

Thank you so much,
Kathie Aberman

To All the Legislators:

I just read the list of accomplishments for Sullivan County in 2024. It's a great list: impressive. However, moving forward, the issue of unhoused people in our County remains unaddressed.

John Liddle made a succinct statement about our current management of this problem:

*People housed in motels don't have a kitchen >>>> so they eat more packaged food >>>> leading to poor health outcomes >>>> costing more Medicaid dollars, paid by County taxpayers

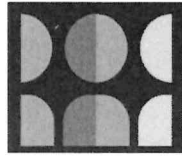
People are put up in motels with no other support for mental health issues or medical issues. There is no support for education and employment. These folks are much more likely to get caught in a revolving door and end up on the street again: nothing solved.

Gateway to Housing provides specific services to support people and prevent them from losing their housing again. They have a track record of many years and great success. John Liddle's presentation on Gateway is finance-oriented and logical. He compares what we spend, and what we get, for Gateway to Housing versus our current motel approach. And I know members of the Legislature are concerned about costs, as are County residents. A program with wrap-around services ends up being much more cost-effective than half (or quarter) measures done over and over.

But there is another consideration beyond that of the balance sheet. It is the human consideration that recognizes that "these people" - the unhoused - are people whose situation should nudge our humanity, whose existence is a reminder that we are all on this ship together and that our interdependence is universal and inescapable.

So please, we have an opportunity to do a good thing, a decision that will help, over the course of a year, to create change in the lives of 80-100 people, and to do that every year. LET'S GET GOING!!!

Sincerely,
Kathie Aberman
Liberty, NY



We Are One Sullivan
An Indivisible Group
sullivanweareone@gmail.com

June 4, 2025

Sullivan County Legislature
County Government Center
100 North Street
PO Box 5012
Monticello, NY 12701

Attention: Matt McPhillips
Nadia Rajs
Brian McPhillips
Nicholas Salomone Jr.
Catherine Scott
Luis Alvarez
Joseph Perrello
Amanda Ward
Terry Blosser-Bernardo

We, the undersigned, petition the legislators of Sullivan County, NY, to perform proper due diligence in responding to the emergency housing crisis in Sullivan County. Recent legislative events, including a public hearing, the May 8th Health and Human Services Committee meeting, and the May 15th Sullivan County Legislature Meeting have highlighted details of the \$8 million grant proposal for building and operating a Gateway to Housing shelter. Comments from both the public and even some legislators revived a familiar cry designed to halt this project: "Not in My Back Yard." Some of the objections raised included: an unsupervised "criminal element" housed near residential development; lack of services at or near the proposed site; unmanageable cost burden for 20 units; more economical for the County to purchase and rehab local motels.

Each of these concerns was addressed by HHS Commissioner Liddle in his May 8th PowerPoint presentation to the Health and Human Services Committee. In marked contrast to our current system, the proposed lessee of the facility has been running similar successful programs in the tri-county area for fifty years. The lessee will provide **three meals daily**, as well as **wraparound counseling services**, in a **24/7 monitored environment**. Residents who refuse to participate in individualized service, or who fail to abide by appropriate rules of conduct, would be discharged.

Sullivan County currently pays \$85-\$100 a night for hotel stays, and those rates are continually increasing. Meals, counseling, and case management services are provided at additional taxpayer cost, and those housed in local motels are often without supervision. The proposed Gateway to Housing program will provide shelter, healthy meals, case management, physical and mental health care, and 24/7 monitoring at a cost of \$88 a night.

The Gateway to Housing facility is anticipated to assist 80 to 100 individuals per year. This program is a lifeline to those in need, often due to unexpected expense, unmanageable bills, illness or injury, loss of employment, etc. The program provides the necessary case management and counseling to help them secure stable housing and employment.

Sullivan County is responsible for 71% of the \$3.4 million spent in 2024 for housing and related services for these individuals. This expense will almost certainly increase in 2025. Our taxpayers cannot afford to ignore this escalating problem. Application is in progress to secure \$8 million in grant funding to construct a more economical and humane solution. Let's not squander the opportunity to implement a proven program to assist our most vulnerable.

By our signatures below, we implore this Legislature to put political considerations aside and act responsibly to move the Gateway Housing Shelter forward to avoid a looming economic and social catastrophe.

<i>Janet Davis</i>	Wurtsboro	<i>Stephen McFadden</i>	Woodbourne
<i>JoAnne Omar</i>	Liberty	<i>Christine Saward</i>	Summitville
<i>Marc Edelman</i>	Callicoon	<i>Claire Cohen-Norris</i>	Glen Spey
<i>Lucia Santoro</i>	Fremont	<i>Richard Cardillo</i>	Yulan
<i>Judy Balaban</i>	Bethel	<i>Gordon Powell</i>	White Sulphur Springs
<i>Kate Bowers</i>	Long Eddy	<i>Anne Hart</i>	Liberty
<i>Bill Duncan</i>	Fallsburg	<i>Larysa Dyrszka</i>	White Lake
<i>Penny Mrdina</i>	Hurleyville	<i>Margaret Langston</i>	Monticello
<i>Sharon Peduto</i>	Narrowsburg	<i>Eric Feinblatt</i>	Hankins
<i>Paul Salzberg</i>	Lake Huntington	<i>Louis Setren</i>	Roscoe
<i>Rebekah Creshkoff</i>	Callicoon	<i>Sophia Medina</i>	Hurleyville
<i>Lydia Morris</i>	Youngsville	<i>Kathie Aberman</i>	Liberty
<i>Melisse Gelula</i>	Tusten	<i>Nancy Brothers</i>	Callicoon Center
<i>Martha Scoppa</i>	Liberty	<i>Star Hesse</i>	
<i>Jean Schmidlein</i>	Bloomington	<i>Kenneth Wampler</i>	White Sulphur Springs
<i>Mitra Behroozi</i>	Cochecton	<i>Myrna Marcarian</i>	Smallwood
<i>Therese Brosnan</i>	Livingston Manor		
<i>Jeffrey Muchnick</i>	Livingston Manor		

Statement to the Sullivan County Legislature – June 5, 2025

Good morning Sullivan County Legislators,

My name is Kenneth Wampler. I have lived in Sullivan County since 1989, part-time at first and now, full time. In 1985, in New York City, I, along with a small group of people created the first supportive housing program in the United States for homeless people living with HIV, The AIDS Resource Center's Supportive Housing Apartment Program. I developed the program and the budget and took it to the city, and after much fighting with the Koch administration, and supported by my local legislator, we were successful and the city funded the first 20 unit contract of supportive housing for these traumatized and dying people. This program, and contract, became a model and within several years there were over 2000 units of supportive housing for homeless people living with HIV in NYC – all in 20 unit contracts. Supportive housing works. And it is fiscally responsible.

You have all expressed your knowledge of the housing crisis in the county that you oversee, and your wish to address it.

You now have the potential to receive 8 million dollars in public funding for transitional housing that is desperately needed – you also have a partner who will provide services with a good reputation and years of experience. Additionally, from the financial aspect, Gateway to Housing will save the taxpayers dollars. So what is the problem?

The problem is that you are being confronted by NIMBY, which is another term for prejudice. It is not new. In fact, it is pretty much guaranteed to occur, every time. It is not fun to fight prejudice but it is possible. The way to confront NIMBY prejudice is through education: by letting the naysayers know that the program is well-conceived and will be operated by a trustworthy and skilled partner, and the laws: you can let them know that the program will fall within all building codes and other regulations. You can also add that your decision to move forward is further supported by the fact that the program will save taxpayer dollars.

End of story.

Simply stated, you, our legislators, cannot say that you want to create housing to ease the crisis, while also succumbing to pressure from prejudice, these two statements cannot logically live together.

If you like, I offer myself to you, to review the staffing or other aspects of the proposed program and I request, as a tax payer and concerned citizen, a visit to one of the residential sites under operation by the vender.

The thing is, you should all *want* this program in your district and be proud to support it. Please don't deny Sullivan County 8 million dollars in support for transitional housing that is needed by our neighbors, our friends, and our families.

You can be heroes, or you can stand on the side of prejudice. The choice is yours.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Wampler, MA, M.S.W.
316 Willi Hill Rd
White Sulphur Springs, NY 12787

P.O. Box 311, ditto

917-701-1951