



## Save vital adult-care funds

Mar 25, 2026

Dear Editor:

More than 20 years ago, a Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times investigation exposed a crisis in New York's adult homes: deaths, dangerous conditions and residents left without basic medical care or any meaningful voice in their own lives. The state was forced to reckon with its failures. A lawsuit was filed and won. Slowly, self-advocacy and accountability structures were built and funded.

Gov. Hochul's executive budget plan would dismantle that progress.

Buried in the budget proposal is the elimination of three programs protecting some of New York's most marginalized residents: low-income adults, many elderly, many with mental health challenges, most covered by Medicaid, living in licensed adult care facilities in Queens, Staten Island, the Bronx and across the state.

These cuts total roughly \$7 million, a rounding error in a \$252 billion budget. The harm they would cause is anything but small. Programs facing elimination are:

- CIAD, or Coalition for Institutionalized Aged and Disabled (\$175,000 cut): The only advocates who regularly enter New York City adult homes, training resident leaders and organizing councils so people have a voice in decisions that govern their lives.

- Adult Home Advocacy Program (\$230,000 cut): Helps residents fight evictions, access public benefits, and navigate a system stacked in favor of facility operators by providing legal representation, rights training, and community organizing.
- EQUAL Program, or Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (\$6.5 million cut): Funds basic quality-of-life improvements like clothing, air conditioners, and capital repairs — with a requirement that residents have a say in how funds are spent.

Adult home residents can't afford lobbyists or campaign contributions. That's why the state's commitment to protecting them matters, and why eliminating support is a consequential choice.

Legislative leaders have moved to restore some of this funding in their one-house budgets. The final budget must restore it in full. The cost is modest. The stakes are not.

**Kate Breslin**

**President, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy**

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