Unit Hold
Incentive
By Khaliyl Mayes
November 4, 2025**

Greetings and thank you to the members of the HRA Rules Committee for the opportunity to testify. My name is Khaliyl Mayes, and I am a Member at Neighbors Together, committed to end poverty, hunger and homelessness.

I strongly oppose HRA's proposed decision to remove the CityFHEPS Unit Hold Incentive. The process of finding and securing housing with a CityFHEPS voucher can take months, as it is often confusing, difficult to navigate, and entangled with communication gaps. In February 2023, I was looking for an apartment with the assistance of Homebase, which provided me with a transfer voucher. My caseworker informed me that once I find an apartment, I could begin the process of the move-in package-however did not give me any resources and my rights as a voucher holder. My caseworker was unresponsive most of the time.

Within three months I found an apartment, however the landlord became impatient. In my experience, the landlord demanded updates to move into the apartment as soon as possible. If not, the landlord told me the apartment would be put back on the market. I needed to take action and was confused on how to navigate this process and my safety was in jeopardy where I was currently staying , which led me to document and file a source of income discrimination complaint to the New York City Commission on Human Rights, with the assistance of Neighbors Together. However, it was impossible to reach my caseworker or any other employee at Homebase about developing updates.

Due to many communication gaps, I received advocacy from Neighbors Together, where the housing advocate was able to speak on my behalf and receive updates from the caseworker at Homebase on the process of moving with the CityFHEPS voucher. With this support, I was able to move into my apartment.

DSS/HRA Commissioner Molly Parks stated during the January 2025 hearing that "The average application processing time for CityFHEPS housing packet is 25 days," this is misleading information on move-in packets; my process took four months. My experience is not unique, I felt discouraged in this process of finding a home while

working with HomeBase. Ending the Unit Hold Incentive puts voucher holders at a disadvantage for housing opportunities.

The City MUST continue the Unit Hold Incentive to keep New Yorkers housed. All New Yorkers deserve a home that is their sanctuary —a safe and stable place that fosters their well-being. No one should be denied access to a home based on source of income discrimination, the unit holds incentive motivates landlords to rent an apartment, despite the agency's misleading process time, which delayed my move-ins, and that of others into a home. Continue the CityFHEPS Unit Hold Incentive for Landlords.

Sincerely,

Khaliyl Mayes