



March 28, 2016

Dear Mayor de Blasio and the Supportive Housing Task Force,

We are writing to urge you to embrace non-time-limited youth supportive housing as part of the new supportive housing creation initiative in New York City. Nationally and locally, non-time-limited supportive housing programs are demonstrating that youth are served best when they are given the flexibility to move on when they are ready.

The data suggests making available tenant-based subsidies, and the eligibility to transfer a young adult to a more appropriate setting after youth supportive housing, are far more effective than age caps and other artificial limits on housing access. It is for these reasons that both the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and United States Interagency Council on Housing have recognized the effectiveness of this approach in ending youth homelessness.

As funders and providers of youth supportive housing, we know age caps are not effective in defining true adulthood and capability to live independently without support services. We also know the importance of having the flexibility to tailor our responses to youth-centered needs is vital to keeping them stably housed over the long term. True Colors Residence was the first truly non-time-limited model of youth supportive housing in the City and demonstrates that the model works. Of the original tenants at the True Colors Residence, which opened four years ago, over half have moved on to fully independent affordable housing.

In line with our conclusions, we are writing to urge you to consider the outcome data and recommendations in CSH's policy brief "No Strings Attached: Helping Vulnerable Youth with Non-Time-Limited Supportive Housing", which recommends the City:

1. utilize Project-based Section 8 vouchers to finance youth supportive housing, capitalizing on the opportunity for tenant-based subsidies as a resource for moving on;
2. allow youth to maintain eligibility to other supportive housing programs throughout their tenancy to permit transfers to more appropriate models as they age; and
3. implement measures to ensure that units are targeted to the highest-need youth.

We know that with your support, all of us can better meet the needs of New York City's most vulnerable young adults. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen K. Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Colleen" being more prominent.

Colleen K. Jackson  
Executive Director – CEO, West End Residences HDFC, Inc.