§ 548-a. Legislative findings and intent. Many recent studies have pointed out that although New York has an array of human services and programs that are spread across numerous state programmatic and regulatory agencies, there is no unified strategy for service delivery. Although problematic statewide, the absence of a service coordination and delivery strategy critically impairs the ability of communities suffering from widespread poverty to fully benefit from such services.

The legislature hereby finds and declares that there is a need to develop a strategy for distressed neighborhoods to assist them in identifying ways to expand and strengthen the services in their communities, to improve the delivery of such services, and to help identify and eliminate barriers to the effective delivery of services to their residents.

The legislature further finds that the provision of services is only a partial solution to the complex problems of economically and socially distressed areas. Neighborhood stabilization and improvement also require an assessment of the long term housing and economic needs of the community and a strategic plan for the stabilization and development of the community. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to establish neighborhood based initiatives to first provide integrated and coordinated services for people in crisis or with a potential for being in crisis in selected distressed neighborhoods and then to assist the neighborhoods in developing a long range plan so that such neighborhoods can take steps to improve their overall economic and social condition.