

Public Comment Received Concerning HRA's Proposed Rule: Miscellaneous Amendments to the LINC and CITYFEPS Programs

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A public hearing regarding the proposed rule was held on October 6, 2015. At the hearing, interested parties had an opportunity to provide input on the proposed rule. One member of the public attended the hearing, but did not speak. Bruce Jordan, HRA's Chief Homelessness Prevention Officer, introduced the hearing.

HRA received one comment via the New York City Rules website (attached). No comments were received at the email address, fax number or mailing address provided on the notice of public hearing.



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## Miscellaneous Amendments Relating to the LINC and CITYFEPS Programs

As Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families, I cannot stress enough the critical need for affordable permanent housing options for domestic violence survivors in New York City. Affordable housing and career track employment opportunities continue to be two barriers for individuals to regain independence from their abusers and move on to independent lives.

Ted McCourtney, Director of Sarah Burke House, Sanctuary's 58-family domestic violence shelter in the Bronx, sees firsthand and on a daily basis the tremendous need for viable housing subsidies for clients in domestic violence shelters.

New York City devotes considerable resources to supporting a robust domestic violence shelter network. Sanctuary encourages women to escape dangerous relationships. Sanctuary offers them safe, confidential shelter, where they and their children have access to extensive clinical services, legal services and a robust Economic Empowerment Program.

Sanctuary's shelters provide families the opportunity to begin putting their lives back together again, and clients that enter our shelters make significant progress toward stability and self-sufficiency during their time with us. However, much of this stability is destroyed if there are not safe housing options available to Sanctuary shelter residents at the end of their shelter stay.

In 2013, when housing supports were not available to families at Sarah Burke House, we were able to move only 18 families into permanent housing – in the entire year.

However, with the new housing programs instituted by Mayor de Blasio through the Human Resources Administration (HRA) under the leadership of Commissioner Steven Banks, such as LINC, Section 8, CITYFEPS, and NYCHA now available to our clients, Sanctuary has been able to place 53 families into permanent housing, including 24 families utilizing the LINC subsidy, so far in 2015.

Although we have had a number of families benefit from the LINC program, it is exceedingly difficult to continue to find viable apartments that fit within the rental parameters of the subsidy. Therefore, Sanctuary for Families supports the proposed amendment to authorize HRA to increase the maximum rent for the LINC and CITYFEPS programs for households with 5 or more individuals. Clearly, the New York City real estate market is a competitive one, and we are in support of any initiative to raise LINC rent levels and better align the subsidy with the market.

Sanctuary for Families also supports the proposed amendment to extend eligibility for LINC to pregnant women. Currently, only families are eligible for the subsidy; pregnant women need to wait until they give birth before they can access LINC. As a result, pregnant women stay in shelter longer. If pregnant women were eligible for LINC, they could transition into permanent housing earlier and develop a level of stability in their lives before their child is born.

The LINC program has proven to be a tremendous resource for our families in shelter – allowing them to maintain stability, and to continue to build on the progress they have made in shelter, as they transition back into the community. Sanctuary for Families fully supports the continuation, and strengthening, of the LINC program.

Sincerely,

Hon. Judy Harris Kluger  
 Executive Director

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\*in memoriam

Submitted October 6, 2015