

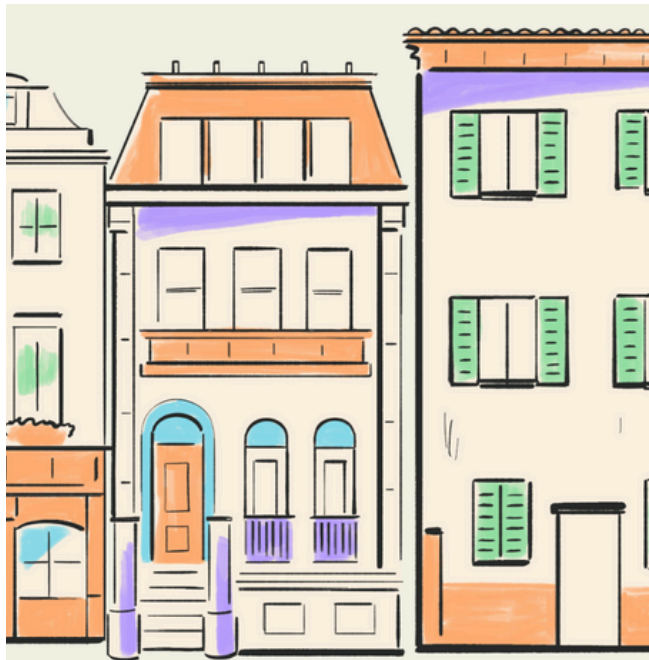
UNLOCK NYC

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Reporting period: FY25, 10/1/24 to 9/30/25

# LETTER FROM THE TEAM



## DEAR PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS, AND FRIENDS,

**Thank you for everything you've done this year to help Unlock NYC in our efforts to make discrimination against low-income and homeless renters impossible to ignore.** We truly couldn't do this work without you! As always, we are especially grateful for the 1,000+ New Yorkers who are standing up with us against discrimination by sharing their stories about how they have been illegally denied, disrespected, ghosted, and more during their search for a safe, affordable home.

**In 2025, we took our systems change work to new heights with projects that amplified the exceptional leadership of our program alumni.**

In this report, you'll see a spotlight on our work with the New York State Attorney General's office, where peer advocates from our Leadership Collective connected 224 claimants with \$400,000 in settlement funds. You'll also learn about our [Uneven Access report](#), where a participatory action research committee surveyed 196 voucher holders about their experiences at the Human Resources Administration (HRA), highlighted disparities in treatment, and created a blueprint for change.

**These projects underscore the importance of continuing to invest in Rights Recorder**, our tool to help voucher holders share their stories, create a paper trail, connect to local resources, and become leaders in our organization. This year, we doubled down on providing new educational resources and expanding our intake team so that we can match every report received with the answers that person needs to pursue accountability.

Please reach out anytime with your ideas and feedback! We'd love to move into 2026 with your continued support and collaboration.

Sincerely,  
**The Unlock NYC Leadership Team**

# 2025 IN REVIEW

## RIGHTS RECORDER

Over 1,000 New Yorkers who use rental assistance vouchers rely on our free **Rights Recorder** app to capture evidence and build a timeline when they suspect a landlord is turning them down illegally.

Our software helps them:

- Receive bite-sized educational content about their rights as a voucher holder in NYC
- Organize all their evidence into a single PDF
- Integrate with Unlock NYC's data and insights about the broker/landlord who denied them
- Send their report to a local fair housing agency, free legal help, or other local resources
- Get notified when Unlock NYC has opportunities to participate in research, advocacy, or leadership opportunities



# 730

fair housing reports submitted

# 265

New Yorkers enrolled

# 50%

of our users found housing within 6 months of enrollment – over 2x the city's average

# 65%

said Rights Recorder played an important role in securing their home

**“THE WEBSITE IS SUPER USER-FRIENDLY...IT’S LIKE TEXTING A FRIEND.**

**EVERYONE I HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH IS SUPER FRIENDLY AND LISTENS TO YOUR NEEDS. REALLY AWESOME TOOL!”**

Shauna Berrios, Rights Recorder user



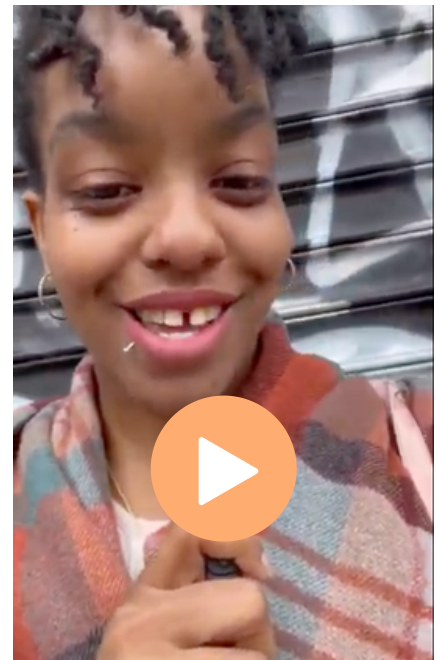
# 2025 IN REVIEW

## LEADERSHIP COLLECTIVE

In 2025, we continued to expand our Leadership Collective, a program that welcomes a cohort of New Yorkers impacted by source of income discrimination to join Unlock NYC behind the scenes for 6 months. Leadership Collective alumni (a group of 20 leaders and counting!) are eligible to apply for internships, speaker roles, and other paid opportunities to work on mission-critical Unlock NYC projects – creating lasting impact for the entire Unlock community.

**I AM VERY PROUD TO BE A PART OF [UNLOCK NYC]. I'M WITH THEM BECAUSE I WANT TO SEE EVERY SINGLE NEW YORKER – UPSTATE, DOWNSTATE - BE HOUSED."**

Jasmine Miller Smith, 2025 Leadership Collective



*Top: Leadership Collective graduation luncheon; Bottom: click "play" to hear Jasmine Miller Smith discussing her experience with Unlock NYC*

## OTHER NOTABLE MOMENTS IN 2025

- Manon Vergerio was a panelist at New Destiny's Annual **Symposium on Housing Solutions for Survivors of Domestic Violence**
- Manon Vergerio and Ashley Eberhart facilitated a **"Data Talk"** webinar with the Furman Center
- We welcomed Nsisong Udosen, our new full-time **Product Operations Lead**
- Our newly-launched email "Welcome Series" **delivers bite-sized know your rights content** to every new program participant
- We hired our first-ever part-time **Report Intake Specialists** to provide 1:1 support to users who need extra help collecting evidence for their reports
- We answered questions, distributed educational booklets, and met new partners at **tabling events** around New York City.
- Two of our founders welcomed **new babies** to the Unlock family this year!
- Manon Vergerio was a panelist at the **NYS Division of Human Rights' We All Belong Here Symposium**.

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: CLAIMS ADMINISTRATOR PILOT

## WHAT'S POSSIBLE WHEN WE PAIR ENFORCEMENT WITH COMMUNITY- BASED OUTREACH? PEOPLE GET WHAT THEY'RE OWED FROM DISCRIMINATORS.

This year, we were proud to support outreach efforts following a major housing justice win: the New York State Attorney General's Office secured a \$400,000 settlement from Shamco Management for unlawfully discriminating against New Yorkers with housing vouchers.

Our role? **Community-centered and tech-powered outreach.** We activated a Peer Outreach Team of New Yorkers who've experienced voucher discrimination themselves to place calls to claimants. We launched mass outreach via personalized texts and emails to boost engagement and build trust. Our 40% claims rate was 4x higher than the industry average – a testament to a community-led approach.



Above: Unlock NYC Peer Outreach team calling potential claimants at the Office of the New York Attorney General in May 2025

**“I AM GRATEFUL TO UNLOCK  
NYC FOR THEIR  
PARTNERSHIP IN ENSURING  
NEW YORKERS WHO WERE  
IMPACTED BY SHAMCO’S  
ILLEGAL CONDUCT RECEIVE  
THE COMPENSATION THEY  
ARE OWED.”**

Letitia James, New York State Attorney General

### \$400K

disbursed to tenants  
impacted by  
discrimination

### 224

claimants who received  
their share of the  
settlement money

### 2,852+

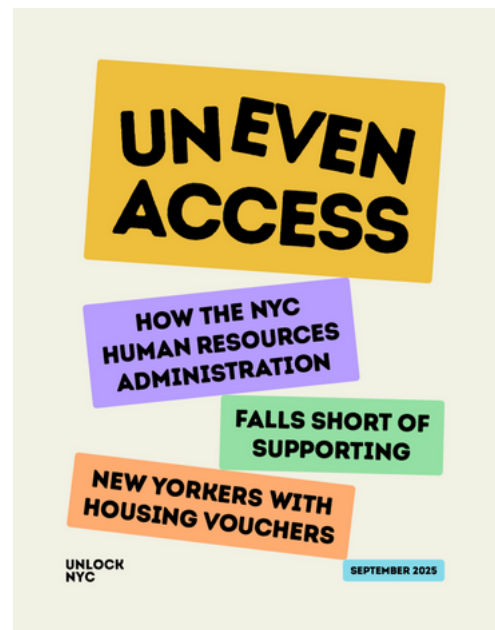
emails, text messages,  
and phone calls made by  
our Peer Outreach team

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: UNEVEN ACCESS REPORT

## THE NYC HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION SERVES 3 MILLION NEW YORKERS – HERE’S WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE.

Whether a New Yorker is just beginning the voucher application process, applying for housing with a landlord, or navigating the city’s rental assistance bureaucracy, **voucher holders’ experiences of discrimination vary widely based on race, gender, disability, language, and education.**

In 2025, Unlock NYC recruited a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Committee made up of 5 impacted New Yorkers to connect with nearly 200 voucher holders through surveys and interviews to explore how racial, gender, and other disparities impact the journeys of voucher holders in New York City. [Our final report](#) is a stark illustration of unfair treatment at HRA, an agency that millions of New Yorkers rely on – and a compelling blueprint for how to make HRA the agency that New Yorkers deserve.



*Top: A CBS New York news segment covering the Uneven Access launch in October 2025 (click image to view video); Bottom: Report cover (click image to view the full report on our website)*

800+

report downloads

23,000+

online views of our  
[segment on CBS News](#)

196

surveys received from  
Unlock NYC users

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR UNLOCK?

## ENSURE EVERY VOUCHER HOLDER KNOWS THEIR RIGHTS.

It's more important than ever that voucher holders **understand their fair housing rights and feel safe and confident exercising them**. In 2026, we're expanding our email-based tenant education series, delivering new bimonthly webinars to voucher holders and community orgs, and publishing a 10-part article series on our website.

## ENGAGE NEW YORKERS ACROSS THE STATE.

A new team at the New York State Division of Human Rights will help voucher holders statewide to access early intervention services, which can help them secure a unit they were illegally denied without the need for lengthy litigation. Building on insights from our 2024 pilot in Buffalo, **we will connect 100+ Rights Recorder users statewide to this unit – and to the homes they deserve**.

## EXPAND OUR DATA- DRIVEN INVESTIGATIONS.

With a database of over 3,000 tips, integrations with property ownership data, and a comprehensive “data dictionary” of the denial tactics being used against voucher holders, we are in a unique position to **contribute to game-changing litigation against serial discriminators** in 2026.



Above: Leadership Collective alumni Elizabeth Byrd and Miss J. Divine represent Unlock NYC at a tabling event



# FINANCIAL HEALTH

## CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

Unlock NYC continues to receive a large majority of our funding from private and corporate foundation grants (about 96% of revenue). About 80% of our expenses are personnel, to whom we are proud to pay fair and competitive wages and provide comprehensive benefits.

FY25\* revenue **\$628K**

FY25 expenses **\$590K**

FY26 starting balance **\$199K**

\* 10/1/24 to 9/30/25

## FY25 revenue sources

### Grants

- Oak Foundation\*
- JPMorgan Chase Foundation\*
- Robin Hood Foundation
- Brooklyn Org\*
- Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies
- New York Community Trust

### Contracts

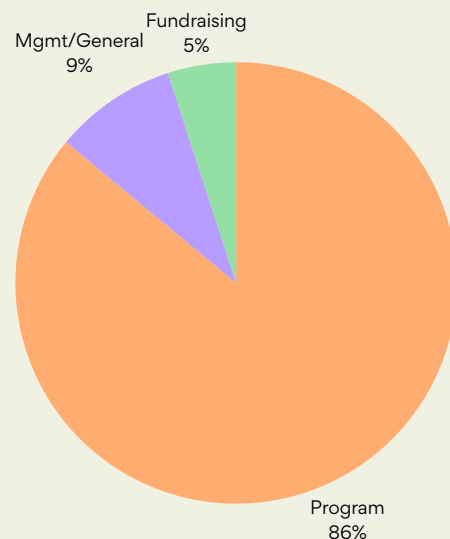
- New York State Office of the Attorney General

### Contributions

- \$14,000 from 16 individual donors

\*multi-year grant

## FY25 expense breakdown



**“ BY CENTERING LIVED EXPERIENCE, DATA-DRIVEN ADVOCACY, AND SYSTEMS NAVIGATION GROUNDED IN LEGAL EXPERTISE, UNLOCK NYC IS UNLOCKING NEW PATHWAYS TO HOUSING EQUITY ACROSS NEW YORK CITY.”**

Sunmoon Jang, Unlock NYC individual donor



# SUPPORT OUR WORK!



## WE HAVE BIG GOALS FOR 2026 – HELP US UNLOCK THEM!

**Donations from individuals who believe that all of our neighbors deserve a fair and respectful apartment search** are key to our organization's stability and creativity. Our 2026 goal is to raise \$20,000 from individuals, at any level:

- **\$25** helps us connect a New Yorker to free legal services after facing discrimination.
- **\$50** shares our flyers and booklets with a community partner and their clients.
- **\$100** covers an honorarium for a directly-impacted leader to deliver a live training.
- **\$1,000** sponsors a directly-impacted leader to join our 2026 Leadership Collective program.

**[WEUNLOCK.NYC/DONATE](https://weunlock.nyc/donate)**

Questions? Email us at [hello@weunlock.nyc](mailto:hello@weunlock.nyc).