



305 Seventh Avenue, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10001-6008

212.645.3444, Fax 212.477.4663
pfth@pfth.org

Jessye Norman
National Spokesperson

Arnold S. Cohen
President & CEO

**NEW YORK CITY SENIORS FACE RISING HOMELESSNESS AND FEWER HOUSING OPTIONS,
BUT MOST WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR HOUSING STABILITY PLUS**

Statement by Paige Sayle
Director of Community Relations and Emergency Shelter
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Homelessness among New York City seniors is on the rise. One million seniors over the age of 60 live here—and fully one in six of them live below the federal poverty level. For a senior – the poverty level is only \$8,980 a year.

The number of impoverished seniors continues to grow in New York. Many are becoming homeless. But they will not benefit from Housing Stability Plus.

Because most homeless seniors receive Social Security or veteran’s benefits—not Public Assistance—they are not eligible for Housing Stability Plus. They fall through the flaw in Housing Stability Plus that requires all participants to be on Public Assistance, which also makes homeless families and single adults ineligible if they receive SSI or benefits other than PA.

At Peter’s Place, The Partnership’s drop-in/multi-service center for older homeless men and women, we have almost no alternatives left for safe housing for homeless seniors.

A year ago, the city ended Section 8 vouchers as an option for homeless singles. **Section 8 was responsible for successfully moving the majority of our clients into housing.** Today, homeless seniors have no access to any housing subsidies. Remaining options are dangerous, unnecessarily restrictive, or very costly:

- SROs have waiting lists of two years or more—and very often do not offer the safety that elderly men and women need.

- Assisted living facilities are extraordinarily expensive and unnecessary for many healthier homeless seniors. They have waitlists of two years or more, are very isolating, and require seniors to pay the majority of their income on rent.

A very few homeless seniors currently on Public Assistance may be eligible for Housing Stability Plus. But here's the "catch 22"—they will be required to apply for SSI at age 65, thus threatening the continuance of their Housing Stability Plus subsidy.

Citywide, we have a bottleneck of clients at all drop-in centers.

The crisis is especially dire at Peter's Place, the only drop-in that serves older homeless adults. We have been forced to close our doors to new social-service intakes because we are unable to move people into housing.

We urge the city to "fix" Housing Stability Plus by eliminating the 20% annual decrease and time limit, and to restore priority for Section 8 and Public Housing to the most vulnerable homeless men women and families receiving SSI, SSD, Social Security, and veteran's benefits.

Without priority access to these federal housing programs, the people that you see here today—and thousands more—will remain homeless.