

Testimony of New York City Mayor's Office of Asylum Seeker Operations Director Molly Schaeffer

Before the New York City Council, Committee on General Welfare and the Committee on Immigration

**Oversight Hearing: Examining the 30/60 Day Shelter Limits Policy
November 19, 2024**

Good Morning, Chairs Aviles and Ayala and members of the General Welfare and Immigration Committees. My name is Molly Schaeffer, Director of the New York City Mayor's Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (OASO). I am before you today to discuss the City's ongoing efforts to support migrants and asylum seekers who have and continue to arrive in New York City. I am also joined by our key agency partners – Dr. Ted Long from NYC Health and Hospitals, Chief of Operations, Iris Rodriguez of NYC Department of Homeless Services, Rudy S. Giuliani Executive Director of NYC Housing Recovery Operations, and Senior Advisor Emily Ashton with NYC Emergency Management. Being able to provide shelter, medical, and case management services to the nearly 60,000 people currently in our care is reliant upon the close coordination of our agency partners to the right and left of me, and I couldn't be prouder to work with such dedicated public servants on a daily basis.

Since April 2022, New York City has continued to lead the nation in response to an unprecedented influx of asylum seekers – providing immediate shelter, food, legal, and other essential services to over 223,000 individuals. Our administration has managed this humanitarian response with compassion and decency. We have relied on experienced agency leaders and hundreds of public servants who have stepped up and joined this effort. Let's be clear— there was no playbook on how to respond to the pace of asylum seekers arriving, but what we did what New Yorkers do best in times of crisis — we step up to help each other. For over two years, that is what New Yorkers and people all over the country and the world have seen — New York City taking action. Using the limited resources and tools available to us, we are operating more than 200 emergency shelters – and we currently have 58,000 people in care; most importantly no families with children have had to sleep on the street. I think that statement is sometimes overlooked. As we all know too well, it normally takes years to open a traditional shelter. We stood up over 200 emergency sites, and fully staffed and operationalized them in less than two years – that is a significant feat. We have nearly tripled our shelter system. One of the sites I am immensely proud of is the Arrival Center which provides comprehensive onsite services 24 hours, 7 days per week, under the leadership of my colleague Dr. Ted Long of NYC Health and Hospitals.

Many partners from all levels of government and around the world have traveled to observe our operations with the intention of adopting our best practices. We are proud of the work we have accomplished, and we recognize that more needs to be done. A national humanitarian response requires a whole of government approach – and strong community collaboration that addresses needs that municipal governments alone cannot meet. We have been steadfast in our advocacy on work authorization to the federal government, and are grateful for the extension of Temporary Protected

Status that was extended to Venezuelans. However, to meet the needs of all of our new New Yorkers, this status needs to be expanded beyond its current reach. We hear this from the people in our care everyday: they want to work.

We appreciate the support we have received from our State and Federal partners, but there is more work to do. We still need additional resources to keep pace with the daily influx of new entrants into city emergency sites. New York City has supported individuals and families arriving from the border since the beginning of the response and we know more can be achieved. We have seen inspiring examples of our core values. We are committed to meeting the needs of this community – addressing medical and mental health, offering legal assistance, workforce development, case management, and services critical to a foundation for their future self-sufficiency.

Implementation of Shelter Notices

Beginning in the Spring of 2022 the city has had to respond to an unprecedented surge of new entrants into the city's care – hitting a peak of 4,300 entrants over a one-week period. Given this historic influx and the need to immediately bring on capacity, we pursued additional models to bolster our response, including establishing emergency respite sites and launching our upstate hotel program. Despite around the clock efforts to increase our sheltering capacity, it became clear that a pipeline of emergency sites was only one part of the equation. At the same time, cities like Denver and Chicago were stretched beyond capacity and introduced a new tool – time limits on the length of stay at shelters. Other cities like San Diego and El Paso capped their accommodations and did not open any new sites to accommodate the influx. The reality is, New York City lacked the shelter capacity, and the ability to quickly expand while still keeping people safe. With this realization, common sense decisions had to be made in order to stave off the potential collapse of a shelter system that had never been designed, nor prepared for, the unprecedented influx of asylum seekers. Due to scale and the evolving nature of the humanitarian response required, the necessity of mobilizing multiple agencies to care for asylum seekers, and the city's legal obligations – fully aligning the city's response has required time to effectuate

In July 2023, HERRCs established a 60-day time limit on shelter stays for single adults and adult families. This was a hard decision based on careful consideration at the individual and policy level. In September 2023, the time limit for single adults at HERRC's was reduced to 30-days as the rate of new arrivals increased and it was clear that assistance from the federal government was not coming. In November 2023, DHS shelters began sending 30-day notices.

In January 2024, HERRC's began to implement the 60-day policy for families with children. In August 2024, as part of DHS' efforts to ensure families with children are informed and to best serve as an effective partner for the next step in their journey, DHS issued pre-notices to alert families with children about the prospect of 60-day notices. The 60-day notices to families with children have not yet been issued by DHS; DHS continues to work to finalize implementation and ensure agency processes' compliance with legal settlements.¹ As someone who has been at the front lines of welcoming and supporting new arrivals since April 2022, this was not

a decision made lightly. We paired these time limits with intensive case management to support families identify the barriers preventing them from leaving shelter and the development of their plans to chart a course for their future.

Shelter is intended to be temporary. Our goal is to help families integrate into the community in New York City or beyond. Shelter time limits, paired with intensive case management, are policies designed to help more households achieve self-sufficiency. The shelter notices also allow us to accommodate new entrants as people exit. These policies are working. More people are taking that next step on their journey and moving out of shelter. Thoughtful planning, coordination and engagement has gone into the implementation of these policies, particularly with our colleagues at New York City Public Schools. As we have publicly stated, our goal is to minimize disruption to children's education, and we remain focused on this goal. I want to thank the New York City Public Schools for their unwavering commitment.

Since the start of our response, the number of new arrivals far outpaced the ability for people to exit shelter. An indication that the city's shelter notice and intensive case management, legal services, and workforce connections are working, we are finally turning a corner. The number of people in the city's emergency sites has steadily decreased from our peak of over 69,000 in January to under 58,000 in recent weeks. Our team works diligently every day to improve our operations and to support our clients working toward their American Dream.

Case Management

NYC Health + Hospitals case managers have provided exit planning meetings to 99% of asylum seekers at non-DHS sites. Since intensified case management efforts began, each week 45% more families with children are able to successfully exit shelter with a plan for their next steps in their journeys.

These proactive, organized case management efforts, which began in October 2023, have seen us conduct more than 700,000 exit planning meetings - helping asylum seekers identify needs and set goals to advance their resettlement, connecting them to the appropriate legal, medical, and social services, and assisting in the completion of over 75,000 applications for work authorization, temporary protected status, and asylum. In coordination with the city's Asylum Application Help Center, case managers have made a concerted effort to help asylum seekers work, with 70% of eligible adults now having completed or been approved for work authorization, providing a pathway towards opportunity.

In DHS emergency shelters, case management services are the responsibility of the DHS contracted non-profit provider assigned to the site, with DHS Program Administrators and Analysts providing oversight. DHS emergency shelters offer case management services similar to what is described above, with a focus on linking individuals and households to immigration specific services, including help with asylum, temporary protected status, and work authorization applications. Through regular case management engagement, an assessment of needs is completed and referrals to appropriate community-based services are made as appropriate. DHS's case management focuses on shelter exit, with staff

continually exploring other housing resources with clients and next steps necessary to facilitate stabilization outside shelter.

Our case management system continues to be an effective way to help people in our care move onto the next step in their journeys. In the approximately 12 months since non-DHS sites started proactive case management, the number of families successfully exiting shelter each week has increased by more than 40%. Similarly, in the time since DHS emergency sites began transitioning to contracted non-profit providers providing case management from temporary staff, the proportion of families successfully exiting shelter each month has also increased meaningfully. In addition to shelter discharges, case management also supports the many intermediary steps that are crucial to supporting migrants' integration into society. For example, non-DHS sites with proactive case management report greater rates of workforce authorization application and approval amongst eligible residents than sites without.

Other Strategies to Support Exits

While case management has shown significant promise in providing clients of emergency shelters with information and planning resources to support sustainable exit from shelter, some migrants face additional barriers on the road to self-sufficiency and community integration. These barriers may include the difficulty in finding good jobs that do not require English proficiency; the challenge of connecting with one's linguistic, religious, or other cultural group in a large city; and or caretaker responsibilities. The City remains committed to identifying these challenges for migrants in emergency shelters and to providing cost-neutral solutions wherever possible.

English proficiency is one of the major barriers that prevents migrants in New York City from exiting shelter more quickly. Some data also suggests that this barrier may affect different populations inequitably, as migrants whose preferred language is more widely spoken in the region (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Russian) may have an easier time identifying community supports and job and housing opportunities. To address this issue, the City has taken innovative approaches to providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to migrants in emergency shelter, as well as to other immigrants citywide.

The first is the Mayor's Office of Immigration Affairs' (MOIA) award-winning We Speak NYC program, which leverages trained volunteers to help language learners ages 16 and up to learn English and access services via online classes, videos, web, and print materials. Building on the success of We Speak NYC when offered at libraries across the city, we are launching a pilot this week to bring volunteer-led We Speak NYC classes to one of our largest single adult sites.

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) has also been instrumental in enabling the provision of ESOL classes to both migrants in emergency shelters and immigrants more generally. In addition to its adult education programs, whose funding was generously supplemented this month by the Council, DYCD also provided onsite ESOL classes to nearly 1,000 migrants during the first half of 2024. Similarly, Public Schools' District 79 has developed 13 units of study for use in ESOL

classes across the district, with input from Adult Education ESOL teachers and support from Hunter College. To further expand access in our most at-need immigrant and migrant communities, NYC Small Business Services (SBS) hosted a District 79 class this summer at the Workforce1 Center in Jamaica, Queens, a first-of-its-kind collaboration.

The City continues to look for additional funding to support its English language programs. In collaboration with the Office of Technology and Innovation, we recently submitted a grant proposal to the federal government for funding that would create and teach contextualized ESOL in the largest single adult sites, with dedicated teaching assistants.

Another barrier to leaving shelter is the ability to connect with culturally relevant community supports. MOIA has led in assisting in these connections, including through its recently announced partnership with historic settlement houses. New York City settlement houses have a long history of successfully integrating immigrant communities. The partnership will expand community support for recently arrived migrants by establishing *Immigrant Support Centers* that will provide an array of services to thousands of newly arrived migrants. MOIA has also collaborated with Health + Hospitals to host resource fairs for immigrant New Yorkers.

Like many New Yorkers, migrant families may struggle to balance childcare with other responsibilities. Being forced to choose between attending ESOL classes or workforce training programs or caring for their family, this disproportionately impacts women and parents in single-parent homes. In response, the City is working with city-funded CBOs to identify open childcare seats.

Workforce Development and Pathways to Economic Self-sufficiency

Federal inaction has meant that many new New Yorkers are unable to legally work in this country for at least 180 days after arrival, posing the enormous challenge of supporting tens of thousands of individuals who are eager to work, yet unable to do so. Nevertheless, the City has established innovative programs and strategic partnerships across multiple sectors to ensure that asylum seekers are able to enter the workforce and contribute to the economy as quickly as the federal government legally allows. The focus of these initiatives including securing work authorization and US-recognized credentials, training new arrivals in high-demand, low-skill jobs, identifying job opportunities outside of NYC based on national trends, and identifying sources of funding beyond local government to support all of the above. The employment journey for migrants begins with obtaining work authorization. Through the AAHC, approximately over 38,000 asylum seekers have applied for work authorization.

When considering potential job pathways for work authorized migrants, it is critical to recognize that many other New Yorkers are also in search of jobs. Therefore, one of the City's migrant-focused workforce development priorities is to prepare migrants for jobs that are in high demand across the country, and not solely the NYC job market. The City collaborates with national CBOs and the New York State Department of Labor, who work to identify employers state- and nationwide who are struggling to fill open jobs and are eager to hire. Through these collaborations, we have identified

construction, entry-level healthcare, skilled trades, and commercial driver license required jobs as four priority industries.

The City then engages with private, public, and nonprofit sector partners across the region to support workforce development training for migrants in these industries. For example, the City collaborates with CBOs to offer workforce development training programs in French and Spanish. In October alone, over 100 asylum seekers completed Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training and obtained site safety cards, certifying them to work on construction sites.

Some migrants have work experience in highly specialized fields. For these individuals, the City facilitates pathways for recertification in the United States. For example, through a public-private partnership, we are helping healthcare workers residing in emergency shelters to navigate the process of recertification. When the federal government processes their work authorization applications, these individuals will be able to enter the workforce in their specialized fields.

For all of these initiatives, the City has worked diligently to identify state, federal, and philanthropic funding wherever possible.

Like other New Yorkers in search of jobs, work-authorized asylum seekers are able to leverage a range of career development resources through the SBS Workforce One offices. To date, more than 9,000 migrants have received assistance in building resumes, preparing for interviews, conducting job searches, and enrolling in training programs that increase their employability.

Resettlement and Placement Programs

Over the past 15 months, the City has collaborated with the State and other local governments to pilot several placement and resettlement programs that may inform future efforts to facilitate exits from emergency shelter.

For example, through the State's Migrant Relocation Assistance Program (MRAP), the State funds 12 months of housing assistance in upstate counties for 1,250 migrant families with children. As of the first week of November 2024, several hundred families with children have moved into their own apartments in upstate counties, including families previously residing in NYC emergency shelters.

Some families with children households in emergency shelter may be earning sufficient income to afford ongoing living costs, but do not yet have the savings to support moving costs such as security deposits. DHS launched the Asylee Moveout Assistance program to test the effects of providing a one-shot payment to a limited number of families, in lieu of the ongoing cost of shelter. Since its launch in September 2024, the program has assisted several hundred parents and children in exiting emergency shelter, at significant savings to the City. We continue to pilot and expand these resettlement opportunities.

We look forward to taking your questions and continued partnership with many of you as our City will continue to serve the people who have come into our care.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

110 William Street, 14th Floor

New York, New York 10038

www.ibo.nyc.gov • iboenews@ibo.nyc.ny.us

**Testimony of Claire Salant, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst
New York City Independent Budget Office
To the New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Immigration
Oversight on the 30- and 60-Day Rules for Asylum Seekers
Tuesday, November 19, 2024**

Good morning Deputy Speaker Ayala, Chair Avilés, and members of the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration. I am Claire Salant, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst on Social Services at the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO). I am joined here today by my colleague Jacob Berman, Director of the Social and Community Services Team. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am here to discuss the City's implementation of 30- and 60-day shelter exit policies for asylum seekers, referred to in this testimony as new arrivals. The City justified the need for exit policies, and historic changes to the City's longstanding right-to-shelter policy, on the assumption that they would reduce the population and the high costs related to new arrivals. IBO's May 2024 [report](#) noted that these management strategies are not purely money savers, but may generate new costs and have negative consequences on a vulnerable population. Just yesterday, the Mayor [announced](#) new policies to address some of these consequences, implicitly acknowledging problems with this strategy that began over a year ago.

Since 2022, more than 220,000 new arrivals have entered the City. Providing services for these new arrivals has cost approximately \$5.2 billion over the last two years, about a third of which has come from the State (all years refer to City fiscal years). For context, the total cost in 2024 was \$3.75 billion, which represents less than 3% of the total City budget including all funds. Actual spending has been materially lower than the City's forecasts, and the number of new arrivals entering the City has been declining rapidly in recent months. Nevertheless, the City continues to budget very high costs for this population moving forward: \$4.7 billion in 2025, and \$7.85 billion in the outyears as of the Adopted Budget. This assumes costs will increase this year and next year compared with 2024, despite a declining population.

In my testimony, I will first discuss the history of the City's shelter policy and the exit policy announcements since last fall. For families with minor children, IBO's testimony highlights the particularly negative impacts on students, whose educational outcomes are likely to be worse when they are forced to move. Finally, it is worth noting that the City did not prioritize cost controls as a goal through the first two years that new arrivals came to NYC.



History of the City's Sheltering Policies and New Exit Policies

Traditionally, the City has provided shelter primarily through providers contracted by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) under the City's Department of Social Services (DSS). In September 2022, the Mayor announced the first shelters specifically for new arrivals operated by other city agencies (referred to as "non-DHS shelters"), beginning with Orchard Beach. In May 2023, the City began operating the Roosevelt Hotel as an Arrival Center to connect new arrivals to shelters. Over the last year, the City has created separate exit policies for adults, including single individuals and adult families, and families with minor children. Policies have differed by shelter (DHS or non-DHS) and household type.

Adults. The City began to impose time limits for some shelter stays in September 2023, beginning with 60-day time limits for adults in non-DHS shelters.ⁱ The City reduced these time periods to 30 days by October, and by November received permission from the State to issue 30-day time limits to adults in DHS shelters as well.ⁱⁱ

In March 2024, the City and Legal Aid entered into a [stipulation modifying the consent judgment](#) entered into between the City and Legal Aid Society in *Callahan v. Carey* (referred to as the "Legal Aid Settlement") for new rules regarding adults in both DHS and non-DHS shelters. This followed a lawsuit filed in September 2022. Beginning in May 2024, all adults in both types of shelter began receiving exit notices after 30 days, or 60 days for young adults 18-23, with exemptions for people with documented disabilities.ⁱⁱⁱ The agreement created two paths for extensions, allowing adults to remain in the shelter system but not necessarily in the same location. Individuals should receive an automatic extension if they can become eligible for public benefits by applying for asylum or Temporary Protected Status, a status designated by New York State for residents Permanently Residing Under the Color of Law (PRUCOL).^{iv} If individuals do not have PRUCOL status, they can apply for an "extenuating circumstance" extension based on a points system, including whether they have made "significant" efforts to find housing or have imminent medical or legal proceedings.

Families with minor children. The City has also imposed 60-day time limits for asylum-seeking families with minor children in non-DHS shelters, starting in October 2023 with the first expiration dates in January 2024. Unlike the process for adults, families with children are still guaranteed shelter, but not necessarily in the same place. They must return to the Arrival Center for a new placement. In late August 2024, the State gave the City permission to impose the same time limits within DHS shelters, but there has not yet been a public timeline for implementation of time limits within DHS.

Exit Policy Implementation

According to data IBO obtained from the Administration, as of November 1, 2024, approximately 20,600 adults in families with minor children had a first exit notice expire. Of this group, about 58% have left the system and the remaining 42% are still residing in City shelters. For those who returned to the Arrival Center for a new placement, 89% are in different shelter facility and 11% are in the same facility.

For individual adults, approximately 51,000 people have had a first exit notice expire, including approximately 3,400 young adults. The City has evaluated 37,606 individuals for PRUCOL extensions and granted 85% of these extensions. For those who do not have PRUCOL status, the City has screened 3,227 cases for extenuating circumstances and granted 33% of these extensions.

Estimated Negative Consequences of Exit Policies. Many of the impacts of exit policies are social and emotional, and not easily quantifiable. In April 2024, IBO [estimated](#) some potential negative consequences of these exit policies using available quantitative data. Some of these consequences reflect the opportunity, indirect, or direct costs for individuals forced to exit shelter—which could impact the larger New York City community.

- First, IBO looked at the consequences of challenges to getting mail, including missed work authorizations and other legal documents, as individuals move shelter locations and/or out of the shelter system, with an impact of up to \$1 billion on the local economy. To the extent that New York’s population is decreasing, and there are concerns about the size of the labor force, any action that prevents available employees from gaining jobs that they can perform is a strain on the local economy.
- Second, IBO looked at the potential healthcare consequences associated with a potential increase in street homelessness for at least a portion of the year, given that exit policies did not guarantee a place to stay for individuals, with an impact of up to \$870 million.
- Lastly, IBO estimated the potential costs of new bus requests for students who resided in non-DHS shelters up to \$30 million, given that the City is legally required to allow students to stay in the same school and provide transportation.

Because these consequences may be shouldered by individuals, government, businesses, or nonprofits, some or none of which might be paid for by governmental entities, IBO does not know how much of these costs have come to fruition.

Since the City’s new exit policies began in May 2024, there has been considerable reporting on the challenges of missed mail^v, with individuals missing work authorizations as well as court notices and other crucial information. The New York City Comptroller’s Office also found that the City does not have “policies and procedures or training materials regarding mail retention and change of address.”^{vi} There has also been a visible rise in encampments around shelters, as adults are either not given an extension or placed too far from their original shelter location.^{vii}

IBO has not yet analyzed the specific impacts of the exit policies on students, although research suggests there are likely negative educational consequences. Robust research suggests that students who have long commutes to school, and/or who switch schools mid-year—both of which are likely consequences of the exit policies—have worse attendance and academic performance.^{viii} Longer commutes and switching schools are likely especially disruptive for low-income students in temporary housing, who at baseline have worse attendance and academic outcomes than their low-income stably housed peers.^{ix} Finally, these disruptions can negatively affect the peers of students subject to exit policies, as schools navigate the movement of students in and out. As data

become available, IBO expects to conduct additional analyses related to school mobility and student outcomes in the wake of the shelter exit policies. IBO looks forward to sharing that research in the future.

Yesterday morning, Mayor Adams announced that the City will create a centralized mail location, to guarantee that new arrivals can continue to get important legal documents even when they have to move facilities or leave the shelter system.^x While this will make a significant difference going forward, it will not address the potentially thousands of new arrivals who may have already lost essential documents. The Mayor also announced that families with minor children from kindergarten through sixth grade will be able to stay in the same facility. This will reduce educational and social disruption as well as associated transportation costs for these families, but not for families with older students. While all students in temporary housing are entitled to free transportation under federal law, only students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade are eligible for bus service; older students may receive a student One Metro New York (OMNY) card, unless their special education status entitles them to bus service.

Spending

One year ago, in the November 2023 Financial Plan, the City estimated that costs related to new arrivals would total \$4.7 billion in 2024 and \$6.1 billion in 2025. A year later, actual costs were almost \$1 billion lower for 2024, at \$3.75 billion, and the City has already reduced the 2025 budget by over \$1 billion, to \$4.75 billion. This reduction comes even as the City has continued to use for-profit vendors and emergency contracts (without competitive bidding) for much longer than is typical.^{xi} IBO expects the 2025 budget estimate to shrink even further in the coming November 2024 Financial Plan, given that the population entering the City has been falling since January 2024 and exits have outpaced entries for most of the last year. Furthermore, IBO expects the budgeted amounts in the outyears, over \$7 billion annually, to be similarly reduced.

As the new budget comes out, IBO will be looking at the revised budget for 2025 through 2028, as well as updating IBO estimates based on recent population data, which will reflect the impact of the exit policies. IBO is also factoring in the considerable uncertainty arising from the outcome of the federal election earlier this month.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I will be happy to answer any questions.

ⁱ Mays, J. (2023, May 23.) New York City Asks for Relief From its Right-to-Shelter Mandate. *The New York Times*. [New York City Asks for Relief From Its Right-to-Shelter Mandate - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/nyc-right-to-shelter-mandate.html)

ⁱⁱ Sundaram, A. (2023, Nov 14.) NYC expands 30-day stay limits to single adult migrants in DHS shelters. *Gothamist*. <https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-expands-30-day-stay-limits-to-single-adult-migrants-in-dhs-shelters>

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- Ferré-Sadurni, L. (2024, May 22.) New York Begins a New Wave of Evictions From Migrant Shelters. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/nyregion/migrant-evictions-shelter-adams.html>
- ^{iv} New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. (2023, May 12.) General Information (GIS) Message: Non-citizens recognized as Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) for Safety Net Assistance (SNA) Eligibility. [Untitled \(state.ny.us\)](https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2023/23DC039.pdf), <https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2023/23DC039.pdf>
- ^v Parra, D. (2024, Jul 22). Missed Mail is Complicating Migrants' Immigration Cases, Exacerbated by Shelter Deadlines. *City Limits*. [Missed Mail is Complicating Migrants' Immigration Cases, Exacerbated by Shelter Deadlines](#)
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- ^{vi} Office of New York City Comptroller Brad Lander. (2024, May 9.) Report on the Investigation of the Implementation of the "60-Day Rule" for Asylum-Seeker Families. [Report on the Investigation of the Implementation of the "60-Day Rule" for Asylum-Seeker Families](#)
- ^{vii} Hogan, G. (2024, Aug 7.) Migrants Ejected from Island Mega-Shelter Set Up Camp Outside. *The City*. [Migrants Ejected From Island Mega-Shelter Set Up Camp Outside | THE CITY — NYC News](#)
- Venuogopal, A. (2023, Jul 20.) For some migrants in NYC, a tent encampment under the BQE is now home. *Gothamist*. [For some migrants in NYC, a tent encampment under the BQE is now home - Gothamist](#)
- Ferré-Sadurni, L. (2024, Aug 19.) New York City Moves to Shut Down a Growing Encampment. *New York Times*. [NYC Moves to Shut Down a Growing Migrant Encampment - The New York Times](#)
- ^{viii} Hopson, L. M., Lidbe, A. D., Jackson, M. S., Adanu, E., Li, X., Penmetsa, P., ... Abura-Meerdink, G. (2022). Transportation to school and academic outcomes: a systematic review. *Educational Review*, 76(3), 648–668. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2022.2034748>. Welsh, R. O. (2017). School Hopscotch: A Comprehensive Review of K–12 Student Mobility in the United States. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(3), 475–511. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316672068>
- ^{ix} McDermott, Z. (2022). Different Students, Differential Success? How Three Vulnerable Student Populations—Students with Disabilities, Sexual and Gender Minorities, and Students Experiencing Homelessness—Fare in Three Different Educational Contexts. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2700994872/186A00EAE8BE4651PQ/1?accountid=12768>
See also: IBO education indicators on students in temporary housing for attendance from [2022-2023](#), achievement for [grades 3-8](#), and achievement [grades 9-12](#).
- ^x Venugopal, A. (2024, Nov 18.) NY migrant families can stay in shelters longer to keep kids in school. *Gothamist*. [NY migrant families can stay in shelters longer to keep kids in school - Gothamist](#)
- ^{xi} Office of New York City Comptroller Brad Lander. (2024, Aug 6.) Audit of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Oversight of Its Contract with Rapid Reliable Testing NY LLC (aka DocGo). [Audit of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Oversight of Its Contract with Rapid Reliable Testing NY LLC \(aka DocGo\) :Office of the New York City Comptroller Brad Lander](#)
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- New York City Council City Council. (2023, Oct 23.) Committee Report and Briefing Paper on the Finance, Legislative, and Oversight & Investigation Divisions. [The New York City Council - File #: T2023-4154](#)



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

**Testimony of Win (Formerly Women in Need, Inc.) for the New York City Council
Committees on General Welfare and Immigration Joint Hearing
November 19th, 2024**

Thank you, Chairs Ayala and Aviles, and the esteemed members of the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration for holding this hearing on the impact of the Mayor's 30- and 60- day shelter limits on new arrivals and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is Christine Quinn, and I am the President and CEO of Win, the City and nation's largest provider of shelter and services to families with children experiencing homelessness. We operate 16 shelters and nearly 500 supportive housing units across the five boroughs. Each night, nearly 7,000 people call Win "home," including 3,600 children. We estimate that a third of our families are immigrants and have provided shelter and services to nearly 500 recently arrived families, or 1,600 individuals, since 2022, many of whom have come into our shelter system without legal status or access to public benefits.

The new arrivals at Win have come from all over the world, but the one thing they nearly all have in common is that the impossible decision to leave their homes was one of life or death. Our families have faced starvation, political persecution, gang assassination attempts and many other life-threatening conditions. One mom at a Win shelter in the Bronx told us about how her partner was murdered by a gang and she fled with her children because that same gang was threatening to kill her and her kids next. Another described facing starvation with nothing but tortillas to eat for weeks at a time. A young family came to our shelter with only the clothes on their backs, which they had not changed for 15 days. Another woman reported witnessing children being trafficked on her journey to the U.S. These are just some of the many stories our staff hears daily that highlight the unspeakable trauma many migrants face before and during their pursuit of a better life in the United States. Although welcoming so many new arrivals has been challenging, we know that continuing to welcome immigrants with nowhere else to go is the right thing to do, despite growing anti-immigrant rhetoric and the incoming president's plans for mass deportation.

Right now, the City is in a crucial moment where we must stand together to protect our immigrant communities. The Mayor needs to send a clear message to all New Yorkers that he stands with immigrants and will work to end or combat harmful policies that put immigrants at risk. While we applaud the Adam's administration for limiting the scope of the 60-day rule yesterday, this measure falls disappointingly short of ending the rule in its entirety. The 60-day rule and similar policies, like the 30-day rule and the consistently abused practice of



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

administrative transfers for migrants, leave countless families in a perpetual state of limbo, creating unnecessary instability while inflicting lasting trauma. We urge the City to go further and end these cruel and senseless shelter stay limits and administrative transfers once and for all, so that individuals and families can be placed on the firmest footing possible to accelerate their pathways to legal status and stop the obvious harms to immigrant children. Additionally, the City must establish clear policies for protecting new arrivals when shelters are targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Finally, the City must secure or destroy any data collected on immigration status that could assist in mass deportation efforts.

Win has always welcomed immigrants to our shelters, and we are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive space for all unhoused families in need, regardless of their immigration status. However, the Adams' Administration's harmful shelter evictions, including the 30-and 60-day rules and the "administrative transfers," which have already impacted 104 families in our care, providing new arrivals in the DHS system with only a 48-hour notice before being transferred, have made it increasingly difficult for the legal aid community and shelter providers to help migrants access the legal and housing resources they desperately need to stabilize their families, exit shelter, and find permanent housing. Instead, these cruel policies have shuffled vulnerable families across the city, displaced children from their schools, and impeded the integrity of our immigration system, as shelter evictions make it impossible for asylum seekers to have a stable address at which they can receive their work authorization and court documents. Even with the newly announced mail center, the added administrative barrier of constantly being shuffled around will inevitably lead to delays in obtaining legal status. By impeding individuals and families from the legal services they desperately need, the 30 – and 60-day rules leave immigrants subject to these policies extremely vulnerable to mass deportation.

Although the 30 – and 60-day policies are detrimental to the entire family, the harm the 60-day rule poses to children and their ability to get an education is catastrophic. The City has already rolled out the 60-day rule on a grand scale, subjecting more than 37,000 individuals including more than 17,000 kids to the arbitrary shelter limits. When the City extends the 60-day rule to DHS migrant facilities as planned, an additional 30,000 people will be forced out of shelter every 60 days. When Win families receive transfer notices or pre-60 day alerts, it has created a wave of panic throughout our shelters, as parents try to control their own anxiety along with their children's. A mother from Venezuela described the level of fear and uncertainty that she is experiencing because of receiving the 60-day pre notices. Daily she asks our staff "What's going to happen? When will we be kicked out?" Nearly 40 Win clients, who received the pre-notices, have expressed similar fears of not knowing where they might be sent next. Yet, our staff are unable to provide any clarity because we haven't received any update about when the 60-day



rule will be implemented in DHS facilities since they announced their intention to expand the policy in September.

For children to learn, they need an environment that provides safety and stability, the 60-day rule creates the exact opposite conditions, which have devastating and lasting impacts on kids. According to the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, “Every school transfer is estimated to set a student back academically by up to six months—a loss of learning for any student, but for English Language Learners it is a particularly challenging obstacle.”¹ By forcing kids to move from school to school every 60 days, the city is setting them further and further behind, essentially halting any educational progress. In the city’s attempt to punish parents for coming to this country, children are the ones who are actually being punished the most.

The 30- and 60-day rules do nothing but exacerbate our current homelessness crisis. That is why Win and our homeless advocacy partners formed the New York Shelter for All in Need Equally Coalition, or NY SANE, which consists of religious leaders, organized labor, legal providers, and advocates united in defending the right to shelter in New York.

While it is unclear if the City Council can successfully ban shelter limits, the State clearly has that authority, which is why Win and NY SANE urge the Council to pass Councilmember Brewer’s [Resolution 363](#) in support of state legislation, S8493, sponsored by Brad Hoylman Sigal, and A9129, sponsored by Catalina Cruz, which would prohibit the City from continuing shelter time limits and would codify the right to shelter in law. This would ensure that immigrant households, children, and all new Yorkers have a warm and safe place to sleep whenever they need it. It would also save families unnecessary trauma and inevitably save the lives of those who will perish after being forced to sleep on the street. Stable shelter is not an indulgence or a perk of the social safety net; it is urgently needed emergency healthcare.

For the past two years, we’ve watched the Mayor blame asylum seekers for the City’s budget shortfalls. However, the Adams Administration’s decision to create a separate shelter system for new migrants has proven to be misguided, discriminatory, and incredibly expensive. Before creating the Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center’s (HERRCs) and migrant hotels, the Department of Homeless Services spent an average \$188 per night per household in family shelter.² Today, that figure has ballooned to \$373 per night for migrant families, an increase of \$12 million per day or \$4 billion per year.³ In addition to being costly, this separate system puts new arrivals living in the alternative shelter system in an extremely precarious position. Instead of being housed within the existing shelter system where individuals and families could be more easily protected from ICE, they have been segregated out, where they have few protections from an ICE raid. The City should move to desegregate the shelter system



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and ensure that new arrivals have the full protection of the City. Further, the City should establish clear policies for shelters to follow should ICE show up at their door that mirror policies established under the De Blasio administration, which served as effective protections for immigrants then and will again.

Additionally, while standing up the alternate shelter system, the City began collecting significant amounts of data on immigration status not previously recorded, including efforts by “Strike Teams,” which consist of Department of Homeless Services representatives and the National Guard, who are conducting assessments at our sanctuary shelter daily. Although the intent of collecting more data on documentation status was to assist the City in its efforts to help new arrivals connect to legal services, the City was slow to stand those services up and what legal services the City does provide are inadequate. As the Trump administration begins its mass deportation efforts, the data the City has collected is now a dangerous liability. The City must take immediate action within the next 60 days to ensure that the data collected is fully secured or destroyed to prevent it from being used in mass deportation efforts.

New York City has always welcomed immigrants and will continue to do so. In this moment, our immigrant communities need City leaders to stand with them in the face of racist and xenophobic policies that have the potential to do catastrophic harm. The City must put an end to the cruel and counterproductive 30 – and 60-day policies to give new arrivals their best shot at attaining legal status and if City officials don’t act, the state should pass legislation that would make shelter limits illegal. Additionally, the City should desegregate the shelter system, establish clear policies for protecting new arrivals if shelters are raided by ICE, and finally either secure or destroy data that has been collected on documentation status that could allow the Trump administration to easily target families in their mass deportation efforts. We have made it through difficult times before, and together, we will make it through these challenging times as well.

¹¹ “3 Pitfalls of Mid-year Transfers for Homeless ELL Students,” *Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness*, October 2018, <https://www.icph.org/commentary/3-pitfalls-of-mid-year-transfers-for-homeless-ell-students/#:~:text=When%20homeless%20ELL%20students%20transfer%20schools%20mid-year%2C%20which,depending%20on%20the%20services%20their%20new%20school%20offers.>

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AUGUST 2023

SAVINGS & STABILITY



Permanently Housing Rather Than Just Sheltering Asylum Seekers Could Save the City Over \$3 Billion Annually

Christopher Mann, MA

Director of Policy & Advocacy, Win

Hannah Tager

Policy Analyst, Win

Theodore Moore

Vice President of Policy & Programs, NYIC



I came here out of necessity. People think we come here for selfish reasons, but if I had an opportunity to work in my country or I could depend on anything there, I would have stayed in my home.

Win Client & Undocumented Immigrant

Context

Presently and historically, New York City has been the home to the country's largest foreign-born population.ⁱ As this number has grown in recent months, the city's social services have also adapted to meet the emerging needs of these new arrivals. **Over 100,000 asylum seekers have arrived in New York City over the past year, with the majority of them depending on the city for shelter and services.** Currently, 57,300 asylum seekers are living in City run facilities and the Mayor projects that this number will continue to grow.

Furthermore, these figures do not account for the thousands of immigrants who were already living in New York City shelters before governors from southern states began inhumanely busing migrants to New York City in August 2022. **These many immigrant households have been systematically excluded from the social safety-net, most notably rental assistance, resulting in them becoming long-term stayers in the shelter system and forcing families into prolonged poverty.** New York City's homeless response system, which was already under strain from the expiration of pandemic related funding and protections for renters, has been pushed beyond its limits. Shelter capacity is at less than 1%, and many immigrants living in shelter have no prospect of leaving.

Currently, these vulnerable families and children are ineligible for most housing subsidies, a denial that is exacerbating the capacity crisis and trapping noncitizens in transitional housing shelters for incredibly long periods of time. **New York has the authority to act unilaterally and expand housing vouchers to households in need, regardless of their immigration status. This expansion could save up to \$2.9 billion per year while helping the newest New Yorkers exit shelter, freeing up space in our homelessness response system.**



I've been here for five years, and I haven't gotten any closer to leaving.

Win Client & Undocumented Immigrant

Solution

Housing subsidy programs are widely recognized as one of the most effective tools to combat homelessness. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's [Family Options Study](#) revealed that, rather than staying in shelter, receiving long-term rent subsidies sharply reduced homelessness and increased housing stability.ⁱⁱ In addition, rental subsidies also promoted benefits in other domains of family well-being, including halving intimate partner violence, reducing adult psychological distress, parent-child separation, absenteeism and behavior problems for children, and increasing food security.ⁱⁱⁱ In FY22, of the 5,207 families with children in New York City that exited shelter to permanent housing, 79% of placements were subsidized.^{iv} Many sheltered, unhoused, and at-risk households rely on housing subsidies to transition to permanent housing, and **over 30,000 households gained or maintained permanent housing with CityFHEPS, the City's most widely**

used voucher, in FY22.^v Furthermore, without housing subsidies, families often struggle to make a sustainable exit from shelter. **In FY22, 15% of families with children who exited shelter without a subsidy returned within one year, compared to less than 1% of families who exited with a subsidy.**^{vi}

When properly implemented, housing vouchers can be New York's permanent and inclusive solution to the homelessness crisis. However, this crisis cannot be contained without solutions that include immigrant New Yorkers. Giving all households the support necessary to break the cycle of homelessness with vouchers will promote fairness and maintain the integrity of the nation's most expansive social services system. **New York has the responsibility to provide a permanent housing solution for households regardless of immigration status and should implement the expansion of the vouchers to all New Yorkers.** Vital benefits have been provided legally to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status through Promise NYC, HHC Options, and others, and **New York has the legal authority to grant immigrants access to housing vouchers.**

It's so hard to want something, but not be able to achieve it. Like a job: I can't work, and my children need a home.

Win Client & Undocumented Immigrant

Cost Savings

Not only is providing subsidized housing vouchers the solution that has the best proven well-being outcomes, but it is also the most cost-effective approach to addressing homelessness. **Offering housing subsidies to households regardless of immigration status would increase capacity in shelters, making it easier and less expensive for New York to care for homeless families.** Over time, changes in the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter census show that the introduction of rental assistance subsidies is correlated with a decline in the homeless population and associated costs (Table 1). This past year's growth in the shelter census and costs can be attributed to the fact that the current vouchers in circulation are not available to most recent arrivals. Furthermore, improvements and expansions of vouchers also increase move-outs, and in the five months after the value of the CityFHEPS voucher increased in May 2022, Win's CityFHEPS placements were 79% higher compared to the months immediately before, and 40% higher compared to the previous year.

DHS Shelter Census, Contextualized

Values

- Sum of Recent Asylum Seekers
- Sum of Other Shelter Residents

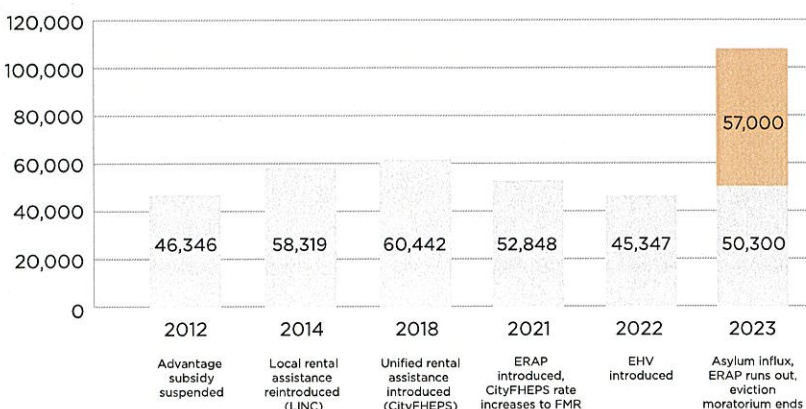


Table 1. *DHS Shelter Census, Contextualized*, by Catherine Trapani, Homeless Services United March 2023, updated by Hannah Tager, Win, August 2023. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dhs/about/stats-and-reports.page>

In general, the expansions and introductions of housing vouchers can lead to future savings, as the subsidies reduce shelter costs enough to almost entirely offset the cost of the voucher. **Savings associated with permanent housing are returned through decreased reliance on the health care, corrections, and emergency shelter systems, which may be close to or above the cost of rental assistance and services.**^{viii} As well, the halving of intimate partner violence associated with the utilization of rental subsidies can result in improved economic outcomes for individuals and communities.^x

While the vouchers currently available have been extremely effective and economically efficient, expanded access is still necessary for those who aren't eligible for existing vouchers. **Put another way: excluding the newest New Yorkers from using vouchers comes with an immense social and fiscal cost. For example, the CityFHEPS voucher costs just \$72 per night for families living in a 2-bedroom apartment.^x In contrast, New York City is spending on average \$383 to shelter households in emergency hotels.^{xii}** In a public briefing on August 9th, 2023, Mayor Adams noted that there are 57,000 asylum seekers in the care of the city, comprised of 25,604 households.

^{xii} **The cost of sheltering 25,604 households per year in emergency welfare hotels, equates to \$3.58 billion dollars. It would cost just \$673 million to house those households with CityFHEPS vouchers, a cost savings of \$2.9 billion per year.**

Similarly, the proposed NYS Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) would cost as little as **\$50 per night for household.**^{xiii} If the State were to pass and implement the HAVP voucher or something similar, it would cost just \$465 million to house the 25,604 asylum-seeking households with HAVP for a year. **Housing families with state-level vouchers instead of sheltering them in emergency hotels could result in saving over \$3.1 billion per year.**

New York should take the commonsense and cost-effective step to extend eligibility for housing subsidies to all households most in need, regardless of their immigration status. Noncitizen households, rather than becoming long-term stayers in the shelter system, should have access to long-term solutions that will relieve the shelter system and allow families to truly thrive.



***I've been here so long...My daughter was
basically raised in the shelter system.
I don't want that for her.***

**Win Client & Undocumented
Immigrant**

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Since its founding to provide emergency shelter to four homeless women and their children, Win has grown into the largest provider of family shelter and supportive housing in New York City and the country. Win offers transitional housing and permanent supportive housing that's coupled with programs and services developed to support long-term housing stability. All of Win's services are guided by its mission—to transform the lives of New York City homeless families with children by providing the safe housing, critical services, and the ground-breaking programs they need to succeed on their own—so families can regain their independence and children can look forward to a brighter future.

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The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) is an umbrella policy & advocacy organization that represents over 200 immigrant and refugee rights groups throughout New York.

The NYIC serves one of the largest and most diverse newcomer populations in the United States. The multi-racial and multi-sector NYIC membership base includes grassroots and nonprofit community organizations, religious and academic institutions, labor unions, as well as legal and socioeconomic justice organizations. The NYIC not only establishes a forum for immigrant groups to voice their concerns, but also provides a platform for collective action to drive positive social change.

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**New York City Council Committee on General Welfare jointly with the
Committee on Immigration**

Oversight – Updates on the Implementation of the 30/60
day rules for Asylum Seekers

**Testimony from the New York Immigration Coalition
November 19, 2024**

Bonjou tout moun. Bonjou, Chair Aviles, and Chair Ayala, and members of the committees. My name is Taina Wagnac, I am the Senior Manager of State and Local Policy at the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 groups serving immigrants and refugees across New York State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am here today on behalf of the NYIC and the communities we represent, to once again denounce Mayor Adams' shelter limit stay policy, which has forced people to give up their room or bed after 30 or 60 days – putting vulnerable people at risk and undermining their basic human right to stable housing. Ensuring access to affordable permanent housing must be our city's top priority and primary solution to alleviating the overburdened shelter system in a safe and humane way for all New Yorkers. Limiting the length of time individuals can have a safe roof over their heads or access to a warm bed is not the answer. Everyone deserves the stability and dignity of a permanent home, not temporary, uncertain conditions.

Mayor Adams entered into office, acknowledged the urgent challenges facing our shelter system, and instead of collaborating with the Council for real solutions, chose to escalate the crisis. Rather than addressing overcrowding with innovation, collaboration, and compassion, he has used our city, and vulnerable families and individuals, as a testing ground, for policies that have worsened the very crisis he claims to have addressed.

The Mayor's 30 or 60-day shelter stay limits is a harmful policy that has exacerbated a pre-existing, and dire, housing and affordability crisis that has impacted New Yorkers of all stripes. . These shelter stay limits are not only cruel, but also represent a betrayal of the promises made to our most vulnerable residents — which has had devastating consequences. This policy undermines our city's longstanding commitment to the right to shelter, and contradicts the values of welcome and inclusion that define New York City.

New York City's right to shelter exists for all residents and is particularly vital in these times of economic uncertainty, rising inflation, and skyrocketing housing costs. With many residents living paycheck to paycheck, we must do more to protect and uphold this right, as too many New Yorkers now find themselves, and their family, one bad day away from homelessness.

Shelter limits have transformed sanctuary into a revolving door, forcing families out of the shelter system when they are least prepared to navigate life in an unfamiliar country. Immigrant



families are already navigating immense challenges – fleeing violence, persecution, and poverty; adapting to new languages and cultures; and beginning their lives anew. This policy unnecessarily compounds their trauma by stripping away the stability they need to rebuild. Trauma this administration needs to recognize and acknowledge.

The administration must acknowledge the profound impacts their actions and bad policies are having on families and children. There is a troubling lack of clarity, oversight, and guidance from administration, which is compounded by the dissemination of misleading data . At first, community providers were told that the 30-day limit applies for all single adults older than 23, with 60-day limits for those ages 18-23, and that pregnant persons and families with children will not receive shelter notices. However, this turned out to be false. Families with children are now being given notices to vacate, often with little time to prepare.

Moreover, the ripple effects of this policy extends to school-aged children, disrupting their education, and school enrollment. Often families are given notices and forced to relocate before their children can be properly enrolled in school or connected to essential support services. For instance our member organizations have reported incidents where their clients were in the middle school enrollment, scheduling mandatory vaccinations and health checks, and waiting for follow up only to learn that the family was put in a new shelter that always end up being too far away from their school. This often leads to children being unenrolled or pulled from schools, and they have to start the process all over again. You have children out of school, not getting their education, essentially being bounced all around the city. This disrupts children's learning, separates them from friends and teachers, slowing down their development and exacerbates instability.

For many families, a room in a shelter represents more than just a place to sleep—it is meaningful and necessary stability in an otherwise chaotic situation – and it enables them to seek the proper care, support, and vital services they and their families need. This constant threat of displacement is particularly cruel for families who have already endured traumatic journeys to seek safety.

Moreover, new arrivals and asylum seekers are required to provide a fixed address for critical immigration legal proceedings, including hearing notices, deadlines, work authorization, and other case updates. The loss of shelter and constant displacement leaves many without a reliable mailing address – which has dire consequences that can force many into precarious situations . As a result, folks have reported missing their court dates and critical legal updates, have slowed progress for their work authorization, among other issues while they were transitioning into a new placement. We cannot overstate the severity of this – missed court dates, legal deadlines, and lost sensitive documents can lead to devastating legal consequences, including the denial of



their asylum claims. Additionally, unnecessary shuffling and relocation of individuals and families increases unnecessary costs to our city - both due to busing requirements for students, re-intake requirements, and the opportunity costs of delays in work authorization.

Apart from the damage and harm presented by the current shelter stay policy, we must also acknowledge serious issues with the notices themselves. They have been issued in English, despite the well-known fact that the recent arrivals in the shelters have limited English language proficiency. Although the city is required to provide translation services, they often cannot meet the required preferred language needs. How are families supposed to comply with a policy they cannot even read? As a result, many only learn they must leave or understand the implications of the notice when they finally speak to a caseworker or someone who can communicate in their language.

Shelter stay limits are not a solution to the challenges facing our city—it is a recipe for chaos and despair. By repeatedly uprooting families, we are creating a cycle of displacement that will have long-term consequences for children’s education, health, and well-being.

I would also like to take time to acknowledge, and support, the Council’s efforts to support our city, and our state’s, working families.

Families in New York deserve a tax system that works for them – particularly in the face of an ongoing affordability crisis. Creating an affordable New York for working families requires more than one-time additions; we urge the Council to lend their voices and call upon our State government to pass the Working Families Tax Credit. The Working Families Tax Credit would benefit nearly every family in New York by closing structural gaps, including 17 year olds who are currently excluded, expanding more access to Individual Tax identification Filers, and assisting New York in reaching its goal to lift 50% of children out of poverty by 2032. We look forward to working with the city to continue moving New York towards a more affordable and sustainable future.

Policy Recommendations

We urge the City Council to:

1. **Pass Intro 210 (Hanif) to End Shelter Evictions:** Rather than continuously pull the rug out from families every 60 days, interrupting students’ education, and forcing families to consistently move miles away from their previous shelters, the city must move to fully protect the Right to Shelter for all families, regardless of immigration status.
2. New York must pass the Working Families Tax Credit legislation



- a. New Yorkers are struggling with the high cost of living. The costs of housing, child care, utilities, and basic living needs have put many families into financial crisis. By making some changes to our tax code, we can give economically burdened workers and families cash to pay for what they need – food, rent, utilities, child care, and more.
 - b. The Working Families Tax Credit will expand access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) by creating a new, combined tax credit.
3. Continue funding for shelter-based coordinators to help children who are homeless get to school every day and access needed educational support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Submitted by:

Taina Wagnac

Senior Manager of State and Local Policy

New York Immigration Coalition

TESTIMONY TO NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

On behalf of Afghans For A Better Tomorrow

By: Halema Wali, Co-Director

November 19, 2024

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to testify on Mayor Adams' 30- and 60-day shelter stay limits. My name is Halema Wali, and I am the founding co-director of Afghans For A Better Tomorrow, an Afghan-led advocacy organization dedicated to systemic change for Afghans in the U.S. and beyond. I am here to strongly oppose these inhumane policies.

Since 2022, our organization has supported nearly 1,200 asylum seekers in NYC, many of whom are Afghans that fled famine, brutal persecution, and climate devastation—conditions created or worsened by U.S. policies. They arrived here seeking stability and safety, but now face eviction from shelters—a policy that is harsh, unjust, and retraumatizing. One Afghan father of six, part of a persecuted religious and ethnic minority seeking asylum, asked us, “Why would they displace us all over again, force my girls to switch schools, when we fled the only country in the world where my daughters are denied an education?”

This policy is not just cruel; it's dangerous. Evicting families from shelters after such brief stays forces them into homelessness and jeopardizes their health, safety, and future. For children, the stakes are even higher: disrupted schooling and deeper instability. These families don't want to remain in shelters where their children go malnourished due to inadequate food—they want a fair chance to rebuild their lives. But without time, resources, and pathways to permanent housing and employment, they are being set up to fail.

New York City has long been a beacon of compassion and opportunity. Upholding our right-to-shelter law and investing in affordable, permanent housing, language access, legal services, and workforce access will not only protect these families but also empower them to enrich our communities. These new arrivals are motivated and ready to contribute to our city's vibrant, diverse future.

I urge the Mayor and City Council to reject these harmful limits and commit to humane, sustainable solutions. Together, we can ensure New York remains a city of hope and opportunity for all. Thank you.

—





Asian American Federation

Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Immigration and Committee on General Welfare Hearing *November 19, 2024*

Written Testimony

Thank you Chair Avilés and the Committee on Immigration and Chair Ayala and the Committee on General Welfare for holding this hearing and giving us the opportunity to testify. I am Ellyse Ramos, a policy intern at the Asian American Federation (AAF), where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

We are here today to discuss the city's new 30- and 60- day shelter rules as well as the New York State Working Families Tax Credit. I would like to thank the City Council for continuing to support legislation aimed at helping lower-income families and our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Overwhelmingly, Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, with two out of three in the city being foreign-born. Within this population, 13% of AAPI immigrants in New York City are undocumented. Specifically, since 2022, over 175,000 asylum seekers have arrived in search of a better life, many seeking to escape violence, or to seek better economic opportunities for their loved ones. Of these 175,000 individuals, about 22,000 are of Chinese descent, and 80,000 are of Indian descent.

The current 30–60-day shelter rules limit the duration of newly arrived migrants in city-funded shelters and fail to uphold the City's Right to Shelter law, posing significant challenges for new immigrants to the city. The number of homeless students in New York City has already begun to peak, as nearly one in five migrant students impacted by the 60- day shelter rules have left their schools¹. Furthermore, a significant portion of asylum seekers in recent years are of Asian descent, and these migrants often face unique challenges. Language barriers, for example, are prevalent among Asian immigrants and may hinder their ability to understand certain services or rules regarding housing systems. AAF's advocacy as a leader of the Language Justice Collaborative (LJC), in partnership with African Communities Together, the New York Immigration Coalition, and MASA, seeks to bridge language barriers for non-English speaking immigrants but the City still has considerable work to do in providing adequate language access to our communities. Asian migrants may also face cultural stigmas that prevent them from seeking public and financial assistance needed to pursue alternative housing options. These factors pose significant obstacles for our community and as such, AAF does not support the recent updates to shelter rules.

Our next point of discussion is related to Resolution 41 and the New York Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC). The WFTC would represent a transformative change for Asian immigrant families in New York City, many of whom are among the hardest working yet underserved members of our community. By removing harmful minimum income requirements, the WFTC ensures that our poorest families, often including those in immigrant communities, receive much-needed financial support. For Asian immigrant

¹ Source: <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/04/15/nearly-one-in-five-nyc-migrant-students-impacted-by-60-day-shelter-policy-left-schools/>

tax filers who use Individual Tax Identification Numbers (ITINs), the WFTC's expanded coverage is critical, as it ends the exclusion from the Earned Income Tax Credit, which has historically denied these families access to thousands of dollars in vital refunds. Furthermore, the introduction of quarterly payments will provide Asian immigrant families with timely financial assistance to address pressing needs such as rent, groceries, and educational expenses. By increasing the maximum credit, indexing it to inflation, and eliminating the cap on the number of children covered, the WFTC recognizes the diverse realities of immigrant households, which often have multiple dependents. Moreover, including 17-year-olds in the credit reflects the ongoing financial responsibilities parents face with older children.

Recommendations:

- The City Council should continue to closely oversee the City's implementation of the 30- and 60-day shelter rules for new migrants. Accessible shelters in New York City are critical for all migrant populations and the 30- 60- day rules impede on the City's right to shelter law and pose challenges to vulnerable families.
- Pass Resolution 41 calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation creating the New York State Working Families Tax Credit. The WFTC is a powerful step toward economic equity, offering Asian immigrant families in New York City a fair chance to thrive. AAF strongly supports this tax credit as a means to uplift all lower-income families, including Asian Americans, in the city.

The Asian American Federation is thankful for the opportunity to testify on this critical subject. We are grateful to see the City Council move ahead with policies that protect our immigrant communities, and we look forward to continuing this work with all of you.



Brooklyn Defender Services
177 Livingston St, 7th Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel (718) 254-0700
Fax (347) 457-5194
info@bds.org

TESTIMONY OF:

Catherine Gonzalez,

Supervising Attorney and Policy Counsel

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council

Committees on Immigration and General Welfare

Oversight Hearing on Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules for

Asylum Seekers

November 19, 2024

My name is Catherine Gonzalez, and I am a Supervising Attorney and Policy Counsel in the *Padilla* Unit of the Criminal Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. For over 25 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. I want to thank the Committees on Immigration and General Welfare, particularly Chair Aviles and Chair Ayala, for inviting us to testify today about the impact of shelter stay limits on immigrant New Yorkers.

For over 25 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. We represent approximately 22,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing loss of liberty, their home, their children, or deportation. Our staff consists of specialized attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields. BDS is fortunate to have the support of the City Council to supplement the services we provide as a public defender office in Brooklyn. Through specialized units, we provide extensive wrap-around services to meet the needs of people with legal system involvement, including civil legal advocacy, assistance with educational needs of our clients or their children, housing, and benefits advocacy, as well as immigration advice and representation.

DEFEND • ADVOCATE • CHANGE



BDS' Immigration Practice works to minimize the negative immigration consequences of family court and criminal charges for non-citizens, represent people in applications for immigration benefits, and defend people against ICE detention and deportation. Since 2009, we have counseled, advised, or represented more than 16,000 people in immigration matters including deportation defense, affirmative applications, and immigration consequence consultations in Brooklyn's criminal court system. Our *Padilla* team attorneys are criminal-immigration specialists who provide support and expertise on thousands of cases, including advocacy regarding enforcement of New York City's detainer law, individualized immigration screenings, and legal consultations.

BDS' Civil Justice Practice aims to reduce the civil collateral consequences for the people we serve who are involved with the criminal, family, or immigration legal systems. The people we serve experience housing instability in a variety of ways: we defend people from eviction in housing court, provide proactive relocation assistance and benefits advocacy, and help clients navigate the shelter system. Our Civil Justice Practice works with clients who are entering the shelter system, as well as shelter residents attempting to secure stable housing. Through this work we see the profound challenges New Yorkers face in accessing shelter and in obtaining housing vouchers and using those vouchers to secure safe, affordable, and permanent housing.

Background

Today's hearing is an opportunity to examine how the city's provision of emergency shelter for newly arrived immigrants is functioning and the impact of its 30- and 60-day rules on these communities. Immigrant New Yorkers, including asylum seekers, face many barriers to accessing and maintaining affordable housing, including delays in obtaining work permits and lack of access to credit/credit reports and banking systems. NYC's homeless shelter system has been a lifeline to many of the newly arrived immigrants and their families and therefore, it is essential that any policies related to the shelter system focus not only on providing immediate relief but also on supporting this community in their efforts to find stability and thrive in our city.

A Bifurcated Shelter System

For over two and a half years, the city has operated a bifurcated shelter system. While New York City has always had a steady flow of new immigrants arriving, most seeking financial, personal and political stability and freedom, the last couple of years we have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of new immigrants arriving in NYC. This recent increase is the result of Republican-led states on the southern border transporting newly arriving migrants and asylum seekers to the northeast, and later California, as an inhumane political stunt, challenging to challenge "sanctuary cities" to honor their commitments to immigrants. Reportedly, more than 210,000 migrants, many of whom are families with children, have arrived in New York City



since the spring of 2022.¹ The city's bifurcated shelter system distinguishes between "new arrivals" and those who have been in the United States longer. "New arrival" refers to anyone who entered the United States after March 15, 2022. The current system directs that "new arrivals" follow a different process compared to New Yorkers who have been in the U.S. for a longer time. Other New Yorkers who have been in New York City longer follow the traditional shelter system.

Individuals and families accessing the traditional shelter system go through screening and eligibility evaluation at the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) intake center, the single point of entry to the shelter system. Families are placed in a shelter operated by DHS, where they can establish eligibility for valuable benefits and services, in particular CityFHEPS.²

Newly arriving New Yorkers are assigned to a wholly separate system with a dedicated intake center at the Roosevelt Hotel. Once in this 'HERRC' (Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers) system, residents are subject to the 30- and 60-day stay limits.

All single adults and families of recently arrived New Yorkers, and all families in the HERRC system, are subject to the 30- and 60-day stay limits respectively. With a few exceptions, a resident who has nowhere else to go after their 30- or 60-day limit will be forced to pack up and move out of their shelter and return to the Roosevelt Hotel. Families in a NYC DHS shelter are not subject to the 60-day stay limit if they have an active Cash Assistance case with the city's Human Resources Administration ("HRA").

Since the implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules, the city is displacing newly arrived New Yorkers. Many BDS clients have been evicted from or moved repeatedly from their shelter placements, which has caused significant disruption for their families and their legal cases. BDS clients have shared how they and their families receive a letter after arriving at a placement which states the date on which their stay ends. They report that when their stay limit date arrives, they are told to pack up their belongings and report to the Arrival Center at the Roosevelt Hotel to re-apply for shelter placement.

¹ Sahalie Donaldson, *Following the asylum-seeker odyssey: a timeline*, City & State (October 10, 2024), available at <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2024/10/following-asylum-seeker-odyssey/382850/#:~:text=More%20than%20210%2C000%20migrants%20have,countries%20in%20Africa%20and%20China>; according to the NYC Comptroller, "as of September 15, 2024, the City had approximately 61,700 people seeking asylum in City-funded shelter, and over 214,600 have come through the City's system since the spring of 2022" *see* Asylum Seeker Census, Accounting for Asylum Seeker Services *available at* <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/accounting-for-asylum-seeker-services/asylum-seeker-census/>

² CityFHEPS is a rental assistance supplement to help individuals and families find and keep housing. *See* CityFHEPS - HRA *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/cityfheps.page>



Once they arrive at the Arrival Center at the Roosevelt Hotel, they and their children are made to wait hours, sometimes days, to restart the shelter application process all over again. It's a disruptive, exhausting, and confusing process.

It is our understanding that individuals issued a shelter stay limit notice may apply for an extension of their shelter stay if they can demonstrate "extenuating circumstances" such as medical conditions or "significant efforts" to secure their own housing. From reports we have received from clients; it appears that there is no standardized procedure or guidance for assessing an individual's extenuating circumstances. The process is marred by chaos and confusion. Since the city has implemented its stay limits for recently arrived immigrants, it has displaced nearly half of the families in the system.³ The remaining families have been moved repeatedly to multiple shelter placements, disrupting their children's school placements and lives. While these evictions and frequent placement changes create a lack of stability for families who are trying to settle into a new life and find work and raise their families, it also causes serious disruptions and delays in their immigration cases. Lack of a stable address affects access to a stable mailbox which can be highly disruptive for people with pending legal and immigration matters.

Generally, the federal government sends communications and notices pertaining to pending immigration applications and/or immigration court hearings via mail. This lack of stability creates a serious risk that individuals can risk missing immigration case notices and/or immigration court hearing notices. A missed notice can have drastic consequences: missing a single immigration court appearance leads to being immediately ordered deported. Where the immigration agency is asking for additional information or evidence, a missed notice that requires a response can lead to the denial of an application due to a late response or no response.

For individuals waiting for an immigration document, like an employment authorization card, delivery to the wrong address can cause significant delays or hurdles. The United States Postal Service (USPS) has a policy of returning secure identity documents (or cards) sent by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) if they are unable to be delivered to the applicant. When someone does not receive their card or other immigration documents by mail, they may be required to file a new application for USCIS to reissue the document.

These issues related to delay or non-delivery of employment authorization documents, can have a direct impact in people's ability to secure stable employment – one of the very things the city is evaluating in deciding whether or not to grant an extension of shelter stay. Lack of a stable address also impacts our representation of individuals and families. We often rely on mail to

³ According to "As of April 14, 2024, the City reported that 9,873 families with children were given 60-Day Notices. In total, 37,118 individuals were impacted as of that date—19,192 adults and 17,926 children." *see* New York City Comptroller, Report on the Investigation of the Implementation of the "60-Day Rule" for Asylum-Seeker Families at pp. 6 (May 9, 2024) available at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Report-on-the-Investigation-of-the-Implementation-of-the-60-Day-Rule-for-Asylum-Seeker-Families.pdf>



communicate with clients without reliable access to a phone. Lack of a stable address can affect a lawyer's ability to effectively represent a client, primarily due to challenges in maintaining consistent communication.

We remain hopeful that the recent [November 18th announcement](#)⁴ about the upcoming creation of a centralized mail center will successfully prevent lost and misplaced mail. However, we remain concerned about possible delays in getting mail to people in a timely manner and urge the city to ensure adequate staffing and consistent procedures that center on ease of access for New Yorkers.

Furthermore, the bifurcated shelter system continues to create additional challenges and burdens on BDS clients with pending legal and immigration cases.

Pervasive Issues in the Shelter System for Recently Arrived New Yorkers

1. Eligibility Issues

Shelter staff have not been adequately trained to determine the eligibility of recently arrived families and individuals seeking shelter.⁵ To apply for shelter, applicants must bring identification and proof of their household composition, their housing history for the past two years, and an explanation why they cannot return to any of those places. One person we represent was turned away from the new arrival shelter intake because he did not have a copy of the case documents from his pending asylum case. While he had other documents, the case worker was not familiar with the USCIS form he presented and turned him away. We are also deeply concerned that intake workers are demanding that people turn over highly sensitive court documents.

Another person we represent has lived in New York for over 7 years. When he went seeking shelter at the PATH intake shelter, DHS staff turned him away, believing that because he did not speak English that he had recently arrived as an asylum seeker and was not eligible for shelter. This incident is not isolated—we have heard from many single adults and families with minor children that they have been sent back and forth between the PATH and Roosevelt Hotel intake centers due to staff confusion over their eligibility.

⁴ "Mayor Adams Issues Orders to Further Save Taxpayer Dollars and Help Migrants Take Next Steps in Journeys, Updates New Yorkers on City's Ongoing Migrant Response" (November 18, 2024) *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/837-24/mayor-adams-issues-orders-further-save-taxpayer-dollars-help-migrants-take-next-steps-in>

⁵ We have learned that staff in the traditional DHS shelters are also not adequately trained to determine eligibility. We have had clients who have lived in New York for a decade or longer and are seeking shelter, but due to language barriers or lack of status were incorrectly told by staff at intake that they were ineligible for DHS shelter and directed to go to the Arrival Center at the Roosevelt Hotel instead. Not only does such misinformation unnecessarily prolong homelessness and housing instability, but it also perpetuates fear and distrust of the shelter system.



2. Difficulty Accessing Benefits

New York State has an expansive definition of PRUCOL (Persons Residing Under the Color of Law), which includes having a pending application for either asylum or adjustment of status. Anyone whose immigration status falls under the umbrella of PRUCOL may be eligible for state and city-administered public benefits. Because many recently arrived immigrants immediately apply for asylum, a large number of residents in the city's new arrival shelter system qualify as PRUCOL and may be eligible for Public Assistance benefits, which are often a life-saving resource and important tool to establish stability.

However, the HERRC shelters are not equipped to help residents access these vital benefits. Whereas DHS shelters are staffed with caseworkers to identify eligible residents and assist with benefits applications, HERRC shelter staff are not trained to identify PRUCOL residents and are often wholly unaware that many residents could be eligible for benefits. Our practice at BDS when working with new immigrant clients in the shelter system is to screen for PRUCOL status and assist with the Public Assistance application ourselves because we know our clients will not be connected to benefits through their shelter.

The city's bifurcated shelter system also creates an arbitrary barrier to accessing CityFHEPS, which is an important tool for shelter residents to secure permanent housing. Homelessness is one of the main categories of CityFHEPS eligibility, but according to city regulation, "homelessness" is limited to residence in a DHS or HRA-administered shelter or street homelessness. Residents in HERRC shelters who meet all other CityFHEPS eligibility criteria are unable to access a voucher simply because they were sent to a separate shelter system based only on the date they arrived in New York. Our clients in this situation are otherwise eligible for CityFHEPS but have no way to access a voucher from the HERRC system. These clients are unable to afford an apartment on their own and are forced to remain in the shelter system where they continue to face the ongoing disruption of the 30- and 60-day stay limits.

3. Mail Issues

We have countless examples of individuals whose mail was misplaced or lost because of a shelter transfer or eviction. BDS client Eva has been living in the New York City shelter with her 7-year-old son for the past 2 years. She has been moved various times between boroughs. She began being assigned to a shelter in Brooklyn, and enrolled her son in school near that shelter, since then she has been moved to shelters in Queens and Manhattan. After receiving her first shelter transfer, Eva decided that she would do everything possible to avoid disrupting her son's schooling. She began looking for her own housing but that has proven challenging due to an inability to find stable employment and numerous delays with obtaining her employment authorization document (EAD). She is currently at a shelter in Manhattan, but her son continues to be enrolled at a school in Brooklyn, so Eva and her son wake up at 5:00AM each day to ensure they make it into Brooklyn in time for school. When we began to work with Eva a year

ago, her main concern was related to having missed her biometrics appointment with USCIS after not receiving her correspondence in time. After her first shelter transfer, she was actively inquiring with shelter staff at both her new placement and her old placement about her correspondence. Our staff made various efforts to try to rectify the missed biometric appointment. Ultimately, it took numerous attempts of Eva walking into the USCIS biometrics site and one month of constant calls to USCIS to get Eva to complete her required biometrics with USCIS. Unfortunately, it took many more months to try to rectify other issues that the delayed correspondence brought to Eva. The missed biometric appointment delayed Eva's ability to obtain an EAD and she missed various employment opportunities. Over a year later, Eva continues to live in the shelter system. She was so impacted by that mail issue that the first thing she does when she receives a stay limit notice is obtain the necessary forms to update her address with USCIS and the immigration court (EOIR). Eva recently secured stable employment after receiving her EAD earlier this year and has been actively looking for an apartment to rent in Brooklyn to be closer to her son's school.

4. Frequent Placements Changes

Limited shelter is destabilizing for people and individuals and families constantly moving often complicates our advocacy. BDS client Lucy who is originally from West Africa and speaks French, lives in a shelter with her niece and 5 children. Despite being in a family unit, Lucy has been issued both 30- and 60-day stay limit notices. We continue to inquire but at this time have not been able to obtain any additional information about this change. Lucy also shared with our staff facing a lot of issues at the shelters. Lucy reports experiencing segregation between Latin American and African immigrants at the shelters and facing discrimination and mistreatment by staff at various shelters. Lucy has shared details of the chaotic environment at the different shelters she's been transferred to. Lucy has also shared issues regarding food insecurity. More than once, she has gone without meals to ensure there is enough food for her children and niece. She shared how after each shelter transfer, she has sought churches near the shelter and often makes the line for church pantry access. Lucy's BDS social worker reports that Lucy has not been connected to any case managers at any of the shelters she's been transferred to over the past year.

Shelter stay limits and transfers affect almost every aspect of people's lives. One of the most concerning has been the impact of transfers on access to education for our clients' children. Multiple BDS clients have reported needing to transfer their children to new schools after a shelter eviction.

6. Reticketing

Social workers at our office have shared examples of obstacles clients face with the reticketing process. The reticketing process is stressful and opaque. Through trial and error our staff has learned that reticketing requires that, when their shelter stay limit date comes, people prove that



they have met the requirements to continue in shelter. Our understanding is that these requirements include a point system that is used to make a determination as to whether someone will be reticketed. Our understanding is that 20 points are needed, and points are awarded based on steps individuals take to obtain stable housing and/or employment. Our staff has learned that the reticketing process also requires an intake process during which individuals are interviewed at the Arrival Center and are required to provide an array of documents, ranging from identity documents, to documented proof of prior stay at a shelter, documentation related to immigration applications or cases.

Our staff has been encouraging clients in shelters to go to the Arrival Center for reticketing at least one week before their stay limit date to prevent gaps in housing. This has proven difficult. Our staff has seen that shelter eviction dates have not been clearly communicated and, in more than one case, shelter residents have been provided letters with the wrong eviction date. Our staff has also noticed that, for people who do not speak English or Spanish, or who do not read those languages, information has been even more limited.

BDS has provided documentation to the people we represent to affirm that they have an active immigration case and are meeting the required steps to stay in shelter. In our office's experience, the requirements have not been adequately explained to people in shelter, who often call us for information when communication breaks down.

BDS client Luis was kicked out of his shelter after months living there when the new rule was implemented. The eviction took place months before BDS began working with Luis. Luis reported to our office that he was denied a reticketing request. He had a letter detailing the efforts that Luis had taken to find stability including obtaining a driver's license, completion of certification classes, and attending exit planning meetings. The letter noted that despite his demonstrated efforts, his reticketing request was denied because he had not made significant efforts to exit the shelter. The social worker and attorney working with Luis assisted him in with preparing a detailed letter and supporting documents to help get Luis back into shelter. So far, Luis has made four attempts to reenter shelter. Unfortunately, all of his requests have been denied and Luis reports that he has been told that he did not have enough points to get back into the shelter system.

Recommendations

Pass Int. 210, which would prohibit city agencies from imposing limits on the length of time eligible individuals and families in shelter or emergency housing. As this bill would accomplish, we support getting rid of shelter stay limits. We support protecting our city's right to shelter for all New Yorkers, regardless of their time here or immigration status.

Create a pathway to housing vouchers. Residents in HERRC shelters are made ineligible for CityFHEPS vouchers by the city's bifurcated shelter system. Residents with PRUCOL status are



arbitrarily denied access to a voucher based solely on their arrival date in New York City. We urge the City Council to address this oversight by expanding the definition of ‘homelessness’ with regard to CityFHEPS eligibility to include residence in *any* New York City shelter, including the HERRC system. This change would shorten stays in HERRC shelters and enable recently arrived New Yorkers to establish stable lives in our city.

Revisit “recent” arrival. The date used to determine who identifies as a “recent arrival” has not changed. This means that there are people who are deemed recent arrivals who may have been living in New York for over 2 years. When this designation was created, it was justified under the umbrella that the city needed a tool to address an emergency situation of an unprecedented number of people coming into New York City. At this point, a lot of people who are still being labeled “recent arrivals” have now been in New York for a while.

Furthermore, the city should use this opportunity to reassess how we can best deliver services to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Rather than criminalizing poverty by relying on ACS and the NYPD in shelters, the city should reallocate that funding to deliver robust social services to shelter residents, including trained housing specialists available to provide individual support, direct access to housing subsidies and benefits, legal support, and language and job training programs.

Conclusion

BDS is grateful to the Committee on General Welfare and the Committee on Immigration for hosting this critical hearing and shining a spotlight on this issue. We thank the Council for your time and consideration of our comments. We look forward to further discussing these and other issues that impact the people and communities we serve. If you have any additional questions, please contact Catherine Gonzalez at cgonzalez@bds.org.



Bushwick City Farm (BCF)
354 Stockton St., Brooklyn, NY 11206
bcfarmevents@gmail.com

Dear members of the City Council Committee on Immigration and Welfare:

We [Bushwick City Farm](#) (BCF) volunteers are writing to denounce the arbitrary and unconscionable 30/60 days shelter limit policy of the Mayor's Office that displaces asylum seekers from their shelters, without first making sure they will have stable housing.

For over a year now, our community garden—which is located across from the [now closed Stockton respite center](#)—has been in serious disrepair and overuse for mutual aid initiatives to support asylum seekers, but more specifically because asylum seekers from various shelters and respites from around the city, that have ended in the streets due to this unfair ruling, have had [to squat](#) it [inside and outside](#) in its perimeter. This situation has also made them vulnerable and subjected to police profiling and negative interactions and to homeless sweeps by DHS multiple times.

BCF is now overrun with rats and trash and it has been difficult to maintain the space clean and safe for everyone to use. The space does not have enclosed structures nor is it apt for living/sleeping, so during winter months it's inhospitable but asylum seekers who find no better option end up sleeping in there. Don't get us wrong, we stand in solidarity with asylum seekers, but this situation has become unsustainable and draining as we (community members) have had to take on multiple jobs (case managers, translators, mediators...) on top of our personal, family and other community responsibilities. These are the conditions Molly Schaffer has created for people removed from their shelters, in many cases after a turnaround period of weeks of waiting for shelter placement with nowhere to go during the transition; and that is if their case gets approved for new placement. Where is a person who is waiting for a shelter reassignment supposed to live while they wait? As the press has reported, they do so in the [subway system](#), [the streets](#), and community spaces [like Bushwick City Farm](#). This situation is putting a toll on the well-meaning long-time community members at the Farm who have been left scrambling to pick up the pieces of the Adams' administration wreckage and Molly Schaffer's unnecessary evictions, not to mention we are wildly undersourced and already supporting an already gentrifying underinvested community like Bed Stuy, where BCF stands.

Since last winter, particularly during code blue nights, we have been mobilizing to try to find these men shelters and share resources with them on where to go and the dangers of sleeping outdoors during inclement weather. We are facing the same situation now with at least a dozen men, just after recently helping about 8 go to St Brigids reticketing center for bus tickets, and to 30th Street and Roosevelt for shelter placement. Relatedly, the current group has been out of the migrant shelter system for a few months and unaware of their options and rights. For instance, until we informed them, they did not know about the possibility of getting free bus tickets, and a few had job offers in other states. Others do not want to leave New York, they have their cases



Bushwick City Farm (BCF)
354 Stockton St., Brooklyn, NY 11206
bcfarmevents@gmail.com

here. This just speaks volumes of the continued mismanagement of the migrant shelter system by this administration.

We are parents, students, teachers, workers, community members and we are tired!

We demand stable and permanent housing for asylum seekers and all New Yorkers now!

The Stockton shelter has closed:

<https://bushwickdaily.com/news/stockton-street-shelter-asylum-refugee-closing/>

Community garden volunteers seek help to support unhoused migrants:

<https://brooklyn.news12.com/community-garden-volunteers-seek-help-to-support-of-unhoused-migrants>

Migrants struggle to find shelter as encampment grows in Brooklyn neighborhood:

<https://pix11.com/news/local-news/migrants-struggle-to-find-shelter-as-encampment-grows-in-brooklyn-neighborhood/>

A thousand migrants sleep outside or in the subway NYC Official survey says:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/02/16/migrants-outside-subways-shelter-survey-cold/>

A growing number of homeless migrants are sleeping on NYC streets:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/09/nyregion/migrants-homeless-encampment-nyc.html>



Testimony

New York City Council

Committee on General Welfare, Committee on Immigration

**Hearing on Oversight: Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for
Asylum Seekers**

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Submitted by

Robin Altman, Supervisor for Asylum Seeker Services

Immigrant and Refugee Services Division

Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York (CCCS) about the 30- and 60- day rule in New York City shelters. I am Robin Altman, Supervisor for Asylum Seeker Services in the Refugee Resettlement Department of the Immigrant and Refugee Services Division of CCCS. Today's testimony will focus on our agency's--and our clients'--experiences with these shelter rules.

INTRODUCTION

CCCS is proud of our decades-long tradition of welcoming New York's immigrants and refugees. Our services have tremendous impact on communities across New York City. The scope and diversity of our services is exceptional.

Across CCCS programs, migrants in New York City have access to a variety of legal services, social services, English language classes, workforce development and support, food support, and other services. Throughout their work with migrant populations, legal service providers, case managers, and other staff have noted significant housing and stability challenges faced by clients who have come to the United States seeking immigration relief as a result of fleeing persecution. New York City has historically been a bastion of support for new immigrants, but the recent migration of more than 214,600 new arrivals since July 2022 have stretched the city's resources. While the collaboration among the city, state, and dedicated service providers has tried to ensure that new arrivals receive dignified services, city-run shelters have fallen behind in providing appropriate care by enacting 30- and 60-day shelter limits. These policies have had a profoundly negative impact on asylum-seekers' lives and are against the city's goal to "ensure that all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status can access the City services they need."

We wish to bring the committee's attention to the negative outcomes that have emerged because of these rules.

Children in shelters experience significant instability.

Due to the 60-day rule for families, it is possible for children to move up to *six times in the course of one year*. Asylum-seeking children have already suffered the trauma of fleeing their home country and in many cases have made the treacherous journey to New York City on foot. These children may experience physical pain, anxiety, night terrors, trouble connecting with others, and bedwetting. Clinical interventions for these children stress the importance of physical and emotional stability, however the threat of eviction every 60 days means that children are unable to establish a sense of safety in their beds. They are forced to be ready to move at all times and feel that they cannot retain weather-appropriate clothing, school supplies, and comforting belongings to ensure that they are mobile. While the New York City public school system technically allows these students to remain in their schools despite having moved, many children switch schools rather than contend with hours-long commutes through unfamiliar areas. This transience is devastating to the fragile community and social support they may have been able to create with their classmates and teachers. These students, while bright and eager to learn, may never be able to catch up to their classmates and may face significant obstacles to academic success that follow them their entire school careers. Parents face an impossible choice: to spend inordinate hours escorting their children to and from a familiar school or spend their days

learning English, looking for jobs, and searching for housing. This impossible choice---between their children's long-term academic success and their family's long-term stability---is devastating and counter-productive. The expectation that families will move every 60 days significantly exacerbates the trauma of children and hinders their ability to succeed in New York City.

Families and vulnerable individuals are at increased risk of exploitation.

Asylum-seekers desperate for housing are at high risk of exploitation. Because of the instability of the 30- and 60-day shelter rules, individuals and families seek any housing option that may give them respite from the cycle of settling and moving. Asylum-seekers are eager to work to earn money to move their families to stable living conditions: they are extremely vulnerable to unknowingly paying for fake OSHA courses, fake drivers' licenses, and to exploitation by businesses who refuse to pay wages after the work has already been completed. The lack of power asylum-seekers have in the housing market often leaves them no other option than to pay high rates for single rooms, basements without heat or windows, apartments with rat or insect infestations, and other situations that are harmful but provide a modicum of stability. These families often end up re-entering the shelter system, worse off and with less money. It would be far better for these families, and more efficient for the city, if they were allowed to stay in one shelter until they were able to find and afford sustainable housing, rather than creating conditions that expose a vulnerable population to further exploitation in the housing market.

Undue pressure is put on the legal system.

Asylum-seekers are eager to obtain work authorization and legal status to begin their lives in NYC and establish independence. The city is equally eager for them to obtain these documents so that they can work legally and access sustainable housing outside of the shelter system. As a result of the applicants for asylum being able to apply for work authorization after the application has been pending for about five months, shelters often encourage residents to apply for asylum to expedite their work authorization processes. Residents report being told by shelter staff, not by legal counsel, that they are required to apply for asylum to remain in their shelter and are pressured to complete their asylum applications as soon as possible to avoid being subject to eviction from their shelter. Legal providers mobilized to serve incredibly high numbers of people seeking *pro bono* legal services and have encountered many people who feel pressured by shelter workers to apply for asylum to remain housed, despite not having strong claims. This influx has put a high strain on New York City's already overloaded immigration legal providers and on the asylum courts, contributing to extensive backlogs of cases and increasing the timeline for applicants to receive asylum by years.

Communication regarding shelter policy is inconsistent and ineffective.

Asylum-seekers residing in shelters report significant problems in the communication they receive regarding the 30- and 60-day exit policies. Reasons for and exceptions to eviction are

inconsistently communicated in someone's preferred language, leaving many shelter guests to turn to social media and informal communication networks to find and understand critical information. The information they glean from these channels is often at odds with the actual shelter policy, and residents do not know who they can turn to for clarification. Exit planning interviews conducted by case workers in shelters are occasionally conducted in a resident's second or third language and case-specific information is often lost in translation. Residents have expressed to their case managers at CCCS that they have tried to advocate for themselves in the shelter but have been unable to escalate their complaints due to language barriers between themselves and shelter staff.

Significant legal milestones are unmet due to address changes.

Perhaps the most dire legal consequence for asylum-seekers evicted from their shelters due to 30- and 60- rules is that they are unable to access their mail consistently, missing critical communication from Immigration Courts and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Many elements of the asylum application process rely on tracking information through written mail, and it is impossible for asylum-seekers to meet the requirements of their cases without these written notices. Asylum-seekers who are subject to 30- and 60-day rules have inconsistent access to their mail and have no way to track mail that may have been sent to a previous shelter address. In some cases, they may miss notification of a change in time or venue of their court date and may be ordered deported if they fail to attend their hearings. This issue cannot be resolved solely through services providing legal representation. Even if an address has been properly changed, USCIS often still sends mail to an applicant's old address. Without the proof of an asylum application, which is often provided only by mail, there is no way for an asylum-seeker to receive their work authorization, a critical step in accessing sustainable housing options.

In light of these challenges, we urge New York City to consider the following changes to city-run shelter rules:

- Eliminate the 30- and 60-day shelter rules to allow individuals and families longer stays in shelters. Barring this, increase the list of exceptions to the rules to include:
 - families with children in schools.
 - Individuals and families who have made steps to find alternate housing, such as searching for housing via websites or in person.
 - Individuals and families who have taken steps to apply for immigration relief, including attempts to contact legal providers.
 - Individuals and families who have taken steps to enroll in English classes, including adding their names to a class waitlist or communicating with course staff.
- Increase funding for legal services in shelters.
- Implement supportive case management, distinct from exit planning, to support residents

as they take steps toward securing sustainable housing and creating a livelihood.

- Ensure that communication with residents is provided in a linguistic and culturally appropriate manner. Increase training of shelter staff to ensure they explicitly offer information regarding expectations, conditions, and extension policies in residents' preferred languages.
- Develop a mail access system for shelter residents who have been evicted or transferred to ensure that documents are delivered.
- Expand the city's housing voucher program to include provisions for asylum-seekers, who are typically ineligible due to the program's prerequisite of receiving cash assistance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to providing safe and sustainable housing for asylum-seekers in New York City. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact robin.altman@catholiccharitiesny.org. We look forward to working with you to advance services for New York City's most vulnerable populations.



**Testimony of Catholic Migration Services before the New York City Council Committees
on General Welfare and Immigration**

November 19, 2024

Honorable Chairs, my name is Magdalena Barbosa and I am the Director of Legal Services at Catholic Migration Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning the impact of the 30- and 60- day shelter rules on newly-arrived immigrants, particularly at this juncture, as we brace for the onslaught of anti-immigrant measures from Washington.

Catholic Migration Services provides free legal services and information to low-income New York City residents in three main areas: immigration, workers' rights, and housing. Our agency's mission is to welcome "the stranger in our midst" by providing high quality legal services and education to empower and advance equality and social justice in New York City. In particular, we have provided immigration legal services for more than five decades, helping thousands of New Yorkers adjust their immigration status, obtain asylum, become naturalized citizens, and receive other immigration benefits.

For the last two years, Catholic Migration Services has been a member of the Pro Se Plus Project (PSP), a collaborative of non-profit immigration legal service agencies and community-based organizations that provide legal orientations, screenings, legal advice, and pro se assistance with applications for asylum, Temporary Protected Status, work permits, and a variety of immigration court motions to immigrants who have not been able to find legal representation.

Through PSP, Catholic Migration Services has had direct contact with thousands of newly-arrived immigrants over the last two years, many of whom have been or still are shelter residents and have been or are being negatively impacted by the 30- and 60- day shelter rules.

First, we have seen fear about personal safety mount when individuals and families have been ordered to evacuate from shelters. People have slept outside and in subway stations, where they are vulnerable to robbery, verbal harassment, and physical attacks. When they have to pack all of their belongings and lug them around on public transportation and through our streets from one borough to another, they do so in fear that their property – including important information for their immigration cases - may be stolen. One asylum-seeker used to descend into subway tunnels to find a place to hide the bag with his immigration court documents and evidence for his asylum case when he was in between shelters.

Second, being homeless is particularly hard on immigrants who speak languages other than Spanish and who find it hard to communicate with other New Yorkers or with law enforcement. They wander the streets and public transportation hubs confused and unable to communicate.

Inability to communicate effectively when homeless, hungry and without basic resources can escalate normal encounters and even lead to arrests. Even minor arrests that stem from misunderstandings aggravated by language barriers can have a negative impact on eligibility for legal immigration status. Under the incoming administration, arrests will likely lead to deportation.

Many of the new arrivals who have been evicted from shelters sleep in train stations, on the street, in parks and other public spaces, which leaves them vulnerable to attacks - from verbal abuse to robbery to physical assault. Due to language barriers and fear of law enforcement instilled by life under repressive regimes in their home countries and by growing anti-immigrant rhetoric in our country, many new migrants tend not to report crimes. When they recount their stories to our staff and we advise them to report that they had been attacked, they shake their heads in disbelief. Even if we can persuade them to do it, we unfortunately do not have the resources to advocate for them with law enforcement or assist them through the process of filing a report and collaborating with an investigation.

Third, the 30- and 60-day shelter rules interfere with the ability of asylum-seekers to obtain work authorization because they need a stable address to receive notices for fingerprints and later their physical work permits and social security cards. For those who have been fortunate enough to have already received their work permits, life on the street is not conducive to finding and keeping a new job. It is a shame to see the free immigration legal help provided by the City through the Asylum Application Support Center fail to lead to self-sufficiency due to a lack of shelter.

Ideally, the city would provide stable housing until immigrants can work legally and save money to make other housing arrangements. Access to language services and case management in shelters, and to free legal immigration services, would also help those who speak languages other than English or Spanish to get their bearings, understand our systems better, and realize they have rights – including to protection by law enforcement – in our city. Thirty days in a shelter is simply not enough time for someone who suffered persecution and endured a dangerous journey to begin to make the transition to life in the United States, let alone navigate our complex immigration system. If we are going to devote resources to these newest New Yorkers, we should provide enough to put them on a path to succeed.

For all of these reasons, the 30- and 60- day shelter rules must be abandoned. This must be done as soon as possible, as winter approaches. The rationale for the rule – lack of bed space for incoming arrivals – no longer holds true, as fewer people make it through the southern border. Instead, we must return to the values we should have never abandoned: welcoming those in search of safety and a better life with compassion, understanding and respect.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Magdalena Barbosa
Director of Legal Services
Catholic Migration Services
191 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201
mbarbosa@catholicmigration.org



Testimony of Juan Diaz
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Submitted to The New York City Council Subcommittees on General Welfare and
Immigration
Oversight - Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers
November 19th, 2024

Thank you, Chair Ayala, Chair Avilés, and members of the Committees on Social Welfare and Immigration for the opportunity to submit testimony at this hearing regarding the Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers.

Since 1944, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

CCC is a steering committee member of the Family Homeless Coalition (FHC), a coalition comprised of 20 organizations representing service and housing providers, children's advocacy organizations, and people with lived experience with family homelessness. We are united by the goal of preventing family homelessness, improving the well-being of children and families in shelter, and supporting the long-term stability of families with children who leave shelter.

CCC and advocates citywide are deeply opposed to the implementation of shelter limits for migrant families at New York City shelters. The harmful effects that children and families will face will endure and severely impact their education, access to stable housing, and overall well-being.

These families are already facing numerous challenges accessing education for their children, work permits, and other essential needs. They also live in constant fear of City immigration enforcement or deportation, and these fears will only increase with the new federal administration. Now more than ever, New York City should support immigrant families with children by focusing on solutions to the current shelter and housing crisis.

CCC therefore urges the City Council to support the following reforms to improve the housing stability of all New York City families with children:

- **Eliminate the 60-day rule for migrant families with children:** 60 days is not sufficient time for shelter staff to work with families to secure public benefits assistance and find permanent housing. These limits actively reverse work done by case managers and make it increasingly difficult for parents to maintain a job. Additionally, families are also unable to access their mail, creating a significant barrier to applying for asylum and work permits, and even possibly risking deportation for missing a notice to appear in immigration court. Migrant students must miss school due to mid-year transfers and often weeks. As such, the 60-day rule should be eliminated to provide sufficient time for migrant families with children to gain self-sufficiency and thrive.
- **Invest in Legal Services for Migrant Families:** Immigrant families in New York City face unprecedented legal challenges. We urge the City Council advocate for more legal resources to prevent family separation and more suffering for migrant children.
- **Fully Implement the CityFHEPS Reform Package:** As the legal process impedes the expansion of CityFHEPS, CCC and FHC partners continue to advocate for the full suite of its reforms and expansion. This critical resource should be funded and be able to serve those who need it most, such as homeless families with children.
- **Release an RFP and Dedicate Funding for Organizations Beyond Homebase Providers to Process CityFHEPS** successfully in speeding processing times and reducing overall burden on the system. Opening this opportunity further will reduce strain on Homebase providers and expedite processing.
- **Reduce Barriers in Voucher Administration that Greatly Expedite Placement in Permanent Housing** Several recent streamlining measures and reforms have been implemented in homeless placements, voucher administration, and NYC Housing Connect lease-up. However, data from the Mayor's Management Report shows that, even with progress in certain categories, overall timeframes are far too long for housing lotteries, voucher processing, and placements into permanent housing.
- **Increased Support for Prevention and Aftercare Services** by increasing Homebase annual funding allocation by \$37.9 million to a total of \$100 million. With the increasing need of services that low-income communities, Homebase providers will be able to provide essential services timelier.
- **Agency Funding and Staffing:** Ensuring adequate staffing for agencies working to provide services to newly arrived New Yorkers is vital for immigrant households in need to attain self-sufficiency. We urge the City Administration to increase funding for administering agencies such as DHS and HRA. As the work continues, more staff power will be required at these agencies to ensure that vulnerable families are receiving the support they need both during shelter and as they navigate out of it.

- **Support a State Funded Housing Voucher:** The current housing affordability and shelter capacity crises call for a more inclusive statewide housing voucher. Currently, there is legislation and widespread support from advocacy groups and key stakeholders to pass and fund a housing voucher program that would mirror Section 8. More notably, it will be more inclusive by having a higher income threshold to qualify, and it will aid more populations, regardless of immigration status.
- **Work with the State Government to Support Migrant Families:** We urge the City Council to partner with State elected officials to support additional funding for deportation defense legal services for immigrant New Yorkers. Additionally, we urge City leaders to support existing state proposals that would expand funding and access to refundable tax credits, public benefits and food support for all New York City families with children, regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Testimony of

Coalition for the Homeless

and

The Legal Aid Society

before the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration,
of the New York City Council

on

Oversight - Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules for
Asylum Seekers

submitted by

Kathryn Kliff, Esq.
Staff Attorney, Homeless Rights Project
The Legal Aid Society

November 19, 2024

The Coalition for the Homeless (“Coalition”) and The Legal Aid Society (“Legal Aid”) welcome this opportunity to testify before the New York City Council’s Committees on General Welfare and Immigration. We are the court- and City-appointed independent monitor of the DHS shelter system and counsel in the historic *Callahan*, *Eldredge*, and *Boston* cases that created the right to shelter in NYC. We are also the court-appointed independent monitor of the non-DHS shelters for New Arrivals under the March 15, 2024 stipulation of settlement in *Callahan* (“Stipulation”). We are actively engaged in assisting and defending the rights of New Arrivals. Accordingly, we are uniquely situated to provide insight about issues related to shelter for both long-time New Yorkers and New Arrivals.

Time Limits on Shelter Stays for New Arrivals

As the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration are well aware, the City has rolled out multiple forms of 30- and 60-day notices for New Arrivals that vary based on household type and shelter system. In December 2023, the City limited initial shelter placements for families with children in non-DHS New Arrival sites to 60 days.¹ Beginning in May 2024, the City began limiting initial shelter stays for single adults and adult families in all shelter systems to 60 days for 18- to 22-year-olds and 30 days for those 23 and older. After the initial 30 or 60 day stay, New Arrivals must meet one of a variety of criteria to be entitled to another shelter placement. This change was pursuant to the Stipulation we entered into after the City asked the Court to modify the right to shelter for **all** single adults – longer-term New Yorkers and New Arrivals alike – so that only adults eligible for public assistance would be eligible for shelter.²

The clear intention of these 30- and 60-day notices is to make it difficult for people to stay in shelter and to make accessing shelter an incredibly disruptive and destabilizing process. New arrivals lose vital immigration documentation when it is mailed to prior shelters, risk losing employment when they have to reapply for shelter or are placed in locations far from their jobs, and are often placed further from their schools and medical providers when they receive a new shelter placement. Implementation of these notices has resulted in roughly 75 percent of the single adults/adult families and 50 percent of families with minor children not returning to the City’s shelters. Since the City does not track outcomes, it is not clear where those thousands of individuals have ended up, despite the administration dubiously framing all exits as successes. While we always celebrate clients finding permanent housing, we remain deeply concerned that New Arrivals are leaving shelter for less safe housing alternatives, including sleeping outdoors.

¹ Families with children are guaranteed another shelter placement when they reapply after 60 days as a result of the *Boston* settlement.

² It is worth noting that had the City’s initial request to the Court to modify *Callahan* been granted, New York City would have seen unprecedented levels of street homelessness. It would have resulted in increased shelter denials for New Arrivals and longtime New Yorkers alike, including New Yorkers working low-wage jobs or those receiving disability income.

Since these policies were initially announced, there has been an election of a new President who has clearly stated that there will be mass deportation of migrants.³ While it is uncertain how the new administration will effectuate its goals, policies that result in New Arrivals being relegated to the streets or that increase exposure to the federal government increase their risk of detention and deportation. To date, numerous New Arrivals are without shelter altogether as a result of 30- and 60-day notices, and countless others may follow. The risk is heightened because the incoming President has signaled he plans to end Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”).⁴ Accordingly, the continuance of these 30- and 60-day notices not only raises the various concerns we have previously shared, but they now could result in detention, separation from family members, and returning individuals to the very countries they fled out of fear for their own safety.

Single Adults

Under the March 2024 *Callahan* Stipulation and the process created thereunder, single adults and adult families that are approved for shelter receive a “Notice of Approval for Temporary Shelter” in their preferred language, stating that they can stay at their initial shelter placement for 30 days (or 60 days if they are under the age of 23). A second written notice must be provided 7 days before the expiration of their initial shelter stay informing them that they must go to the Reticketing Center if they need another shelter placement. At the Reticketing Center, individuals should be screened to see if they are Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (“PRUCOL”). Those who have applied for asylum, TPS, or other forms of immigration relief are considered PRUCOL. Once a person provides proof of their PRUCOL status, they are granted an extension of their shelter stay. Young people who have documentation of their enrollment in high school are also granted an extension. If a person is not PRUCOL (or in school), they must demonstrate “extenuating circumstances” by either evidencing that they are making “significant efforts” to leave shelter, or by demonstrating that they have been granted a reasonable accommodation for a disability, have imminent plans to move into other housing, or have an upcoming medical procedure or immigration hearing.

Both the Coalition and Legal Aid have seen numerous problems with the reapplication process at the Reticketing Center, including:

- People who never received legally required notice prior to the expiration of their shelter stay;
- Extension denials despite having PRUCOL status;

³ Luis Ferre-Sandurni and Welsey Parnell, *Trump’s Deportation Vow Fuels Fear and a Potential Showdown in New York*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 9 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/09/nyregion/trump-migrants-deportation-nyc.html>.

⁴ Miriam Jordan, *Trump Immigration Targets: Ukrainians, Venezuelans, Haitians*, N. Y. TIMES (Nov, 15, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/15/us/trump-immigrants-temporary-protected-status.html>.

- Information being provided only in writing, without the information being provided orally in the person's preferred language, making it impossible for those who are not literate or those whose preferred language is not being used to understand the process;
- Denials of extensions requested on the basis on extenuating circumstances that are not communicated in a person's preferred language;
- People who are not PRUCOL being summarily denied an extension without an inquiry regarding whether they meet any of the other criteria for an extension;
- Significant numbers of people leaving the Reticketing Center each day without being granted or denied an extension (the City continues to be unable to provide a sufficient explanation regarding why people are leaving mid-process).

Although approximately 90% of the New Arrivals applying for shelter extensions are PRUCOL, and thus able to extend their shelter stays on that basis, the denial rates for those who are not PRUCOL are extremely high.

The City has chosen to use a points-based system to decide who has demonstrated that they have made significant efforts to exit shelter. The points system was not a part of the stipulation of settlement to which we agreed, and we have repeatedly encountered clients who have made significant efforts but whom the City wrongfully denied an extension. Those who are not able to extend their stays by demonstrating an extenuating circumstance are too often relegated to sleeping on the streets, an outcome that serves neither New Arrivals nor New Yorkers, and that will become more serious for New Arrivals as we head into the winter months and as the Trump Administration assumes office.

Families with Children

New Arrival families with minor children who are staying in non-DHS shelters must reapply for shelter every 60 days at the Arrival Center at the Roosevelt Hotel, at which point they can be reassigned to a new shelter location.⁵ Unlike adult families and single adults, families with children are guaranteed another shelter placement, meaning the reapplication process is solely to disrupt family's stability while the City assesses ongoing need for shelter and the appropriate placement, given family composition and school enrollment. To date, this process has been fraught with numerous implementation issues documented by the Comptroller's Office,⁶ has disrupted children's education, and impeded the ability of New Arrival families to achieve the stability and self-sufficiency that would allow them to leave shelter and enter permanent housing. Ignoring this reality, the Adams Administration just announced that families in non-DHS shelters with at least one child who is in kindergarten through sixth grade will not have to

⁵ It should be noted that families assigned to commercial hotel rooms under the City's contract with HANYC are subject to even greater disruption as they must reapply at the Arrival Center every 28 days given existing law which would result in the family becoming a tenant if they were to remain in these rooms for 30 days or longer.

⁶ CITY OF N.Y. OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER, Report on the Investigation of the Implementation of the "60-day Rule" For Asylum-seeker Families (May 9, 2024).

relocate when their *second* 60-day notice expires if they still need additional time in shelter. They assert that this change is necessary to save taxpayer dollars, but the fact that families still must relocate after the initial 60-day notice will still require spending taxpayer dollars on busing children – costs that presumably will continue indefinitely after the first shelter relocation. The new change also offers no protections for families with students in 3k, pre-K, middle and high school.

Further, in September, the City received authorization from the State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance to extend the 60-day notice policy to families in DHS shelters and was poised to begin rolling it out this fall. We informed the City that we do not believe they have a legal basis for extending this policy to families with children in DHS shelters, and they since have agreed to not require DHS families with children to move shelters at the end of the 60 days, as long as they make a request for an extension prior to that date. We are awaiting specifics of how this process will work in practice.

While the City has committed to placing families in the borough of their youngest school aged child when they seek another shelter placement, it has failed to do so at a very high rate for the families in non-DHS shelter thus far.⁷ Being forced to move every 60 days results in serious disruptions, as parents find themselves needing to change arrangements for school transport or re-enroll their children in the school closest to their current shelter placement. For parents with multiple children, these moves entail getting children to school across disparate locations throughout the City.

Recommendations to the City to Reduce the Shelter Census

Arbitrary time limits that fail to consider each individual's unique situation de-stabilize a population that has already experienced immense trauma before arriving in New York. This trauma is exacerbated when coupled with the horrific, degrading, and needless "reticketing" process that single adults and adult families must endure in the effort avoid having to sleep on the streets and that families with children encounter every 60 days as they shuffle between new shelter placements and schools. In addition, having to make these requests in person at the Reticketing Center or the Arrival Center, sites widely known to the public as locations where New Arrivals are, may put them at risk of apprehension by the incoming federal administration. Rather than facilitate the planned mass deportations of the newest New Yorkers, it would be both more humane and cost-effective to help connect New Arrivals to permanent housing and stability so that they can focus on securing immigration relief and employment.

There are a number of ways the City could achieve this goal and reduce the number of people in shelters, which include:

⁷ Arya Sundaram, *More Migrant Families Relocated to Shelters in Other Borough, New Data Shows*, GOTHAMIST (Sept. 11, 2024), <https://gothamist.com/news/more-nyc-migrant-families-relocated-to-shelters-in-other-boroughs-new-data-shows>

End the Use of 30- and 60-Day Notices

These notices and the accompanying reapplication process create barriers to the very goals that the City is seeking to address, namely helping New Arrivals achieve stability so that they are able to secure permanent housing outside of the shelter system. While we appreciate the City's recent announcement about families with children in grades K-6 in non-DHS shelters, the policy should be that families should not have to change shelters at all, not even once. The counterproductive and inhumane 30- and 60-day notices for single adults and adult families should also be suspended. Such elimination of these arbitrary time limits would address the aforementioned concerns, while also being responsive to the increasing risk to New Arrivals of detention and deportation. It would also enable many of the City's other efforts to be more effective. For instance, neither 30 nor 60 days is sufficient time for case managers to work with households to address the trauma of their journey, receive work authorization, or get enough steady income to support permanent housing arrangements. When individuals are forced to reapply and relocate, various critical life-sustaining processes such as securing benefits start all over again, to say nothing of the trust that is formed with caseworker staff that is developed over time.

Provide Quality Case Management

Quality case management should help address urgent needs such as safe accommodations, medical referrals, school enrollment, and benefits navigation/access, as well as longer-term goals such as accessing legal counsel, family reunification (where feasible), community orientation and integration, and securing employment and permanent housing. However, the City's current approach to case management involves up to three meetings with an "exit planner," with little direct support to address New Arrivals needs. Further, not all shelter placements provide case management, as some lack a single case manager while others have a ratio of one case manager for every 250 New Arrivals. To ensure quality services, all New Arrivals should receive case management regardless of shelter placement, and the ratio of case managers to New Arrivals should be at least one case manager for every 30 New Arrival households. Caseworkers also should receive specialized training and supervision to better assist clients navigating U.S. immigration processes, including how to review immigration documents, how to provide a basic orientation on the importance of appearing at all hearings and appointments, the importance of securing legal counsel, and avoiding the unauthorized practice of law and scams.

Based on our accumulated experience serving this population, the primary challenges New Arrivals face are access to legal services—which in turn means longer time waiting in legal limbo and without work authorization—and lack of access to stable affordable housing. Acute health or mental health issues and concerns related to family separation are also common stressors for this population. Case management services should be trauma-informed and designed to identify these and other barriers to stability and address them through individualized service planning, information provision, and referrals to specialized support services.

Service plans should explore needs such as family reunification, financial support, and acute factors that may be affecting client functioning such as mental health, safety concerns, and family conflict should be addressed throughout service provision. Case managers should work closely with legal service providers to apply a highly tailored approach to legal referrals (acknowledging, of course, the existing capacity limits of the extremely overburdened legal services providers). These tailored referrals to legal services, coupled with the legal orientation embedded in casework approach, can aid eligible New Arrivals in obtaining work authorization and facilitate early integration.

Case managers should provide warm hand-offs by establishing contact with the provider ahead of referral, ensuring their ability to consult as soon as possible and following up with them to verify successful enrollment. When challenges arise, caseworkers should advocate, resolving any issues with and on behalf of clients.

Invest in Immigration Legal Services

Legal services are critical in supporting New Arrivals as they navigate the challenges of rebuilding their lives in a new country. Securing legal status - and even engaging in the initial steps needed to do so – is foundational to accessing housing, benefits, employment, healthcare, and other essential services. But New York currently lacks sufficient legal service infrastructure to provide each New Arrival with the comprehensive services needed for thorough, and in turn more successful, applications for asylum, TPS and other forms of immigration relief.

The City should ensure that every New Arrival is screened for available immigration relief and work authorization through rapid-response services, while building the infrastructure of immigration legal services. To begin with, the City could expand upon the Asylum Application Help Center (“AAHC”) model and provide appointments for rapid-response services to every New Arrival. As of early September, the AAHC had only assisted 32 percent of New Arrivals to apply for asylum or TPS. If every New Arrival were able to apply soon after their arrival, they might receive work authorization months earlier. In addition, every New Arrival should be screened for every form of relief. The AAHC is not screening people for other forms of relief, like visas for victims of trafficking and other crimes, or Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. More thorough screenings are even more essential to protect New Arrivals from detention and deportation given the changes to current immigration law and practice that the new federal administration seeks to implement.

At the same time, there is a dire need for long-term investments in immigration legal services, recruitment, retention, training of legal teams, and infrastructure. Currently, there are not enough immigration lawyers to meet the need for representation – something that is more critical given the Trump Administration’s stated goal to begin mass deportations. We know that people who have lawyers or DOJ accredited representatives are far more likely to successfully secure immigration status and work authorization. But if the capacity and infrastructure for legal services is not increased, we believe that many New Arrivals and longer-term undocumented residents will not realize these outcomes.

Expand CityFHEPS and Eliminate Administrative Barriers

The City can decrease the shelter census by helping more longer-term New Yorkers move into permanent housing, and by keeping more longer-term residents from entering the shelter system. Even apart from the overall increase in the shelter census attributable to the presence of New Arrivals that began in March 2022, the number of longer-term New Yorkers sleeping in shelters each night has increased significantly in recent months. For instance, between January and October of 2024, the number of longer-term New Yorkers in the DHS shelter system grew from 54,573 to 58,642 – an increase of 4,069 people (or 7%).

The CityFHEPS program is the most significant available tool for moving people from shelter to permanent housing. The City should immediately implement the CityFHEPS expansion bills and work to eliminate the bureaucratic hurdles and delays that plague every step of the process. Clients of the Coalition experience extended delays in processing their applications for CityFHEPS, approvals of apartments, and payments to landlords. Such extreme delays and processing issues are commonly experienced by people who are trying either to leave shelter and find permanent homes or to avoid eviction, like the seven tenants in a lawsuit filed by Legal Aid who faced delays in the processing of their CityFHEPS voucher recertifications.

About The Legal Aid Society and Coalition for the Homeless

The Legal Aid Society: Legal Aid, the nation’s oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, is more than a law firm for clients who cannot afford to pay for counsel. It is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal, and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform.

Legal Aid has performed this role in City, State, and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of more than 2,000 attorneys, social workers, paralegals, and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, Legal Aid provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel.

Legal Aid’s legal program operates three major practices — Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights — and receives volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants that is coordinated by Legal Aid’s Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of nearly 200,000 legal matters, Legal Aid takes on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession.

Legal Aid's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of nearly 200,000 individual cases and legal matters, Legal Aid's law reform representation for clients benefits more than 1.5 million low-income families and individuals in New York City and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a State-wide and national impact.

Legal Aid is uniquely positioned to speak on issues of law and policy as they relate to homeless New Yorkers. Legal Aid is counsel to the Coalition and for homeless women and men in the *Callahan* and *Eldredge* cases. Legal Aid is also counsel in the *McCain/Boston* litigation in which a final judgment requires the provision of lawful shelter to homeless families. Legal Aid, in collaboration with Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, LLC, filed *C.W. v. City of New York*, a federal class action lawsuit on behalf of runaway and homeless youth in New York City. Legal Aid, along with institutional plaintiffs Coalition and Center for Independence of the Disabled-NY ("CIDNY"), settled *Butler v. City of New York* on behalf of all disabled New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Also, during the pandemic, Legal Aid along with Coalition continued to support homeless New Yorkers through litigation, including *E.G. v. City of New York*, Federal class action litigation initiated to ensure Wi-Fi access for students in DHS and HRA shelters, as well as *Fisher v. City of New York*, a lawsuit filed in New York State Supreme Court to ensure homeless single adults gain access to private hotel rooms instead of congregate shelters during the pandemic.

Coalition for the Homeless: Coalition, founded in 1981, is a not-for-profit advocacy and direct services organization that assists more than 3,500 homeless and at-risk New Yorkers each day. The Coalition advocates for proven, cost-effective solutions to address the crisis of modern homelessness, which is now in its fifth decade. The Coalition also protects the rights of homeless people through litigation involving the right to emergency shelter, the right to vote, the right to reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities, and life-saving housing and services for homeless people living with mental illnesses and HIV/AIDS.

The Coalition operates 11 direct-services programs that offer vital services to homeless, at-risk, and low-income New Yorkers. These programs also demonstrate effective, long-term, scalable solutions and include: permanent housing for formerly homeless families and individuals living with HIV/AIDS; job-training for homeless and low-income women; and permanent housing for formerly homeless families and individuals. Our summer sleep-away camp and after-school program help hundreds of homeless children each year. The Coalition's mobile soup kitchen distributed nearly 400,000 hot, nutritious meals to homeless and hungry people on the streets of the city this past year – up from our usual 320,000. Finally, our Crisis Services Department assists more than 1,000 homeless and at-risk households each month with eviction prevention, individual advocacy, referrals for shelter and emergency food programs, and assistance with public benefits as well as basic necessities such as diapers, formula, work uniforms, and money for medications and groceries. In response to the pandemic, we are

operating a special Crisis Hotline (1-888-358-2384) for homeless individuals who need immediate help finding shelter or meeting other critical needs.

The Coalition was founded in concert with landmark right-to-shelter litigation filed on behalf of homeless men and women (*Callahan v. Carey* and *Eldredge v. Koch*) and remains a plaintiff in these now consolidated cases. In 1981, the City and State entered into a consent decree in *Callahan* through which they agreed: “The City defendants shall provide shelter and board to each homeless man who applies for it provided that (a) the man meets the need standard to qualify for the home relief program established in New York State; or (b) the man by reason of physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter.” The *Eldredge* case extended this legal requirement to homeless single women. The *Callahan* consent decree and the *Eldredge* case also guarantee basic standards for shelters for homeless men and women. Pursuant to the decree, the Coalition serves as court-appointed independent monitor of municipal shelters for homeless single adults, and the City has also authorized the Coalition to monitor the municipal shelter system serving homeless families. In 2017, the Coalition, fellow institutional plaintiff Center for Independence of the Disabled – New York, and homeless New Yorkers with disabilities were represented by Legal Aid and pro-bono counsel White & Case in the settlement of *Butler v. City of New York*, which is designed to ensure that the right to shelter includes accessible accommodations for those with disabilities, consistent with Federal, State, and local laws. During the pandemic, the Coalition worked with Legal Aid to support homeless New Yorkers, including through the *E.G. v. City of New York* Federal class action litigation initiated to ensure Wi-Fi access for students in DHS and HRA shelters, as well as *Fisher v. City of New York*, a lawsuit filed in New York State Supreme Court to ensure homeless single adults gain access to private hotel rooms instead of congregate shelters during the pandemic.

Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors Testimony

Committee on Immigration Hearing on the 30 and 60 Day Rules for Asylum Seekers

Council Chambers, City Hall

11/19/24

Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors (FBFN) is a mutual aid volunteer collective dedicated to assisting residents of Floyd Bennett Field (FBF.) We help cover basic needs, navigate the system, improve quality of life, and provide a humanizing and welcoming experience as they go through one of the most difficult and uncertain periods of their lives. Above all, we remain in solidarity with our new neighbors.

We came into existence last December when many of us - on our commutes on the Q35 bus (the only form of public transport to the area) and in our local schools - saw recently-arrived FBF residents shivering in flip flops and tank tops, presumably the clothing they were wearing when they arrived to NY after a long bus ride from the border. We jumped into action to clothe our new neighbors. Our involvement has deepened since then.

We have continually been against the 30 and 60 day rules - we see how they have upended the lives of so many of the residents that live at FBF and caused franticness and fear. From January 9 (when the 60 day rule went into effect), through March 2024, we received frantic requests for suitcases by hundreds of FBF residents. Because of it, we organized a suitcase campaign, where we were able to provide a suitcase to every single family that requested one. Every last one of the resident families were getting ready to upend their lives once again.

While we continually have advocated against the cruel 30-60 day rule, today we are here to alert City Council of what is possibly in store for Floyd Bennett Field residents. We have a new request for the Mayor's Office + City Council and we demand a plan.

Like many of you, we are saddened and angered by the election results of earlier this month. But we are fearful of what this means for our new neighbors at Floyd Bennett Field. The City leased land from the fed government to establish the shelter at FBF. If it's not clear, THE TENTS ARE ON FEDERAL LAND.

We push City Council to establish a stable housing plan for all migrants living in NYC with priority to the residents of Floyd Bennett Field in the next 60 days. With this rapid response, we demand the closure and removal of all infrastructure from Floyd Bennett Field.

We have serious concern that FBF may get raided early on because:

- 1) FBF is federal land. The federal government has easy access;**
- 2) Because 2000 families are already there, a sweep for mass detention is easy;**
- 3) The camp/tent infrastructure already exists and can be easily converted into a detention center;**
- 4) Trump has plans to restart the policy of family detention and detaining parents with their children. FBF is a HERRC for families exclusively. Children's mental health is on the line;**

5) NYC is a sanctuary city. The administration will be looking for press around massive sweeps in sanctuary cities.

According to NBC news on Sunday, the incoming Trump administration is considering locations...[for] immigrant detention centers that would hold immigrants before they are deported as part of the new administration's promised mass deportation plan. So far, people working on the plans with the Trump transition team are...assessing which areas might need temporary facilities to detain migrants as part of the deportation effort...The administration might also need to reopen, expand or build new facilities in the Northeast to hold migrants arrested around New York City, the source said." Another source familiar with the plans said "so-called sanctuary policies in Democratic cities should not prevent ICE from expanding detention there." Floyd Bennett Field meets this criteria.

Similar to why we are against the 30-60 day eviction rules, we demand to learn what the City's plans are to protect people living at FBF. If that plan is for FBF to close down in advance of inauguration day, we demand that a stable housing plan is in place so that the lives of our new neighbors are not upended to the max - via detention and potential deportation and being forced back to the dangerous situations they escaped from. As a sanctuary city, NYC must stand up to the federal government and anticipate what's to come. The City must take preemptive action to protect our newest neighbors.



HOMELESS SERVICES UNITED

307 W. 38TH STREET, 4TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10018
T 212-367-1589
www.HSUnited.org

Homeless Services United's Written Testimony for

The NYC Council General Welfare and Immigration Committees' Joint Hearing on the Mayor's 30 and 60-day Shelter Stay Limit for Asylum Seekers on November 19th, 2024

My name is Kristin Miller and I'm the Executive Director of Homeless Services United. Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition representing mission-driven, homeless service providers in New York City. HSU advocates for expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. Thank you, Deputy Speaker Ayala and Chair Aviles and members of the General Welfare and Immigration Committees, for allowing me to submit testimony.

HSU is grateful to Deputy Speaker Ayala, Chair Aviles, and members of the Council for your steadfast leadership and commitment to assisting New Yorkers at risk of eviction or currently experiencing the trauma of homelessness. This hearing is extremely timely, as the City and State must unfortunately brace for an incoming Federal administration which has made numerous anti-immigrant statements including threatening mass deportation of families and individuals who came to our country seeking safety and a better life.

HSU appreciates the Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) upcoming efforts to refresh shelter providers on the standing process to follow if Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other enforcement agencies try to gain access to shelters to target individuals based on their immigration status. Given the creation of DHS Sanctuary sites and HERRCS which exclusively serve recently arrived households, we urge the Council and administration to work together to ensure further protections to keep these vulnerable households safe, to standing up a rapid response team within DHS law department to ascertain in real-time the legality of ICE and other shelter access requests by enforcement agencies, given prior attempts by ICE to utilize incorrect or fraudulent documentation.

As Chair Aviles rightly stressed in her on-the-record questions to Health + Hospitals, the 30- and 60-day limit policy runs counter to trauma informed care practices for individuals and families residing in DHS Sanctuary sites and H+H HERRCs. And as fellow advocates and impacted individuals testified, this policy is extremely disruptive to them and their children's lives, a barrier to their ability to attain long-term stability within the community.

While we appreciate the fact that fewer families will be subject to the 60-day limit through the administration's policy change announced yesterday (Nov. 18, 2024) for families residing in HERRCs with a child enrolled in K-6th grade, we question why families must be subject to relocation once before becoming exempt. As documented by advocates who testified today as well as the media, relocation has an extremely disruptive effect on school enrollment and attendance for children, barriers to accessing public benefits and employment assistance as households switch their case workers.

While it is promising to hear that the administration is standing up a new centralized mailing address for recent arrivals in shelter, we need assurances that procedures are in place to proactively notify families of pending correspondence waiting for them. This is extremely important

mail pertaining to their public benefits and asylee cases can have dire consequences, including denial of public benefits and even deportation.

Homeless Services United recognizes the challenges which New York City faces in housing the over 59,000 people in its care within DHS Sanctuary Sites and HERRCs, but we urge the City to end the 30-and 60-day time limits which create barriers to timely provision of social services for these recently arrived households. HSU and our members stand ready to work with the Council and Administration in stabilizing our newest New Yorkers and protecting their rights within the coming weeks and years. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

If you have any questions, please contact me at kmiller@hsunited.org .

TESTIMONY

New York City Council Committees on Immigration and General Welfare **“Oversight - Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- Day Rules for Asylum Seekers”**

November 19, 2024

Submitted by: Human Services Council (HSC)

INTRODUCTION

The City of New York should end its 30- and 60-day shelter limits for new arrivals. Resources used to manage this policy should be redirected towards sustained, community-driven care coordination, housing, legal services, and other human services. A current lack of investment and coordination in these services keeps new arrivals in crisis by blocking sustainable pathways out of emergency and into NYC communities.

HSC has witnessed the impacts of these policies on human services infrastructure as a membership organization representing over 175 nonprofit human services providers in NYC. For two years, we engaged over 100 human services partners around challenges in serving new arrivals, which informs the findings and recommendations included below.

FINDINGS

The 30- and 60-day rules result in significant burdens on new arrivals. Continually relocated new arrivals miss important legal notices, become disconnected from communities/services that link them to employment, housing, and legal support, and are retraumatized. These policies also incur additional and unnecessary costs for City agencies and nongovernmental providers. The cruel cycle disrupts the completion of critical steps in services that bring families out of crisis, resetting and/or extending human services at additional cost to recipients and providers alike.

The City should instead prioritize sustained case management, legal services, employment support, housing, and other human services. Human services networks, especially community-based organizations (CBOs) and mutual aid groups, offer critical direct services and coordination models for new arrivals. Expansive networks of human services providers across NYC have the mission, skills, and lattice of local support to provide more equitable and sustained services to migrating communities. They organically provide pathways for transitions into NYC communities because they are rooted in those communities. And, supporting them translates to investments for millions of other New Yorkers who receive their services.

Human services providers shared that they have sustained services to new arrivals predominantly without equitable funding from City government. Critical infrastructure for new arrivals is managed largely through donated labor by human services staff and volunteers and limited philanthropic support. Among these services, a notable lack of resources for legal services, case management, employment support, and language access also results in extended crises for new arrivals.

ADVOCACY

Redirect the budget for the 30- and 60-day rules towards expanded human services for new arrivals, including:

- More comprehensive and coordinated cross-site care coordination services with stronger data privacy protections; access to designated and expedited human services pathways; and expansion of consistently-trained case managers
- Expanded capacity for legal services for emergency, triaged legal needs; multi-year legal representation; coverage of legal fees; and trainings/legal packets for clients/advocates on rights, processes, and benefits
- Sustainable, affordable housing solutions, especially via community organizations/networks; investments in longer-term housing options (e.g., stabilization beds); and lifting barriers to benefits like CityFHEPS

Design a new arrivals sustainability model with human services and community networks for stronger coordination and more equitable resource sharing

- Leverage community-driven procurement models for nongovernmental partners from past crises (e.g., COVID-19), ensure capacity building is included for CBO recipients, and use equitable procurement practices¹
- Designate additional resources for hiring interpreter/translation services for non-English speakers and people with disabilities, in all needed languages and at equitable pay rates

Lead a public engagement campaign for New Yorkers to better understand the situation faced by their newest neighbors, mitigate stigma/discrimination, and galvanize resources for families

- Compassionately and respectfully humanize efforts, sharing the stories that underline the deep risk that families took to get here, and the hate now being experienced
- Partner with community organizations to thoughtfully implement this campaign to avoid tokenizing new arrivals

CONCLUSION

New Yorkers have long expressed pride in their City’s identity as a sanctuary city—a welcoming refuge for immigrants. And, we also experience rhetoric and policies from leaders in all levels of government that try to shake this foundational belief in our City. This approach has not only pitted New Yorkers against our newest neighbors: it denies resources to NYC for community building that would ultimately make our City better for everyone. Let’s end the divisive words and policies, and meaningfully invest instead in the human services and community care infrastructure that helps all New Yorkers, including our newest neighbors.

Contact

Alana Tornello
Director of Resilience, Human Services Council
tornelloa@humanservicescouncil.org

¹ The City should use collaboration development models with partners, as it [has previously shared](#).



17 Battery Place, Suite 331
New York, NY 10004
(212) 407-3417

TESTIMONIAL LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**COMMITTEE REPORT AND BRIEFING PAPER OF
THE HUMAN SERVICES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISIONS**

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

Hon. Diana Ayala, Chair

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

Hon. Alexa Avilés, Chair

November 19, 2024

Oversight: Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers.

Thank you to Chair Ayala and Chair Avilés and the Committee on General Welfare and the Committee on Immigration for the opportunity to provide this testimonial letter. On behalf of Immigrant Justice Corps, my name is Lauren Migliaccio, and I am pleased to provide testimony on: Oversight - Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers for the New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Immigration.

Immigrant Justice Corps (hereinafter “IJC”) is the country’s first and only legal fellowship program dedicated exclusively to meeting the need for high-quality legal assistance for immigrants fighting deportation and seeking a path to lawful status and citizenship.¹ IJC’s goal is for legal representation to lift immigrants out of poverty, by helping them understand their rights, attain

¹ <https://justicecorps.org/>



lawful status and access to secure jobs, quality health care and life-changing educational opportunities. Inspired by the Katzmann Study Group on Immigrant Representation², IJC galvanizes the country's most talented law school and college graduates, places them with premier legal services providers and community-based organizations nationwide, leverages the latest technologies, offers in-depth and ongoing access to substantive as well as professional wellness trainings, and fosters a culture of creative thinking that produces new strategies to reduce the justice gap for immigrant families, ensuring that immigration status is no longer a barrier to social and economic opportunity. Now, in our tenth year, IJC has trained and placed over 500 Fellows in support of our mission to increase both the quantity and quality of immigration legal services. While we are headquartered in New York City, our collective experience is national in scope, with fellows placed at immigration legal service providers in 34 states, and the District of Columbia. IJC is deeply committed to serving immigrant New Yorkers as we have forty-five IJC Alumni serving as staff attorneys and legal supervisors and over forty of our current Fellows placed with immigration legal service providers in New York City.

I. Seeking Asylum is a Lawful Act for Immigrant New Yorkers Fleeing Persecution

² Robert A. Katzmann, *Study Group on Immigrant Representation: The First Decade*, 87 Fordham L. Rev. 485 (2018).

As a result of state policies undertaken at the U.S. Mexico border, in the Spring of 2022, New York City began to experience a massive influx of asylum seekers.³ In response to the new arrivals and asylum seekers, Mayor Adams established Humanitarian Emergency Response Relief Centers (“HERRCs”) and Respite Centers to provide shelter to this vulnerable population.⁴ Recent data reports from the City of New York show that as recently as September 2024, there are approximately 31,585 individuals residing in HERRCs.⁵ According to the DHS Daily Report, as of November 3, 2024, 33 percent or 28,541 of the housed individuals were asylum seekers or newly arrived immigrants.⁶

In July of 2023, Mayor Adams’ Administration announced that single adult asylum seekers would be limited to shelter stays of 60-days.⁷ Once single adult asylum seekers hit the 60-day mark, they need to reapply for shelter accommodations. Then, in September 2023, the Adams administration announced that shelter stays for single adult asylum seekers would be reduced to 30 days.⁸ Families residing in HERRCs would be limited to 60-day periods of stay, after which

³ Song Beer, Isabel and Dean Moses. NYC to Provide Humanitarian Emergency Response for Asylum Seekers. AMNY. (Sept. 22, 2022) Available at <https://www.amny.com/services/adams-humanitarian-response-asylum-seekers/>.

⁴ What You Need to Know About Shelter if You’re a New Arrival to New York City. The Legal Aid Society. (n.d.) Available at: <https://legalaidnyc.org/get-help/housing-problems/what-you-need-to-know-about-shelter-if-youre-a-new-arrival-to-new-york-city/#:~:text=New%20York%20City%20Department%20of%20Homeless%20Services%20%E2%80%9CDHS%E2%80%9D%29,for%20you%20at%20a%20HERRC%20or%20Respite%20Center>.

⁵ Local Law 79/2022 - Temporary Housing Assistance Usage (November 1, 2024). Available at: https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Local-Law-79-2022-Temporary-Housing-Assistance-Usa/jiwc-ncpi/about_data

⁶ “DHS Daily Report,” Open Data, see: https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/DHS-Daily-Report/k46n-sa2m/data_preview. “NYC DHS Asylum Seeker Numbers”, a weekly report DHS shares by email with committee staff.

⁷ Transcript: Mayor Adams Announces new Policy to Help Asylum Seekers Move From Shelter. NYC Office of the Mayor. (July 19, 2023). Available from: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/522-23/transcript-mayor-adams-new-policy-help-asylum-seekers-move-shelter>

⁸ As Number Of Asylum Seekers In City’s Care Tops 60,000, Mayor Adams Announces 30-day Notices For Adult Migrants, Intensified Casework To Help Adult Asylum Seekers Take Next Step. NYC Office of the Mayor (Sept 22, 2024). Available

time these families would have to apply for other shelter placements.⁹ The 30- and 60-day shelter deadlines present a threat to asylum seekers' safety, health, wellbeing and lawful right to pursue an asylum claim with the Federal immigration system.

a. Legal Framework for Seeking Asylum Is a Complicated Barrier to Due Process and Requires Stability for Independent Living

Immigrant Justice Corps supports the rights of New York City's asylum seekers, as they are individuals fleeing persecution, because the right to seek asylum is enshrined in United States and international law. The United Nations 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol define a refugee as someone who cannot return to their home country due to past persecution or a well-founded fear of future persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.¹⁰ By signing the 1967 Protocol and subsequently enacting the Refugee Act of 1980, the United States adopted the refugee definition for our current framework for seeking asylum. Importantly, the Refugee Act of 1980 makes clear that any person “physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States . . . irrespective of such [person’s] status, may

from: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/697-23/as-number-asylum-seekers-city-s-care-tops-60-000-mayor-adams-30-day-notices-for>

⁹ As Number Of Asylum Seekers In City’s Care Tops 64,100, City Announces Additional Policies For Asylum Seekers In City Shelters. NYC Office of the Mayor. (October 16, 2023). Available from: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/780-23/as-number-asylum-seekers-city-s-care-tops-64-100-city-additional-policies-for>

¹⁰ *INS v. Cardoza-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421, 436–37 (1987) (“If one thing is clear from the legislative history of the new definition of ‘refugee,’ and indeed the entire 1980 Act, it is that one of Congress’ primary purposes was to bring United States refugee law into conformance with the 1967 United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees . . . to which the United States acceded in 1968.”) (internal citation omitted).

apply for asylum." Thus, regardless of their method of entry into the United States, any noncitizen has a legal right to seek asylum.¹¹

Asylum seekers must navigate the Federal immigration system to assert their lawful claims, either in removal proceedings adjudicated in immigration court with the Executive Office of Immigration Review ("EOIR") or affirmatively adjudicated with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS").¹² This vulnerable population is faced with many obstacles that endanger their health, safety and wellness due to the arduous obstacles involved in the Federal adjudication process.¹³ Asserting an asylum claim necessarily involves sharing personal identity stories and trauma that relates to a protected ground of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.¹⁴

Asylum seekers must wait for their day in court due to long case-processing times and adjudicatory backlogs. As of June 2023, the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse ("TRAC") at Syracuse University reported statistics collected through Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests that approximately 1,101,819 asylum applications are pending with

¹¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1158 ("Any [individual] who is physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States (whether or not at a designated port of arrival . . .) . . . irrespective of such [an individual's] status, may apply for asylum.").

¹² <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-organization-chart>

¹³ <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/asylum-united-states>.

¹⁴ *INS v. Cardoza-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421, 436–37 (1987) ("If one thing is clear from the legislative history of the new definition of 'refugee,' and indeed the entire 1980 Act, it is that one of Congress' primary purposes was to bring United States refugee law into conformance with the 1967 United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees . . . to which the United States acceded in 1968.") (internal citation omitted).

EOIR.¹⁵ New York has a high number of asylum cases adjudicated in the immigration courts, with about one-fifth of the nation's asylum cases venued in New York City.¹⁶

b. Recent Executive Actions Seek to Undermine the Legal Framework Established to Enable Vulnerable Populations to Assert Lawful Asylum Claims

The Biden Administration sought to undermine this framework through Executive Actions. The 2023 Circumvention of Lawful Pathways rule seeks to bar many asylum seekers who did not apply for asylum while traveling through a third country or those who did not make an appointment at a Port of Entry using the CBP One scheduling application.¹⁷ These requirements are unrealistic and impractical for individuals seeking protection, as many asylum seekers are unable to safely transition countries due to high levels of violence as well as technological and accessibility challenges of the CBP One app.¹⁸ The Biden Administration's 2024 Proclamation and subsequent amendment tightened the restrictions further by barring individuals apprehended between ports of entry from seeking asylum that is triggered when an arbitrary threshold of border apprehensions

¹⁵ Immigration Court Asylum Backlog, TRAC Immigration. (n.d) *Available at:*

<https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/asylumbl/>.

¹⁶ Asylum Decisions Vary Widely Across Judges and Courts – Latest Results, Trac Immigration. *Available at*

<https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/590/>.

¹⁷ *Available at* <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/05/11/fact-sheet-circumvention-lawful-pathways-final-rule>

¹⁸ <https://www.rescue.org/article/what-do-president-bidens-border-policies-mean-asylum-seekers>

within a seven-day period is met.¹⁹ These policies exacerbate humanitarian issues by pushing vulnerable individuals into more dangerous situations.

Despite these restrictions, many New York City asylum seekers remain eligible to pursue asylum. The 30-day and 60-day rules, however, create additional burdens on this vulnerable population as they seek to pursue their legal right to protection.

II. 30- and 60- Day Rule for Asylum Seekers Disrupts Continuity of Legal Services and Safety of Asylum Seekers

a. Noncitizens have a statutory obligation to file recent address changes with Federal Immigration Authorities

Noncitizens in removal proceedings are obligated to inform the court of any change of address within five working days of the change in contact information on Form EOIR-33.²⁰ Immigration court will send all official correspondence to the address listed on Form EOIR-33.

¹⁹ <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/irc-harmful-and-illegal-approaches-us-border-regulations-will-return-more-people>

²⁰ <https://respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov/en/forms/eoir33ic/>

For many noncitizens this process is inaccessible without the assistance of a legal service provider or immigration attorney, and most do not have consistent access to legal services. Many asylum seekers are unable to navigate the online change of address process, and others may struggle with printing or mailing forms with limited resources. The frequency with which E-33 forms will need to be filed is overly burdensome and puts migrants at risk of noncompliance with EOIR regulations, potentially jeopardizing discretionary status they may be seeking and putting them at risk of immigration detention.

Similarly, noncitizens with pending applications at USCIS must file a Form AR-11 within ten days of changing addresses.²¹ Failure to update USCIS with a change of address within ten days could result in loss of critical immigration documents, delays in adjudication of immigration applications, fines or potential complications in removal proceedings.

b. The 30- and 60-Day Rule Will Result in the Loss of Hearing Notices and Other Critical Immigration Documents

Due to the 30- and 60-day rules, there will inevitably be periods of time where the immigration court does not have a noncitizen's most up to date address, in between new shelter placement and filing of the E-33. Those gaps in stable housing and access to services make

²¹ <https://www.uscis.gov/ar-11>

noncitizens in shelter placements especially vulnerable to lack of notice for hearing dates and decisions on motions or on cases. Importantly, the Federal immigration system is unforgiving when it comes to any missed hearings and could result in *in absentia* removal orders²² which have devastating consequences for migrants fleeing persecution. While the 60-Day Notice advises families with children that their “mail will be kept for a maximum of 60 days” it does not provide families with information on how to change their address or how to request that their mail be held.²³ Families or individuals without children may not be able to make this request at all.

c. Access to Legal Services During 30-60 Day Period Will Be Interrupted Resulting in Lack of Continuity of Representation

Asylum seekers living in shelters are expected to address a myriad of critical and interdependent needs while facing housing instability. Access to immigration legal services is an essential need during this period. Currently, New York City attempts to meet this need by directing asylum seekers to the NYC Asylum Application Help Center (“AAHC”).²⁴ While AAHC provides *pro se* application assistance, the service centers around non-continuous legal support. Migrants receive services based on available appointments, but many do not retain legal representation.²⁵

²² See 8 C.F.R. § [1003.26\(c\)](#)

²³ As Number Of Asylum Seekers In City’s Care Tops 64,100, City Announces Additional Policies For Asylum Seekers In City Shelters. NYC Office of the Mayor. (October 16, 2023). Available from: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/780-23/as-number-asylum-seekers-city-s-care-tops-64-100-city-additional-policies-for>

²⁴ <https://portal.311.nyc.gov/article/?kanumber=KA-03502>

²⁵ Inside NYC’s Asylum Application Help Center, Available at <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/new-york-playbook/2024/03/06/inside-nycs-asylum-application-help-center-00145111>

Individuals seeking help and representation remain responsible for receiving all notices and communication from USCIS and EOIR, as well as any follow up, and navigating court and agency decisions. Lack of stable housing impacts the migrants' ability to consistently access AAHC services. Additional relief options can only be explored with access to more in-depth legal screening and services. Without a stable residence, many migrants are unable to access local legal services or may not qualify for legal services due to borough specific residency requirements. Travel between boroughs and to and from legal service providers may be inaccessible due to financial or childcare restraints as well.

d. 30- and 60-Day Rule Disrupts Employment Authorization Application Process and Work Authorization Eligibility

The 60-Day Rule does not allow individuals enough time to pursue work authorization, and in fact, may prolong or negatively impact the process.²⁶ Individuals can become eligible for work authorization through, among other ways, applications for asylum or Temporary Protected Status ("TPS").²⁷ Individuals who apply for asylum must wait at least 180 days *after* filing their asylum application to become eligible for Employment Authorization if they are in removal proceedings.²⁸ Under federal rules, individuals who file an asylum application can apply for work

²⁶ Transcript: Mayor Adams Announces new Policy to Help Asylum Seekers Move From Shelter. NYC Office of the Mayor. (July 19, 2023). Available from: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/522-23/transcript-mayor-adams-new-policy-help-asylum-seekers-move-shelter>

²⁷ <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>

²⁸ 8 CFR § 274a.12

authorization after their asylum application has been pending for 150 days.²⁹ USCIS can issue an Employment Authorization Document (“EAD”) after an additional 30 days. This waiting period is known as the 180-Day Asylum EAD Clock. Individuals who apply for TPS can apply for work authorization at the same time. According to the United States Department of Homeland Security, the processing time for TPS applications was 7.4 months for the period October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.³⁰

The 60-Day Rule and policies force guests to exit shelter and encourage them to relocate outside of the City through connections with family, friends, or acquaintances, Out of NYC Stay, and NYS Migrant Relocation Program.³¹ Once a family exits shelter, the case management, such as it exists, ends.³² New York City does not maintain any contact with the family so cannot support their ongoing application processes or transfer mail if it comes to the shelter location. Guests who relocate outside of the City will very likely need to transfer their cases to a new asylum office or interview location and may need to obtain a new legal service provider which may delay their asylum applications and work authorizations.

²⁹ 8 CFR § 274a.13

³⁰ <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>

³¹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://otda.ny.gov/programs/bria/Migrant-Relocation-Assistance/MRAP-Landlord-Fact-Sheet.pdf

³² NYC Comptroller Brad Lander. “Report on the Investigation of the Implementation of the ‘60-Day Rule’ for Asylum-Seeker Families.” (May 9, 2024). Available at: <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/report-on-the-implementation-of-the-60-day-rule-for-asylum-seeker-families/>

Families who relocate within or outside New York City may not timely receive their mail from government agencies and legal service providers regarding applications, interviews, and other appointments. This may cause families to miss scheduled asylum interviews and appearances which may make them ineligible for work authorization or delay work authorization. Since work authorization is acknowledged as the path to self-sufficiency and Permanent Residence Under the Color of Law (“PRUCOL”)³³, it is counterproductive to relocate families, especially when relocation is not paired with ongoing case management. According to USCIS, delays that individuals request or cause while their asylum application is pending do not count toward the 180-Day Asylum EAD Clock.³⁴ These delays may include asking to transfer a case to a new asylum office or asylum interview location and failing to appear at an asylum interview.

III. Conclusion

The 30- and 60-Day Rule issued by the Adams administration poses a threat to the health, safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable population of asylum seekers. The enactment of the 30- and 60-Day rule also presents nearly insurmountable hurdles to asserting due process and a lawful asylum claim. To protect this vulnerable population of our neighbors and New Yorkers that has

³³ <https://humanrights.weill.cornell.edu/resources/medicaid-and-legal-resources>

³⁴ <https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/form-i-9-related-news/employment-authorization-document-ead-automatic-extension-calculator>



already endured traumatic processes, the 30- and 60-Day Rule should be closely analyzed and replaced with more humane and stable shelter rules.

Respectfully submitted,

Immigrant Justice Corps



JEWES FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Committee on Immigration and Committee on General Welfare.

Dissent on 30/60 Day Shelter Eviction Policy

To: Deputy Speaker and Chairperson Ayala and Chairperson Avilés

From: Rabbi Barat, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

Date: Tuesday November 19th, 2024

My name is Rabbi Dr. Barat Ellman, and I am one of 6,000 members of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. I am here today to speak **against the 30/60 day rule** that is currently causing shelter evictions for new New Yorkers. The administration's Shelter eviction policy must end immediately!

My Jewish tradition has much to say on hospitality, care for the stranger or foreigner, and on human dignity. In Genesis, we see Abraham rush to welcome and host three strangers who come to his tent, insisting they stay for a bath, food and drink. We are commanded 36 times in our Torah - the Five Books of Moses - to love and care for the stranger, including providing the stranger with the opportunity to rest on the Sabbath. In Deuteronomy, we are told that when an indentured servant has fulfilled the term of service, the master must set him or her up with housing, supplies, and the where-with-all to establish themselves economically. That is because the Torah recognizes that most of us - if given proper care - are capable of becoming contributing members of society.

The migrants who come to our great city are no different. If given proper support they are able to establish themselves. I know this because about two years ago, my husband and I hosted a young Colombian man for several nights. His time with us gave him a measure of stability which proved critical to him. We connected him to services and stayed in touch with him, and now, he is working as a barber in Queens and living in his own apartment. Mine is not the only such story. Friends of mine have also opened their homes to individuals and families because they know the importance of giving someone a leg up. Surely, the City of New York can do the same?

And yet Mayor Adams advocates this 30/60 days policy that destabilizes migrants, that takes housing away from them right after they have found shelter. His policy means children have to

change schools every couple of months, and their parents have to scramble to settle them again and again. It means that single adults have only 30 days to live in shelter before being kicked out for good.

New York City has the capacity to house everyone in this city who needs it, both unhoused citizens and newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Mayor Adams has spent three years pitting New Yorkers against each other, claiming new immigrants are the reason our city is struggling – all while he's been stealing millions of taxpayer dollars and granting non-competitive government contracts to his friends, flouting daily the message emblazoned at the entrance of our city: "Give me your tired your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless tempest tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

I, along with JFREJ and many other migrants' rights and housing justice groups declare that these words on the Statue of Liberty are not mere jargon. They have meaning. They declare that immigrants are welcome here in New York City. It is Eric Adams' Trumpian policies of shelter eviction that are not.



Written testimony by Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) for the NY City Council Committee on General Welfare and the Committee on Immigration hearing about Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules for Asylum Seekers, held on November 19, 2024

Statements of:

- Stephanie Cordero, Director of the Immigrant Rights and Advocacy Project at Brooklyn Legal Services, and
- Karin Takahashi, Social Worker of the Immigrant Rights and Advocacy Project at Brooklyn Legal Services

Statement of Stephanie Cordero

My name is Stephanie Cordero and I am the Director of the Immigrants' Rights and Advocacy Project at Brooklyn Legal Services, which is part of Legal Services NYC (LSNYC). LSNYC is the largest civil legal services organization in the country with a mission to fight poverty and seek racial, social, and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers. LSNYC has been around for over 50 years and our practice areas include housing, immigration, public benefits, among many others.

In a time when our values as Americans are being threatened, it is more important than ever to send a clear message that New York City welcomes and protects all New Yorkers regardless of where they come from. The 30- and 60- day rules for asylum seekers have the opposite effect. They tell our newest, most vulnerable New Yorkers that they are not welcome. Such was the message received by a family from Honduras that we assisted this year. The mother and her four children—under 12 years old—were moved from shelter to shelter 3-4 times within a month's time. The children were forced to change schools multiple times, which was so disruptive that the family ended up moving across the country to California. She shared with our staff how this was happening to many other families she knew. Only too late did we learn that she had entered the United States in 2021, and thus should not have been subjected to these repeated evictions from shelter. However, it is not surprising that such a draconian policy would sweep up far more people than intended, particularly when the shelter residents themselves are often given little, if any, information.

Demand Justice.

The 30- and 60-day rules ostensibly aim to preserve the city's limited resources, yet their existence and implementation themselves overburden the city's resources. The logistics of continuously issuing notices, assisting shelter residents with scheduling appointments for extension requests, all while attempting to connect shelter residents to legal and social resources overwhelms case managers and shelter staff. The result is chaotic and cruel. On July 9, 2024, my team and I visited the Kingsboro Men's Shelter in Brooklyn to provide an immigration Know Your Rights workshop. About 50 shelter residents attended it. All of them were slated to be evicted from the shelter the next day. The great majority heard about the right to seek an extension of their stay *from us*, for the first time, that day. This was particularly troubling as multiple shelter residents had already applied for asylum and would have been eligible to obtain extensions if they had known they could request them. Evidently, whatever system the city supposedly has in place to inform people of the steps they need to take to avoid the revolving door of shelter evictions, it completely failed almost all of the people we spoke to. They did not know anything.

Most of the shelter residents we spoke with were men from West African countries. Some of them spoke French and some only spoke African languages. We frantically tried to answer their individual questions knowing that we would not be able to do any follow-up. Forcing them move out of the shelter could deal a major blow to their asylum claims and work permit requests. Some residents were waiting for biometrics appointment notices from USCIS in order to proceed with their asylum cases. If they moved to a new location, these appointment notices would likely get lost as there is no certain way of changing an address with USCIS for a pending asylum case in immigration court. Surely many residents would miss their appointments, which could result in their asylum applications to be deemed abandoned or in extensive delays in their eligibility for work permits.

During our visit to this shelter, we could barely get through our Know Your Rights presentation because, by and large, the residents' main concern was where they would sleep the next day. We could not provide answers to these concerns except to refer them to the already overwhelmed shelter staff. It was a heartbreaking reality, one that felt anti-New York and anti-everything we stand for as a city. The 30- and 60-day rules target the most vulnerable at their most vulnerable times. They are not just disruptive to people's lives, they are inhumane. Furthermore, they significantly infringe on our ability to provide legal services, and consequently, on New Yorker's due process rights.

Statement of Karin Takahashi

My name is Karin Takahashi and I am the Social Worker of the Immigrants' Rights and Advocacy Project at Brooklyn Legal Services, which is part of Legal Services NYC.

As a licensed social worker with experience working in HERRC migrant shelters, I have witnessed firsthand the profound and disruptive impact of the current shelter policy on vulnerable populations and the fear and distress it has caused on the residents. Many of the migrants in these shelters are seeking asylum and have already endured significant trauma—ranging from violence, displacement, trafficking, sexual abuse, incarceration, and loss. The 30- and 60- day shelter policies exacerbate these challenges, creating a cascade of negative effects that ripple through their lives and the lives of their children.

For children, this policy is a devastating disruption to both their education and emotional development. When families are moved from shelter to shelter, children are frequently forced to change schools, face extended commutes, or sometimes are unable to attend school at all. This constant instability undermines their academic progress and significantly harms their mental health. Many of these children, who have already experienced severe trauma, suffer from anxiety, depression, and PTSD. For example, I worked with a 10-year-old child who suffered so much from this instability that the child expressed thoughts of suicide. Additionally, I have counseled children who refuse to go to school due to the overwhelming challenges of adjusting to new environments, often resorting to drugs and other maladaptive behaviors as they seek a sense of community and belonging.

For individuals with both physical and mental health concerns, this policy exacerbates existing health risks and disrupts continuity of care. The frequent moves between shelters force people to switch healthcare providers and travel long distances to access essential services. This disruption can lead to serious health complications and, in some cases, the discontinuation of critical treatments. Many residents lose access to mental health care or case management services due to the barriers in commuting and constant address changes.

Individuals I worked with in the shelters as a social worker abruptly lost contact with me and the services I was providing them. I was not allowed to maintain contact with residents, leading to a breakdown in coordination, loss of referrals, and interruptions in other ongoing treatments.

Moreover, the 30- and 60-day shelter policies severely interfere with the immigration process for many asylum seekers. The frequent moves often result in the loss of important documents, such as notices from immigration authorities, which are crucial for their cases. This disorganization and lack of continuity delay or even derail asylum claims. Lost mail, missed appointments, and the difficulty of keeping up with address changes jeopardize the status of their cases, prolonging their uncertainty and hardship. For many migrants, navigating the complexities of the immigration system is already

overwhelming. The added challenge of constantly changing addresses only exacerbates their stress and confusion.

Additionally, the case management services and behavioral health teams that the city often relies on to support clients facing the hardships of harsh policies are inadequate. Many case managers and social workers lack proper training, licensure, and a background in trauma-informed care, particularly for immigrant populations. This has resulted in instances of unprofessional behavior, including altercations between staff and clients, the dissemination of inaccurate advice, threats made to clients, and even cases of staff sleeping on the job. These failures not only exacerbate the challenges faced by clients but also contribute to retraumatization, preventing clients from receiving the support they need to overcome the barriers in their lives. Furthermore, case management meetings are often brief and resemble surveys intended primarily for data collection, rather than providing meaningful assistance to clients. It is imperative that the case management and social work teams responsible for supporting this vulnerable population provide high-quality, trauma-informed care delivered with professionalism, empathy and compassion.

In sum, the 30- and 60-day shelter policies are neither humane nor trauma-informed. They fail to acknowledge the profound vulnerability of those our shelters are meant to assist and instead deepens their trauma and instability. Migrants, many of whom are fleeing violence and seeking safety, need stability, continuity, and dignity—not arbitrary and disruptive rules that further destabilize their lives.



Friday November 22, 2024

New York City Council Joint Oversight Hearing: “Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules for Asylum Seekers”

**Written Testimony of the National Homelessness Law Center
 Authored By: Siya Hegde (Staff Attorney)**

The National Homelessness Law Center (“NHLC” or “the Law Center”)¹ thanks the leadership of Deputy Speaker Ayala, Chairwoman Aviles, and their respective colleagues in the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration for stewarding this joint oversight hearing on the implementation of 30- and 60-day shelter caps on asylum seekers.

We are a national capacity-building organization with 35 years of legal and policy expertise around the criminalization of homelessness and related housing justice priorities at the local, state, and national levels. Accordingly, we respectfully submit these written remarks and recommendations as they draw from our multi-faceted perspectives, with emphasis on preserving the legal right to shelter, wielding City resources to advance the right to housing, and issuing concrete measures protecting against the forced eviction of asylum-seekers and newly arrived migrants.

The City’s lack of sufficient shelter is the byproduct of its failed housing and homelessness policies and lack of political will to address homelessness, rather than the influx of new arrivals and asylum-seekers.

New York City’s historic provision of a legal right to shelter has been a beacon of promise since its inception. At the time that the *Callahan* consent decree took effect in 1981, the federal Reagan administration began making significant cuts to affordable housing stock, triggering a further decline in the budget authority of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development²—while New York City had led a charge to curb its street homelessness through

¹ Formerly the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, the National Homelessness Law Center (“NHLC” or “the Law Center”) is the only national organization in the United States dedicated to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. It works to expand access to affordable housing, meet the immediate and long-term needs of individuals who are homeless or at risk, and strengthen the social safety-net through policy advocacy, public education, strategic impact litigation, and legal training and support.

² WITHOUT HOUSING: DECADES OF FEDERAL HOUSING CUTBACKS, MASSIVE HOMELESSNESS, AND POLICY FAILURES, WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT 1, 15-16 & 19 (2010), accessible at <https://wraphome.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/2010%20Update%20Without%20Housing.pdf>.

the right to shelter mandate, the reality nationwide was that contemporary mass homelessness was erupting. Today, for those hundreds of thousands of newly arrived migrants who look to New York as a sanctuary city, the hope of obtaining work authorization and contributing to a workforce and taxpaying base offers them a vision for settlement, stability, and safety, the kind of vision that would not be possible in their countries of origin due to the persistent violence and persecution many of them experience.

Barriers to housing citywide predated the influx of new arrivals and asylum-seeking New Yorkers in April 2022. With over two-thirds of New York households renting their homes,³ pitfalls in affordable housing policies have resulted in 52.1 percent of renters being rent-burdened and nearly 30 percent of low-income renters being severely rent-burdened (classified as those renters with over 30 percent and over 50 percent of their pre-tax household income spent on housing costs, respectively).⁴ The median renter household reportedly earns around \$70,000 annually, which can reasonably cover a monthly rent that is half of a median Manhattan or Brooklyn apartment.⁵ Further, apartment vacancy rates have drastically decreased, with only 1.4 percent of city apartments available to rent in 2023, and many New Yorkers consequently found to be doubling up or residing in illegal basement and cellar units.⁶ Meanwhile, since the expiration of pandemic-era eviction protections in January 2022, court-ordered marshals across the city have evicted over 17,000 households—not including those tenants who were forced to leave their apartments due to affordability challenges, landlord harassment, uninhabitable living conditions, etc.

Regarding the shelter system at large, comprehensive findings from the New York City Office of the Comptroller detailed that the average length of a shelter stay for all populations far exceeds a year.⁷ Moreover, homeless families with children averaged over seventeen (17) months of temporary shelter, single adults averaging sixteen (16), and adult families (i.e., families without children) averaging over twenty-eight (28) months.⁸ These lengthy durations—which have increased year-by-year since 2020⁹—present potential barriers for homeless individuals to seek permanent housing, especially where there is a general lack of subsidized housing with critical support services made available to those individuals with particularized medical and accessibility needs. In Fiscal Year 2023, New York City held about 37,000 total supportive housing units, though only 21 percent of individuals and families who applied and

³ SPOTLIGHT: NEW YORK CITY’S RENTAL HOUSING MARKET, NYC COMPTROLLER BRAD LANDER 1, 4 (Jan. 17, 2014), accessible at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/spotlight-new-york-citys-rental-housing-market/> [hereinafter “COMPTROLLER RENTAL MARKET REPORT”].

⁴ *Id.*, at 4, 10.

⁵ Mihir Zaveri, “Why ‘Affordable Housing’ in New York City Can Still Cost \$3,500 a Month,” NYT (Nov. 12, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/12/nyregion/housing-crunch-affordable-housing.html>.

⁶ *See id.*

⁷ REVIEW OF THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES’ PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, NYC COMPTROLLER BRAD LANDER 1, 6 & 40 (Aug. 17, 2023), accessible at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/MD22-105S.pdf> [hereinafter “COMPTROLLER 2023 DHS REPORT”].

⁸ *Id.*, at 40.

⁹ COMPTROLLER 2023 DHS REPORT, *supra* note 7, at 41.

were deemed eligible were ultimately accepted.¹⁰ As of April 2024, approximately 2,000 supportive housing units were reportedly vacant citywide.

Common barriers hindering residents' abilities to exit DHS shelters into permanent housing are often attributed to administrative delays in processing housing vouchers and benefits applications for shelter residents, as well as severe staffing shortages of caseworkers, housing specialists, and other on-site management staff. A recent audit from the Office of the New York State Comptroller found that in a representative sample of fifty-two (52) CityFHEPS applicant cases, nearly ten (10) months had elapsed from the time the shelter resident(s) was issued a CityFHEPS shopping letter and subsequently approved to exit the shelter into permanent housing altogether.¹¹ In many other instances, the pre-issued Shopping Letter would typically expire within 120 days before the resident(s) was able to successfully find affordable enough housing, that too often on their own.¹²

At present, the citywide shelter census count for Department of Homeless Services ("DHS")-operated shelters is 87,526, consisting of total adults and children.¹³ Additionally, as nearly half of all asylum seekers and new arrivals have resided in DHS shelters, approximately 93 percent of them have reportedly been families with children.¹⁴ As the City's housing unaffordability crisis, lack of sufficient supportive housing and Housing First policies, and failed management of critical rental assistance programs for renter households and shelter residents alike has reached a tipping point in recent years, these issues have collectively made the need to preserve the legal right to shelter even more urgent.

The City's implementation of 30- and 60-day shelter stay limits is a proxy of criminalizing homelessness and poverty under the guise of a "Crisis Plan".

The Adams administration's former claim that the influx of asylum-seekers was "destroy[ing]" New York City¹⁵ reinforces the false, xenophobic rhetoric that homelessness stems from individual actions rather than systemic policy failures. Absent limited extenuating circumstances, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis (i.e., assessment of residents' potential Permanently Residing Under the Color of Law ("PRUCOL") status), the rigid 30- and 60-day shelter stay limits are criminalization policies by another name. They constitute an example of a

¹⁰ STATE OF THE HOMELESS 2024: RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK, LEADERSHIP IN RETREAT, COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS 1, 42 (July 2024), accessible at <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/State-of-the-Homeless-2024-PDF.pdf> [hereinafter "STATE OF THE HOMELESS 2024"].

¹¹ ADMINISTRATION OF THE CITYFHEPS PROGRAM FOR DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES SHELTER RESIDENTS (REPORT 2023-N-1), NYC DEP'T. SOC. SERVS., 1, 10-11 (Oct. 2024), accessible at https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/state-agencies/audits/pdf/sga-2025-23n1.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery [hereinafter "REPORT 2023-N-1"].

¹² *Id.*, at 11.

¹³ "Daily Report," NYC DEPT. HOMELESS SERVS. (Nov. 20, 2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>.

¹⁴ Annie McDonough, "Where are asylum-seekers living in New York City?" CITY & STATE (Mar 25, 2024), <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2024/03/where-are-asylum-seekers-living-new-york-city/395176/> (citing the Council's "Asylum Seekers Terms and Conditions Report", dated Jan. 2024, accessible at <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2024/02/Asylum-Seekers-Report-January-2024.pdf>).

¹⁵ Emma G. Fitzsimmons, "In Escalation, Adams says Migrant Crisis 'Will Destroy New York City,'" NYT (Sept. 7, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/nyregion/adams-migrants-destroy-nyc.html>.

forced eviction practice without judicial process or permanent housing solutions, specifically targeting a subclass of vulnerable individuals on the basis of their poverty and national origin.

Earlier this year, as the Council should already know, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a consequential and chilling 6-3 decision that unsheltered homeless individuals could be criminalized (i.e., ticketed and arrested) for sleeping publicly with tents and blankets.¹⁶ The effects of this harmful ruling have already enabled more than 150 communities to propose or pass new policies enabling the arrest of persons who are simply trying to shelter themselves in the absence of adequate alternatives.¹⁷ Predating this ruling, however, the Adams administration had already been implementing its own sweeps policy, resulting in thousands of unsheltered New Yorkers experiencing forced move-along orders, the seizure and destruction of their life-sustaining property without sufficient due process measures, and serious effects on their physical, mental, and psychological wellbeing as a direct result. The 30- and 60-day shelter rules for asylum-seekers and new arrivals are placing these individuals in greater peril of sweeps should they face eviction from the shelter, rejection from their shelter reapplication efforts, and/or denials of shelter extensions. The City’s own Independent Budget Office (“IBO”) has estimated up to \$870 million in healthcare costs associated with street homelessness, especially as exit policies like these do not guarantee repeat shelter placements.¹⁸ They estimate up to \$30 million additional monies for busing homeless students in the non-DHS Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (“HERRCs”), recognizing that there are adverse educational and developmental impacts on youth experiencing homelessness who are shuffled between shelter sites as the result of the exit policies themselves.¹⁹

The City Can and Should Institute Concrete Policy Measures to Protect Against Forced Evictions of Sheltered Migrants, Advance the Right to Housing, and Help Reduce Street Homelessness

The very occurrence of a forced eviction from a temporary, emergency shelter facility undercuts the essence of a legal right to shelter and foundational human rights principles under international law. Under General Comment No. 7 to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,²⁰ “forced evictions” are interpreted to mean any “permanent or temporary removal” without the consent of those individuals, families and/or communities

¹⁶ See generally *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*, 603 U.S. ____ (2024) (holding that the enforcement of generally applicable laws that regulate camping on public property does not violate the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition on “cruel and unusual punishment”).

¹⁷ Since the Grants Pass ruling in late June of 2024, the Law Center has been independently tracking local and state enforcement actions that have reportedly been introduced (e.g. pending), passed, or slated to pass across the country. As of the date of this testimony, we have aggregated 99 actions that have passed and another 66 that are pending. See generally, Shawn Hubler, *Liberal Berkeley’s Toughened Stance on Homeless Camps is A Bellwether*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 17, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/16/us/homeless-berkeley-california-enforcement.html>.
¹⁸ *NYC Independent Budget Office Asylum Seeker Cost Projections for Fiscal Years 2025 & 2026*, NYC INDEP. BUDGET OFF. 1, 4 (May 15, 2024), accessible at <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/may-2024-asylum-seeker-print.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ See generally International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights art. 11(1), *adopted* Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 171 (“... recognize[s] the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.”) [hereinafter “ICESCR”].

subjected to it, furthermore “without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.”²¹ They also generally perpetuate further cycles of impoverishment and instability in the absence of safeguards such as permanent housing, safe alternative emergency shelter options, and accessible income sources including Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”) and/or asylum work authorization permits, eligible housing vouchers, and public benefits. The City should actively ensure wraparound services, including medical support, low-barrier shelters and adequate stabilization beds, legal services, vocational job training, resettlement services, food, and transportation services in the event of alternative destinations where asylum-seekers may have other relatives and community ties.

In addition to making these safeguards readily available to asylum-seekers most directly impacted by the 30- and 60-day rules, the City has a responsibility to wield its money and resources into turning vacant units—including units allocated for supportive housing—into adequate housing and transforming its shelter system to satisfy the adequacy requirements of the original *Callahan* consent decree. It must also retain more interpreters and case management personnel at DHS and other emergency shelter facilities, rather than weaponize and criminalize asylum-seekers in an already under-resourced social safety net.

The real crisis that New Yorkers are experiencing is not a crisis of migrants or mass immigration – and certainly not a crisis that was perpetuated or conditioned by the influx of asylum-seekers and new arrivals. Rather, the crisis is one of poor allocation of resources, the lack of mechanisms in place ensuring that homeless individuals and families have an adequate place of refuge and holistic support. Conflating the realities of mass immigration with the housing and homelessness crisis not only reinforces the xenophobia, racism, and other biases systematically placed on this vulnerable population, but it detracts us collectively from the root causes of these crises (namely the political will that remains absent at all levels of government).

The Law Center supports the dozens of local New York groups working tirelessly across these various movements and the broader human rights struggle to stop shelter evictions and push this City to implement a more transformative, wholesale model of policies that places human dignity at the center of its short- and long-term priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Siya Hegde, Esq.
Staff Attorney

John Salois, Esq.
Youth Shelter and Housing Attorney

Will Knight, Esq.
Decriminalization Program Director

Eric S. Tars, Esq.
Senior Policy Director

Katie Meyer Scott, Esq.
Youth Homelessness Director

²¹ Hum. Rts. Comm., General Comment No. 7: Art. 11(1) (The right to adequate housing: Forced Evictions), ¶ 3, U.N. Doc. CESCR/20/05/97 (1997) [hereinafter “General Comment 7”]

October 31st, 2024

To: New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Immigration

From^[1]: Healthcare Workers for Housing Justice Subcommittee of New York Doctors

Re: Oversight Hearing on the Implementation of the 30 and 60 Day Rule for Asylum Seekers

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's hearing. My name is Dr. Shobana Ramasamy, and I am a primary care physician in New York City. Today, I am speaking on behalf of the New York Doctors Coalition

We are an organization of over 900 physicians working in New York City with a collective experience of multiple decades caring for patients. Being on the frontlines of healthcare in the city, we have within the last year cared for and advocated on behalf of hundreds to thousands of newly arrived people. This includes single adults and families from over 50 countries, who have endured countless trauma including torture, persecution, and violence. Each day, we listen to the harrowing narratives of each of our patients, narratives that include violence in the home countries they fled, the dangers of their journeys to the USA, and the current day-to-day challenges of living in New York City with unstable housing.

We write with urgency and immense concern regarding the 30 and 60 day rule of temporary shelter for newly arriving people seeking asylum here in NYC. As healthcare workers and trainees in New York City, we know intimately the importance of safe, stable, and affordable housing to the health of our patients. As such, we are staunchly against the current 30 and 60 day shelter stay limits.

In our primary care clinics, we have seen increasing numbers of children whose repetitively torn social connections have made it difficult for them to cope and adjust to constantly changing learning environments. We recall the case of a young family from Venezuela who was seen in one of our primary care clinics. This family of five experienced severe PTSD with many members of the family having recurrent nightmares from their journeys, and the temporary shelter limits only made it harder for the family to connect and build community in NYC. The younger children in particular struggled with depression, caused by difficulties with sustaining a stable school environment and exacerbated by disruptions in the continuity of their medical and mental health care. Their story is only one of so many hundreds that we have been hearing.

The current policy of 30 and 60 day eviction notices for newly arrived people is not only deeply harmful at present, but also creates deep rifts of trauma that echo forward in multiple aspects of an individual's health for years to come. The negative health impacts of a system that shuffles people through temporary shelter are incalculable, including but not limited to:

interruptions in healthcare for patients who have underlying chronic health conditions that may be uncontrolled from the lengthy journey, suboptimal childhood growth and development due to inadequate nutrition and difficulty obtaining specialized services, inability to maintain certain medical diets as constantly moving requires rediscovering of food access points with provisions for certain medical diets (i.e. low sugar, high protein, low cholesterol, plant based diets), and, of course, the innumerable traumas implicated on children who don't get to have a steady connection with their schools.

Furthermore, we have also seen frequently the policy applied haphazardly, with multiple instances of patients being told they would need to leave **before** their medical extensions that we advocated for. We recall the case of a young woman who arrived into the city with an openly draining fistula and despite an extension for multiple months in the setting of impending surgery, the team at her HERRC was constantly telling her she would be kicked out of the shelter earlier. The harassment became so persistent that she decided to flee New York City before her scheduled surgery.

We believe that the only way to stop the incalculable harmful impacts on health being propagated by the current housing system onto newly arrived people would be **to eliminate the 30 and 60 day shelter limits in their entirety**. Your consideration and leadership on these matters is imperative and greatly appreciated for the continued betterment of our beautiful New York City community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

[\[1\]](#) New York Doctors Coalition is a community organization of over 900 physicians working in New York City dedicated to social justice and equity in the city.



Testimony of Karina Albistegui Adler, Co-Director of Health Justice at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest to the New York City Council Committee on Immigration Jointly with the Committee on General Welfare on November 19, 2024, regarding the Implementation of the 30 and 60 Day Shelter Rules for Asylum Seekers

Chair Aviles, Chair Ayala and distinguished members of the council thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter. I am the Co-Director of Health Justice at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). It is an honor to testify on behalf of our client communities today.

My colleagues and I have been able to help hundreds of undocumented New Yorkers with serious health conditions improve their health through access to comprehensive health insurance, direct immigration representation, and individual health advocacy. Welcoming and compassionately serving the thousands of newly arrived asylum seekers in addition to longtime members of our communities is a priority for us. This is why we have been concerned about the implementation of this rule, as it relates to the negative physical and mental health outcomes for this population of New Yorkers.

The 30 and 60 Day Shelter Rule Prevents Asylum Seekers from Fully Integrating into Our Communities.

The story of our city is one marked by waves of immigration; people fleeing violence, famine, oppression come to our city to settle and find stability and opportunity. Over time, countless asylum seekers have been able to integrate into the fabric of our city. Our recently arrived neighbors deserve the opportunity to do the same, but this is nearly impossible when they lack housing stability. Uprooting people so frequently prevents them from establishing community ties that could enable them to thrive in our city. Accessing assistance, health care, education and career opportunities is much more difficult when a person is moving to unfamiliar parts of the city every month or two. Each move may require seeking out and building new connections to meet their basic needs or traveling very far to connect with attorneys, case workers, food pantries, transportation, medical...etc. A better approach would be to support this community in finding stable housing, in the same way that we've done for countless of other New Yorkers in need.

Unstable Housing Creates a Substantial Barrier to Accessing Health Insurance

Many asylum seekers qualify for comprehensive health insurance in New York; however, the enrollment or re-enrollment often hinges on the ability of the applicant to respond to mailed notices. While text messages, emails, and calls are possible, many shelter residents lack access to functional devices, phones, and secure internet connection. Even under the best of circumstances mail in our city can be difficult to keep up with. In the context of changing residence every few weeks and the need to spend countless hours navigating services across the city in search of employment, food, housing, medical care, and legal representation, tracking down

mail becomes very difficult. We have documented, many cases of people losing insurance coverage or failing to complete enrollment because they have missed mailed notices. We urge city officials to work closely with New York State of Health and Health Resources Administration to ensure that qualifying asylum seekers can complete their health insurance enrollment and re-enrollment process. This may require some data collection and accounting of how many shelter residents have failed to complete initial applications or re-enroll due to missing information.

Unstable Housing Negatively Impacts Health

For asylum seekers who can complete the health insurance enrollment process, accessing and maintaining important connections with primary care and mental health providers can prove difficult due to the forced uprooting. In many instances necessary medical care such as major surgeries and dental care has been delayed or denied because of the lack of unstable housing. One of our clients, Mr. F, suffered for months with a painful dental problem that required oral surgery that would be fully covered by his health plan. However, due to concerns with his unstable housing his care and treatment was delayed. Another client, unable to obtain a lifesaving kidney transplant because his housing instability and the quality of his housing was a contraindication to transplant. We have also heard from asylum seekers in shelter about the severe mental health impacts of the housing instability on themselves and their children. Given our observations we strongly encourage the city council to make the process of seeking health waivers for the 30- and 60-day rule transparent, extremely user friendly, and as broad as possible. Importantly, the waivers should extend the shelter stay for at least 12 months if not longer depending on the medical need of the individual. A process that requires people to seek waivers every 30 to 60 days is far too onerous to be effective in ensuring that the underlying medical need is met.

The Poor Conditions of the HERCCS Exacerbate Chronic and Acute Health Conditions

We are alarmed by reports of the conditions of the HERCCS. Through our mutual aid partners we have heard of a general lack of hygienic condition, an inability to fully isolate when people have contagious illnesses such as COVID, Flu, and colds. Last winter I facilitated a collection of basic over the counter children's medications which include cough suppressants, fever reducers, and pain medication which was distributed through South Brooklyn Mutual Aid to residents in Bennet Field who lacked access to this basic medication during an outbreak of upper respiratory infections among the children and adults living there. We hope the city council will work closely with Health and Hospitals to plan for this eventuality this year and ensure that people living in shelters have easy access to basic medical care, vaccinations, medications with language accessible dosing instructions, and the ability to isolate themselves during outbreaks of infectious illness in shelters. One suggestion might be to bring providers to the shelters on a regular basis to meet people where they are. Additionally, the city could distribute pre-packaged kits that include basic over the counter medications for adults and children as well as masks and COVID testing kits at shelters across the city.

Conclusion

Mayor Adams campaigned on a platform of creating a Sanctuary City that welcomed immigrants, but this policy change has been anything but welcoming. Instead, it seems to operate on the idea that making life so uncomfortable for asylum seekers that they give up and leave. Chair Aviles, Chair Ayala and the members of the committees I hope this hearing will bring about a more humane policy that centers the dignity and humanity of

our asylum-seeking neighbors. I look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration with the council to facilitate healthcare access for new arrivals and long-time New Yorkers alike.

Karina Albistegui Adler
Co-Director of Health Justice
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
151 West 30th Street, 11th floor
New York, NY 10001
Kalbisteguiadler@nylpi.org

NYLPI has fought for more than 40 years to protect civil rights and achieve lived equality for communities in need. Led by community priorities, we pursue health, immigrant, disability, and environmental justice. NYLPI combines the power of law, organizing, and the private bar to make lasting change where it's needed most.

NYLPI's Health Justice Program brings a racial equity and immigrant justice focus to health care advocacy, including ongoing work addressing the human rights crisis in immigration detention and advocating for healthcare for all New Yorkers.

Testimony by the New York Legal Assistance Group on
Oversight - Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers
Before the New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Immigration
November 19, 2024

Deputy Speaker Ayala, Chair Avilés, Council Members, and staff, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak to the New York City Council on the implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for asylum seekers. My name is Angela Eslava Gonzalez, and I am a Paralegal Case handler at the Shelter and Economic Stability Project in the Public Benefits Unit at the New York Legal Assistance Group (“NYLAG”).

NYLAG uses the power of the law to help New Yorkers experiencing poverty or in crisis combat economic, racial, and social injustices. We address emerging and urgent needs with comprehensive, free civil legal services, financial empowerment, impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community partnerships. We aim to disrupt systemic racism by serving clients, whose legal and financial crises are often rooted in racial inequality.

The Shelter and Economic Stability Project at NYLAG provides free legal services and advocacy to low-income people in and trying to access public shelter in New York City, and those having trouble accessing or maintaining Public Assistance and SNAP (food stamp) benefits. We work to ensure that every New Yorker has a safe place to sleep by offering legal advice and representation throughout each step of the shelter application process, assist and advocate for clients who are already in shelter as they navigate the transfer process, and seek adequate facility conditions and resources for their needs. We also represent clients at Administrative Fair Hearings, conduct advocacy with the Department of Social Services

(“DSS”), Benefits Access Centers and SNAP centers, and bring impact litigation to ensure that our clients are obtaining and maintaining an adequate level of shelter and benefits.

I have worked with numerous single adults and families who have recently crossed the southern border to seek asylum in the United States. On their journeys, they have experienced horrors too numerous to count, and when they arrive in New York City, they are often re-traumatized by their treatment at the shelters to which they have been assigned. Based on my experiences working with them, I appreciate the opportunity to offer the following comments.

I. Time Limits that Only Apply to New-Immigrants in Shelter are Blatantly Discriminatory

The city has created discriminatory shelter restrictions where all people needing shelter in New York City other than new immigrants are granted shelter for an unrestricted period of time, but new immigrants (those who have entered the country after March 15, 2022) are told their shelter stays are time-limited to either 30 or 60 days depending on the age of the applicant. These time limits are forcing people into street homelessness, creating instability for families, preventing children from attending school, and preventing people from obtaining immigration statuses and public benefits. This is not what our newest New Yorkers deserve and is not the conduct a self-proclaimed “Sanctuary City” should be engaging in.

A. Adult New Immigrants are Being Forced into Street Homelessness

For single new immigrant adults and adult new immigrant families, after their initial time period expires, they must reapply to extend their shelter stay for an additional 30 or 60 day period (depending on the age of the applicant). The reapplication process consists of the applicants showing evidence of steps they have taken to exit the shelter system. Although the city claimed it would provide extensive case management services to assist in the process prior to reapplying for shelter stay extensions, some NYLAG clients are not aware of the evidence they

need to show to be granted an extension. In many cases, NYLAG clients are only asked their immigration status and/or whether they have applied for immigration relief, and if they have not, they are automatically denied (even though this is not the only criteria for obtaining a shelter stay extension). Most often, the new immigrants have taken many other steps to exit the shelter system that would count towards being granted an extension, but since they have not been told the criteria, many are denied and are unaware that they might have had additional evidence to show. Thus, even when meeting the city-established threshold for being granted an additional 30 or 60 day stay under these discriminatory and burdening conditions, new immigrants are frequently wrongly denied and forced out onto the street. Often, new immigrants are told they can only reapply once they have applied for immigration relief. This is not true and puts clients at further risk of experiencing long-term homelessness, during which they are much less likely to be able to find legal service providers that can assist them with such applications.

Additional evidence that new immigrants are told they can use to apply for an extension of shelter is proof that they have been looking for a job, or that they are working. Many new immigrants who need to reapply for an extension do not have work permits and thus, are not legally authorized to work. Because of this, many new immigrants are faced with a difficult choice; either they choose to work and/or look for jobs without work authorization or face the imminent risk of becoming street homeless. The City is essentially asking people to violate federal law if they want to be granted an extension of their shelter stay. This is further aggravated by the fact that new immigrants must show the city evidence that they have worked or looked for work. If they have done this without legal permission, their applications for immigration status are put at risk. This circumstance may also harm people's ability to gain legal representation, as

working without a permit may disqualify new immigrants from being taken on as clients, depending on the legal service provider.

Unsurprisingly, many NYLAG clients have resorted to sleeping on the street, on subways, and in other places not meant for sleeping. Despite the flaws in the shelter system, the right to shelter was at least a humane, compassionate offering that ensured every New Yorker had a roof over their head, whether they just got here a week ago or have lived here their entire life. We have reached new levels of inhumanity with the shelter stay limits for recently arrived immigrants, denying our newest New Yorkers the right to shelter that we have long touted as something that sets New York apart.

B. Families With Minor Children are Being Needlessly Destabilized

New immigrant families with minor children are mandated to move from their assigned shelters every 60 days unless someone in the family can prove they have a disability¹. This causes significant disruption for all members of the household, but most specifically for children whose consistent attendance at school is put at elevated risk. At the end of every 60-day period², these families have to go back to the Roosevelt Hotel, with their children, and wait to be given a new placement³. This process is particularly difficult and burdensome for families with disabilities who are not given permission to stay in their shelters (as many families with disabilities are not aware that they can get an extension, or how to get one). More troublingly,

¹ Some new immigrant shelters are only offering 28-days stays for families with children. In these cases, they are mandated to move every 28 days.

² New immigrant families with minor children who are sorted into DHS shelter do not currently have to move every 60-days.

³ On November 18, 2024, the City announced that “following their second 60-day notice, [new immigrant] families with children in kindergarten through sixth grade can stay in the same shelter they were previously assigned to if they still need more time in the system”. <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/837-24/mayor-adams-issues-orders-further-save-taxpayer-dollars-help-migrants-take-next-steps-in>. This change is wholly insufficient to address this cruel policy, as it still appears to allow children to be displaced twice within their first 120 days in the country, and it only applies to a portion families with minor children.

many new immigrant families are not aware that they will get a new placement and spend their initial 60-days preparing for street homelessness.

Having to reapply, in person, for shelter every 60-days prevents children from attending school, and parents from attending work. This disruption is exacerbated when the new placement is far from the school that the children had previously been attending (which it often is). In these cases, children are sometimes physically unable to get to school and it may take months for a school bus to be assigned (if it happens at all).⁴ As a result, children are forced to drop out of school entirely or to transfer schools.⁵ This policy has victimized the most vulnerable members of our population, homeless new immigrant children.

The irony is that every family with minor children is given a new placement when they reapply for shelter. Given that, it appears the only reason to force families to reapply and move every 60-days is to destabilize families and try to force new immigrants out of New York City. This policy must be rescinded immediately.

C. Shelter Time Limits Prevent Obtaining Immigration and Public Benefits Relief

Shelter time limits also affect new immigrants' ability to access immigration relief and public benefits. Once people are forced out of their shelter, they are often not able to retrieve mail sent to their prior shelter addresses. This causes them to miss important mail, such as vital immigration notices telling them the dates of upcoming hearings. If people miss these notices, and thus, miss the hearings, they are subject to being removed in absentia, which, among other consequences, makes them ineligible for continuing a work authorization. Clients also miss mail notifying them of the date and time of their biometrics appointments, and missing that

⁴ <https://www.newsweek.com/adams-migrants-nyc-busing-council-1890314>

⁵ <https://www.newsweek.com/adams-migrants-nyc-busing-council-1890314>

appointment stops the accrual of time towards the 150 days they would need to be eligible for an employment authorization.

Immigration relief is crucial for new immigrants to gain stability and is one of the main vehicles that they can use to transition out of the shelter system. If these disruptions are being caused to destabilize families, and discourage their presence in the shelter system, the efforts are counterproductive to the massive efforts this city has undertaken to help people apply for immigration relief. As families face disruptions in their immigration relief processes, it becomes harder for them to get Employment Authorizations and/or to get PRUCOL status, and in consequence, delays the process of them being able to transition out of the shelter system.

II. Having a Two-tiered Shelter System is “De Facto” Discriminatory, Separate is Not Equal

In September of 2022, Mayor Adams began to create new shelter systems that do not comply with the minimum shelter guidelines mandated in New York City and do not provide its residents with assistance transitioning to permanent housing.⁶ These new shelters are charged with providing shelter to **only** the newly-arriving asylum-seekers, are significantly less funded and resourced than traditional Department of Homeless Services (“DHS”)⁷ shelters for all other people experiencing homelessness and do not offer all the protections and services that DHS shelter for all other people experiencing homelessness provide. Many new immigrants in these systems are staying in tents, including families with minor children. These tents are not permanent dwelling structures and do not provide shelter from the elements (for example,

⁶ <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/695-22/mayor-adams-humanitarian-emergency-response-relief-centers-further-support-asylum#:~:text=Humanitarian%20relief%20centers%20will%20become,City%2C%20in%20addition%20to>

⁷ Even the special sub-shelter system created within the DHS system has less critical supports than those DHS shelters for all other people experiencing homelessness because they are housing “Asylum seekers”.

families have had to evacuate during rain storms, as the tents could not withstand the weather).⁸ NYLAG clients who reside in these systems report only being given 2 meals a day, and some report only being provided with cold food (which is sometimes given to them while still frozen). These shelters are so poorly resourced and maintained that they cannot support the needs of those living there; they do not even have crucial supports like case workers and childcare. As a result residents are finding it impossible to do things like enroll their children in school, let alone gain the means to transition out of shelter. Exacerbating this is the fact that residents of these shelters are not eligible for the housing subsidies that generally allow people experiencing homelessness to transition to permanent housing, which they may be eligible for if they resided in DHS shelter.

Further, the differentiation of shelter systems on the basis of whether the population they serve are asylum seekers, or not, creates vast potential for racial profiling. When a person who is or may be a new immigrant applies at a DHS intake site, DHS policy is to send them to the new immigrant arrival center at the Roosevelt Hotel. It is unclear how staff determines who should be sent to the Roosevelt, accepted at asylum-seeker specific DHS shelters, or accepted into the DHS shelters for all other people experiencing homelessness. What criteria is used determine whether an applicant is an immigrant, let alone whether they are asylum seekers? It's hard to imagine this determination is not influenced by peoples' race and/or their English proficiency. Even if staff is trained to ask all applicants specific questions about immigration status/asylum seeking status, the potential for racial profiling determining the outcomes for shelter applicants is extremely high.

⁸ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/01/09/floyd-bennett-field-james-madison-high-school-storm-evacuation-migrants/>

In sum, separating new immigrants into their own, poorly resourced and poorly regulated shelter system discriminates against them based on their national origin and economic status. These characteristics alone are being used to justify treating new immigrants as less deserving of traditional shelter placements and reducing their access to services crucial to transition out of the shelter system. This is blatantly discriminatory and cruel. Asylum-seeking immigrants should be provided with the same level of shelter and services as all other people experiencing homelessness in New York City.

We thank the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration for the work you have done to facilitate services for vulnerable New Yorkers, and for taking this opportunity to continue to improve the conditions for our clients. We hope we can continue to be a resource for you going forward.

Respectfully submitted,

New York Legal Assistance Group



Thank you to the City Council Immigration and Child and Youth Committee for inviting written testimony. We comprise a team of social workers at Safe Passage Project, a non-profit legal services organization that provides free representation to immigrant children facing deportation. Safe Passage Project currently serves over 1,400 children who live in the five boroughs of New York City and in the two counties of Long Island. We work closely with partner organizations through the ICARE Coalition (which is funded by the City Council's Unaccompanied Minors and Families Initiative), with the goal of providing high-quality legal representation to as many unaccompanied minors as possible. Once we accept a client, we commit to sticking with them until we achieve the best possible outcome for them, usually a green card. As Safe Passage's social work team, we are dedicated to collaboration with our clients and attorneys, ensuring that our clients can navigate the various systems they encounter and are connected to as many resources as possible, including housing, education, health, and mental health services.

As the number of immigrant youth who arrive in New York increased, we have done our best to respond to their varying needs, including for those who reside in a Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRC). Like many peer organizations, we would like to emphasize our concerns that HERRC's 30- and 60- day rules have detrimental impacts on our clients' stability, health, and safety.

The 30- and 60- Day Rules Cause Immense Instability for Residents

When residents are forced to move every 30 or 60 days, this interruption can have a negative impact on their ability to maintain educational opportunities and/or stable employment:

- B.B. is a 19 year old young man from Guinea. He had been living in a HERRC in the Bronx when he was reassigned to another facility after he received his 30 day notice. He was reassigned to another HERRC in Brooklyn. B.B. had been attending a Pathways to Graduation program in the Bronx: he had established a routine and a community of support and was thriving in school. He tried to transfer to a Pathways program in Brooklyn, however, he was told that no program has space for new students. He



continues his long commute to the Bronx to study. The only solution he was offered by the HERRC was to check daily with staff for a Bronx opening. This lack of support and care has caused B.B. even more stress and has diminished his motivation to study, although he persists.

- E.M. is a 22 year old young woman from Honduras. She is a mother of two young children and has had to change HERRCs three times due to the 30/60 day rule. She decided to leave the HERRC system, as constantly switching shelters was having a negative impact on her daughter's education and her family's health. Each time the family was forced to move, E.M. had to figure out a new way to commute from their new placement to her daughter's school. E.M.'s daughter was reprimanded multiple times for excessive lateness. E.M. was offered no case management support at the shelter through these transitions; in fact, she visited a Manhattan HomeBase location and was turned away, as she did not qualify for a housing voucher. E.M. was also told repeatedly to apply for her work permit, although she explained that she already had an immigration lawyer who was working on her case. Staff refused to speak with both her Safe Passage lawyer and social worker. E.M. decided to ultimately risk street homelessness rather than remain in the HERRCs.
- I.S. is a 19 year old young man from Honduras. He was reassigned to an old postal warehouse near JFK airport that was converted into a HERRC. Because the facility has no address, I.S. is not able to receive a variety of services that he would greatly benefit from, such as safety net assistance. And due to the HERRC's isolated location, along with the uncertainty of where he will be placed next, I.S. is unable to enroll in in-person English classes or maintain steady employment.

The Instability Caused by the 30- and 60- Day Rules Poses a Threat to Residents' Health and Safety

In each above case, the young person experienced threats to their health, safety, and sense of well-being:



- B.B. - Since being placed in Brooklyn, his commute is more than an hour and half long each way. He is not getting enough sleep, his anxiety has worsened, and he cannot concentrate in school. Because he does not have access to a kitchen, he has had no access to nutritious foods. He has experienced horrible stomach pains from the combination of high anxiety and an unhealthy diet; in fact, B.B. stopped eating altogether until it was no longer sustainable.
- E.M. - Being forced to navigate multiple new neighborhoods increased E.M.'s feelings of isolation and loneliness, and made her feel unsafe navigating new areas of the city with her young children. The stress from multiple moves led E.M. and her daughters to become sick multiple times, including a bout of kidney stones for E.M. She and her daughters also experienced consistent gastro-related illnesses, as they never had access to a kitchen in their HERRCs and relied solely on takeout or junk food to feed themselves. Not only was this expensive but proved detrimental to their health.
- I.S. was physically attacked and verbally harassed by guards at two different HERRCs. In one shelter, he was falsely accused of wanting to sneak onto a restricted floor and was pushed and hurt by the guards. Because I.S. only speaks Spanish, he did not understand why the guards were angry and physical with him. After this incident, he was sent to another HERRC, where he was accused of being physically aggressive to a guard after simply asking for a Metrocard. The guards attacked him and injured his arm so severely that an ambulance was called and he was taken to the emergency room. The NYPD was then involved. Neither the guards nor NYPD officers spoke to I.S. in Spanish, once again leaving him confused and unable to understand the situation. He was sedated at the hospital and kept overnight. He continues to have trouble sleeping after these two incidents and fears how he will be treated at his next placement.

Safe Passage has ongoing concerns regarding the instability, health, and safety issues that the 30- and 60- day rule rules, combined with inferior conditions of HERRCs, cause for immigrant individuals and families facing compounded vulnerabilities and trauma. We ask the city to end the 30 and 60 day HERRC limits and provide appropriate support to residents of HERRCs.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council, good morning:

My name is Karim Walker, and I am an organizing and outreach specialist with the Safety Net Project where I work with homeless New Yorkers every day.

In the past several years, as part of my work doing outreach to street homeless New Yorkers I have met with many newly-arrived immigrants who are staying on the street and in some of the city's immigrant-only shelters, such as on Randall's Island in Manhattan, Ryerson Street in Brooklyn, and the Creedmoor in Queens. Through my interactions and dialogue, I have spoken to many people who have been subject to the cruel 30- and 60-day evictions that the city has imposed on them.

The 30- and 60-day limits are draconian, discriminatory, and mean-spirited. They must end immediately. Contrary to the City's claim, they are a clear attempt to wear people down, to get them to give up, and deter them from accessing shelter at all. Instead of threatening and evicting immigrants, the City would do well in assisting them in finding permanent housing and advocating to accelerate their access to work authorization, which is a recurring issue for many recent immigrants.

One of the people I encountered, Eva, shared her thoughts as follows. The following statement has been translated from Spanish: "The 30 day rule has impacted me in all aspects because I have to move every few months and it impacts everything. I have been in six different shelters since I arrived in New York. It has impacted my health, my studies, and my emotional stability. I have gone from Brooklyn to Staten Island to Queens to Randall's Island to Brooklyn. At one of the shelters, I had found stability and was feeling stable emotionally and moving forward. But after finding that stability I was moved to a place where I had no privacy and had to live in really bad conditions in the shelter. We are immigrants who came here to be able to find a

better future and to work and to be able help our families. But the displacements are making it impossible to work towards that better future.”

Undoubtedly, the demand for shelter is a challenge our city is facing. But it is not a new challenge and it will not be solved by subjecting tens of thousands of people to cruel shelter evictions. The shelter population is at record levels because homeless New Yorkers cannot get housing — people go into shelter and then struggle to get out. Successive city and state administrations have failed to create affordable housing solutions that enable homeless people to exit shelter. Our leaders have failed to address City warehousing and landlord warehousing of tens of thousands of vacant apartments; and currently the Mayor is outright refusing to implement CityFHEPS Laws that would help thousands of people move out of shelter and prevent more evictions. Until the City reverses course and engages meaningfully with the root causes of homelessness, most importantly lack of access to permanent housing, these issues will continue to tear our city apart.

Finally, we must remember that limits on shelter stays are discriminatory and a part of a broader separate and unequal shelter system for recent immigrants and asylum seekers. The system is eerily reminiscent of “separate but equal” regime, one of the more hideous and tragic chapters in American history. In establishing a separate system and subjecting immigrants to the 30 and 60 day rule, the City has chosen to give a vulnerable group of predominantly people of color differential and lesser legal treatment, while simultaneously dehumanizing and degrading them. What kind of city do we want to be: one that reflects the nation’s original motto: E. Pluribus Unum, or one that replicates the darkest aspects of America?

**Testimony of Maura Heron
before The New York City Council
Committee on Immigration and Committee on General Welfare
November 19, 2024**

Good afternoon. My name is Maura Heron, and I am a Supervising Attorney in Sanctuary for Families' Immigration Intervention Project, the nation's largest immigration legal service program exclusively for survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence. Sanctuary is New York State's largest provider of comprehensive services exclusively for abuse survivors and their children, with a broad, holistic program of shelter, counseling, legal, and economic empowerment services reaching 8-9,000 adults and children annually. The Immigration Intervention Projects represents clients in all types of humanitarian immigration relief for which they may be eligible, providing representation, pro se assistance, and advice and referrals to over 2,500 clients annually. In response to the influx of migrants to the city in recent years, we have expanded our practice to include more asylum and removal work. Last year, IIP handled nearly 400 asylum and 200 removal defense cases.

We are grateful for the opportunity to testify on the critical topic of the shelter time limitations for recent migrants to New York and the impacts those limitations have on our clients' lives and our ability to represent them in their asylum cases. Our special thanks to Council Members Alexa Aviles and Diana Ayala, Chairs of the Committees on Immigration and General Welfare, for calling this hearing, and for their advocacy on behalf of immigrant survivors.

Representing recent migrants in their asylum cases before the immigration court is demanding of both attorneys and clients. All of Sanctuary's clients are survivors of gender-based violence. They are often fleeing domestic violence, sexual violence, and homophobic violence in their home countries. Preparing an asylum case requires that survivors re-live these experiences over and over as they explain their stories to us. This is not only time-intensive but often is emotionally exhausting. We have intensified our efforts to ensure that our services are trauma-informed as our clients repeat these devastating stories to us.

It is very difficult to prepare clients for their cases in immigration court without stable housing. Clients who have to move shelters every few weeks simply do not have the emotional bandwidth to talk about past traumatic experiences; they are in constant crisis, and their transience makes it very challenging to stay in touch with them and provide effective legal representation. Clients who have to constantly move often miss their appointments. They lose documents that are critical to their claims. They do not receive extremely important notices in the mail. They cannot concentrate on preparing their cases when they do not know where they and their children will be sleeping from one week to the next.

I would like to talk this morning about two recently arrived migrants who have been negatively impacted by the time limits of their shelter stays. I will call the first client Rosa. Rosa is a single mother and domestic violence survivor from Venezuela. She fled Venezuela after she was attacked for protesting government corruption at the hospital where she worked. Rosa has serious health issues, including a recent cancer diagnosis, and her immune system is suppressed. Living in shelter would be challenging for Rosa under the best of circumstances, but the constant moving has caused her health to suffer terribly. Each time she has to pack up and return to Roosevelt Hotel for a new placement, her health plummets because of the strain of the physical move, the wait time to be seen, and anxiety about where she'll be sent. She has been hospitalized several times. Rosa is placed with a pro bono team of lawyers who represent her with Sanctuary's supervision, but she has had to cancel many appointments because of the constant moves and subsequent hospitalizations.

The second client who I wish to speak of is Juana. Juana is from Ecuador, a single mother of a 7-year-old boy with autism. Juana was violently sexually assaulted by the man she hired to transport her to the United States. This attack happened in front of her son, and he became non-verbal after witnessing the sexual assault of his mother. Juana's son was first enrolled in a public school in Manhattan where he started receiving services such as speech therapy. Unfortunately, the family was then moved to a shelter in a different borough, and Juana spent many hours each day commuting with her son on the subway

and buses. Eventually Juana was forced to enroll her son in a school closer to their new shelter, as the commuting did not allow her to do anything else with her time, including meet with her lawyers. When her son transferred schools, his speech therapy did not automatically transfer. He lost the progress he had made in speech and is struggling academically.

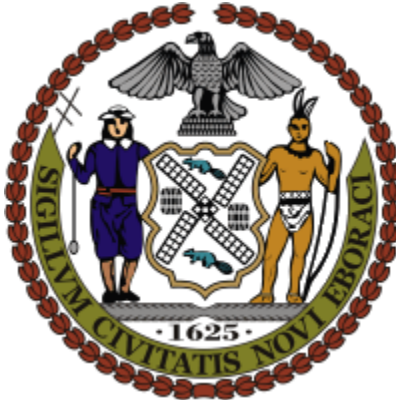
Sanctuary for Families screens recent arrivals every week who are clearly eligible for asylum based on their past experiences with gender-based violence. These clients come to New York because of our reputation as a city that welcomes immigrants. But as noted above, stable shelter is key to ensuring that clients have the opportunity to adequately prepare for their court cases. In view of the planned policy changes articulated by the incoming federal administration, immigration cases will become far more challenging, making it all the more critical that the city minimize the range of other obstacles faced by these vulnerable individuals and families.

We thank the Committees for shining a light on this important topic and are deeply grateful for the Council's efforts to tackle these challenging issues in our city. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for your deep commitment to immigrant abuse survivors and New Yorkers in need.

The New York City Council

The Committee on Immigration and Committee on General Welfare

Chairpersons Alexa Avilés and Diana Ayala



Oversight - Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers

City Hall

November 19, 2024



Testimony of

Jeremy C. Kohomban, PhD
President and CEO, The Children's Village
President, Harlem Dowling



On behalf of The Children's Village, I thank Chairpersons Avilés and Ayala for the opportunity to provide testimony on the implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers.

I am Jeremy Kohomban, President and CEO of The Children's Village and President of Harlem Dowling. Both organizations have deep roots in New York City, committed over the last two centuries to provide care and support children and families, including victims of human trafficking and asylum-seeking individuals.

We submit this testimony with the hope of enhancing New York City's support for asylum seekers. We all recognize that they should not be left languishing in our City's homeless shelter system. Instead, the City must prioritize effective pathways to relocation and meaningful wraparound supports that will allow them to secure housing and build sustainable livelihoods. We have done this well for prior generations of asylees, we can do the same now.

As we navigate these uncertain times, it is crucial for the City to lead the way—not by imposing punitive measures but by fostering paths to legal citizenship that prioritizes safety, dignity, and opportunity.

In the last two years, more than 210,000 migrants¹ arrived in the City as of August, an unprecedented volume; while this has somewhat abated recently, many of these individuals and families continue to arrive with limited resources, often bearing the psychological toll of dangerous journeys and the weight of expectations from those left behind. Some face risks that go beyond homelessness, including exploitation in low-wage, high-risk jobs that jeopardize their safety and expose them to abuse. Others carry heavy debts from their migration, making them susceptible to exploitative labor arrangements that threaten to trap them in cycles of debt bondage.

While well-intentioned, the City's 30- and 60-day rules fail to address these deep-seated issues. Limiting their stay in City shelters without a clear and sustainable path forward will not achieve the long-term stability we all seek. Instead, it may increase the likelihood that people fall into unsafe or even exploitative circumstances. Our experience has shown us what can work to support asylum seekers and prevent them from such circumstances:

¹ "What to Know About the Migrant Crisis in New York City." The New York Times, August, 19, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/nyc-migrant-crisis-explained.html>

1. Access to Housing and Basic Needs: It is essential to ensure that all asylum seekers have a safe place to sleep, shower, and access essential services. Temporary shelters can be helpful, but we also must consider expanding drop-in centers, like our Family Enrichment Centers, where individuals can access basic necessities and find a supportive community.

2. Federal and Local Support for Legal Status and Employment: Navigating the asylum process and filing for work permits is a challenging task for anyone, let alone individuals unfamiliar with the U.S. legal system. Resources should be allocated to expedite these processes and ensure that people can access work permits expediently.

3. Implementing a Navigator Program: Much like the navigator programs implemented during the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, a similar model for asylum seekers could be transformative. Skilled navigators can guide asylum seekers through the complex journey toward stability in the United States, including accessing legal support, securing housing, and finding employment. These programs are cost-effective yet invaluable for ensuring asylum seekers are informed and less vulnerable to exploitation.

4. Family Reunification and Mentorship: Whenever possible, family finding should be a priority to reconnect asylum seekers with supportive relatives, sponsors or a community that is welcoming. For those without family, structured mentorship programs can provide essential support, fostering relationships that help people build a new life in our communities.

New York City has long taken pride in our role as a sanctuary for those seeking a better life. Given the current political climate and the uncertainty over deportations in the coming years, this moment calls upon our City to honor that legacy by providing genuine pathways out of the shelter system and into stable, thriving lives.

Investing in relocation assistance, housing, legal support, and wraparound services not only benefits this generation of asylum seekers, it strengthens our city as a whole. By fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes legal pathways over punitive restrictions, the City can lead by example, demonstrating that compassion and pragmatism can coexist in public policy.



To: New York City Council Committee on Immigration & Committee on General Welfare
From: Ellinor Rutkey, Esq., The Door's Legal Services Center
Re: Oversight Hearing: Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- Day Rules for Asylum Seekers

Date: November 19, 2024

The Door is a comprehensive youth development organization that has been supporting vulnerable youth in New York City since 1972. Each year, we provide services to nearly 9,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 24, many of them immigrants. The services we provide include healthcare, education, supportive housing, food and nutrition, career development, arts and recreation, mental health counseling, and legal assistance — all under one roof. We are also a Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Runaway and Homeless Youth drop-in center, providing food, clothing, showers, laundry, and case management services to young people who are unhoused or unstably housed. At The Door, we emphasize empowering and engaging the young people we serve, and we are committed to creating a safe, equitable, and inclusive space for young people and staff.

The Legal Services Center at The Door is an office of over 50 individuals, including attorneys, social workers, and support staff. We specialize in serving vulnerable children and young people, including many clients who are unhoused, undocumented, and/or LGBTQIA+. Our attorneys represent youth in removal proceedings before immigration courts, as well as those seeking to regularize their status through the filing of affirmative humanitarian applications. In the fiscal year 2023, we handled 3,282 immigration matters for young people. We also operate several free legal clinics, including a weekly drop-in legal clinic for runaway/homeless youth.

I. Background on 30- and 60- Day Rules

Despite the longstanding right to shelter in New York City, recent immigrants living in city shelters face eviction every 30 or 60 days. Families with children and individuals under the age of 23 must leave their shelter (or apply for an extension) every 60 days, while adult families and individuals age 23 or older are afforded only 30 days before being forced to leave. These rules primarily impact recent immigrants who live in Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs), but over the summer, the City also began applying 30- and 60- day rules to evict families living in Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters.¹

i. Extensions

When a family or individual reaches the end of their 30- or 60-day period, they generally must either leave their shelter or request more time in the shelter system. Adults requesting more time (including young adults ages 18-24) typically must show that they are eligible to receive an

¹ Gwynne Hogan, *State Greenlights NYC Evicting More Migrant Families From Shelters*, The City (Aug. 20, 2024), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/08/20/migrant-family-shelter-eviction-temporary-disability-assistance-homeless-services/>.



extension.² To be eligible, the individual must have taken “significant efforts to resettle.” Examples of “significant efforts to resettle” include taking English classes, getting a job, and retaining an immigration lawyer. By attempting to make a significant effort to resettle, an individual receives one point. An individual receives five points for successfully completing a task. For example, a recent immigrant who interviewed for a job but did not get the position would receive one point, but if the same person had in fact been hired for the position, they would receive five points. Individuals must either receive 20 points to be granted an extension or be eligible for an automatic extension. Automatic extensions are provided to those who are enrolled in high school or who are Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (“PRUCOL,” includes individuals who have filed for asylum, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or (SIJS)).

When an extension is granted, there is no guarantee that the individual will be able to remain in the same shelter placement. The extension merely allows the individual to continue living in *a* shelter, not in the particular shelter where they lived when they made their extension request. It is common for recent immigrants to have to change shelters every time that an extension is granted – in other words, every 30 or 60 days.

ii. Who is Impacted by 30- and 60- Day Rules?

The new New Yorkers who are impacted by these policies – and especially, the young new New Yorkers with whom we work at The Door – are often in extremely vulnerable positions. Some of them have only just arrived in the United States after a perilous, long, and often traumatic journey from their countries of origin, while others have spent months – or even years – in immigration custody. Even before coming to the United States, many of these recent immigrants have already experienced significant trauma in their lives.

For example, one Door client entered the United States as an unaccompanied child and was placed in ORR custody (immigration detention) until his 18th birthday. Because he lacked a support network in the country, and because there was not a youth shelter bed available for him, he was forced to move into a HERRC and comply with the City’s 30- and 60-day rules. This young person decided to leave his home country in West Africa after years of being hit, whipped, and physically abused by his father. His favorite part of living in New York is getting to attend school – something he had been unable to do in his home country, as his father forced him to drop out of school to work on a farm at age 10.

Other Door clients subject to 30- and 60-day rules fled their home countries due to war or other violence. For instance, another Door client living in a HERRC came to the United States after traveling by plane, bus, and by foot from his home country in North Africa. The young person had made the difficult decision to leave his home country after rebel forces broke into his family’s home, raped his sister, and beat his brother to death before his eyes.

² There are two types of extensions: extensions pursuant to the *Callahan v. Carey* settlement, and extensions as a reasonable accommodation for a disability. The extension system described in this testimony is the *Callahan* extension system, though it is important to note that individuals with certain disabilities may be able to receive extensions as a reasonable accommodation.



II. 30- and 60- Day Rules are Unlawful and Inhumane

Under the *Callahan v. Carey* consent decree and its progeny, there is a legal right to shelter in New York City.³ This right does not depend on an individual's immigration status, and it must still be enforced and respected, regardless of the resources available to the City and regardless of the demand for shelter. Nonetheless, the City has tried to abandon its promise to all people by attempting to evade its obligation to provide shelter through the use of 30- and 60- day rules.⁴

This is repugnant. Shelter is a human right. The City has a legal and moral duty to ensure that all of its people have access to safe, habitable shelter. Instead of fulfilling this duty, the Adams Administration has chosen to create an underclass of people who are afforded fewer rights than others. While non-immigrants and immigrants who did not enter the United States recently enjoy full access to the City's shelter systems, recent immigrants are literally and metaphorically marginalized. They are sheltered in makeshift tent cities, many of which are located toward the outer edges of the city, and face eviction – from a *homeless shelter* – every 30- to 60- days. Recent immigrants are New Yorkers, and the City owes it to them to treat them as such. Everyone deserves to have their fundamental human needs met, and it is inhumane to infringe upon someone's human rights based solely on their immigration status.

III. The Policy Scheme Is Illogical, Incoherent, and Based on False Assumptions

i. Recent Immigrants Live in HERRCs Out of Necessity, Not as a First Choice

When Mayor Adams announced the 30- and 60- day rules in October 2023, he called them “the only way to help migrants take the next steps on their journeys.”⁵ Speaking in support of the policy, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services stated that 30- and 60- day rules “will help us resettle people more quickly[,] helping them on their journey to independence.”⁶

These justifications are based on false assumptions. For one, this policy seems to assume that recent immigrants are living in shelters – and particularly, in HERRCs – as a first choice, and not as a last resort. In reality, those who live in shelters do so out of necessity. Particularly among the young people that we serve at The Door, many recent immigrants enter the country with no ties to the United States, let alone ties to the City of New York. These new New Yorkers do not have friends or family to call on for assistance with housing or other necessities. Further, because those subject to 30- and 60- day rules all recently arrived in the United States, most will not be eligible to obtain employment authorization for at least several months – and likely, much longer. With no source of income, securing housing on the private market is all but impossible for many individuals impacted by 30- and 60- day rules.

³ *The Callahan Consent Decree*, Coalition for the Homeless (Aug. 2014), <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CallahanConsentDecree.pdf>.

⁴ See *Save the Right to Shelter*, Coalition for the Homeless (last visited Nov. 8, 2024), <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/save-the-right-to-shelter/>.

⁵ *As Number of Asylum Seekers in City's Care Tops 64, 100, City Announces Additional Policies For Asylum Seekers in City Shelters*, N.Y.C. Off. of the Mayor (Oct. 16, 2023), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/780-23/as-number-asylum-seekers-city-s-care-tops-64-100-city-additional-policies-for>.

⁶ *Id.*



The assumption that recent immigrants would choose to stay in shelter rather than live independently is especially bewildering in light of the horrific conditions in HERRCs. HERRCs are inhospitable and alienating. With thousands of people staying in makeshift tent cities, HERRCs offer little to no privacy for their occupants. This lack of privacy can be especially difficult for the young people that we serve at The Door, who need solitude and a quiet space to process complex trauma. HERRCs also are open to people of all ages, meaning that young people in HERRCs often find themselves among much older adults rather than fellow teenagers and young adults. As a result, many young people say that they have not formed any sort of relationship with their fellow HERRC residents and instead feel isolated and unsafe.

In addition, HERRCs do not supply sufficient food to their occupants. Recent immigrants consistently report to Door staff members that they are given barely any food at their HERRCs. While food is a necessity for all people living in shelter, consistent access to nutritious and plentiful food is particularly important for young Door members, whose essential organs, including their brains, are still developing.

In light of these conditions, it is unfathomable to think that recent immigrants would choose to stay in a HERRC indefinitely out of desire to be there, if not for being forcibly evicted after a mere 30- or 60- days.

ii. This Policy Misunderstands What is Beneficial for New New Yorkers

This policy makes incorrect assumptions about what actions would be beneficial for new New Yorkers. This is particularly evidenced by the extension system. Because those subject to the 30- and 60-day rules generally must amass 20 points to avoid being evicted from shelter, they are greatly incentivized to complete the delineated actions in order to earn points. However, some of these actions may actually harm rather than help new New Yorkers.

For instance, recent immigrants can earn a quarter of the points needed for an extension if they have a job. The emphasis on having a job is so significant that some Door members report being pressured to work without work authorization by their shelter. But for many immigrants, working without a work permit may bar them from adjusting their status (i.e., receiving a green card).⁷ An immigrant who works without a work permit is also more vulnerable to exploitation. It is common for Door members who work without work permits to be paid below minimum wage or forced to work in dangerous conditions. For example, one Door member working without a work permit was paid between \$2.50 and \$4.00 per hour to haul trash. Even though those who work without work permits are protected under New York State labor laws, immigrants are often understandably apprehensive to enforce their rights out of concern that they could lose a necessary source of income or face legal consequences.

Similarly, recent immigrants can receive an automatic extension to their shelter stay if they have applied for immigration relief like asylum or TPS. Many Door members also report being

⁷ See *USCIS Policy Manual*, Vol. 7, Part B, Ch. 6: Unauthorized Employment (INA 245(c)(2) and INA 245(c)(8)) (last visited Nov. 6, 2024), <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-7-part-b-chapter-6>.



pressured to apply for asylum by staff at their shelters, regardless of their eligibility or the strength of their claim. Filing an asylum claim at an inopportune time and/or *pro se* (without legal representation) can actually make it harder for recent immigrants to leave shelter due to the timeline for work permit eligibility. An immigrant who applies for asylum can generally file their application for a work permit 150 days later. But if the applicant then has an immigration court appearance where they ask for an adjournment – a necessary step for immigrants still searching for lawyers – the 150-day clock stops until the applicant’s next immigration court appearance. Given how busy the immigration courts have been, that next immigration court appearance could easily be more than six months away. As a result, many asylum applicants will end up waiting even longer to receive their work permit than they would have had they not filed an application so quickly and before they could possibly find representation. Thus, although the 30- and 60- day policy operates on the assumption that it is in an immigrant’s best interest to file for asylum, doing so at the wrong time could actually make it more difficult for that immigrant to obtain a work permit and achieve greater stability.

iii. This Policy Creates Disproportionate Burdens for Families with Minor Children

Under the 30- and 60- day rules, anyone living in shelter may request to remain in shelter for a longer period of time following the expiration of their stay. Single adults and adult families may request extensions while still living in their current shelter. However, there is no guarantee that the request will be granted, or that the person making the request will be able to remain in the same shelter rather than have to move to a new shelter. But for the majority of families with minor children, requests to remain in shelter cannot be made while the family is living in their current shelter. Instead, these families must fully move out of their shelters every 60 days in order to request a new shelter placement.

This process is extremely burdensome for impacted families. Moreover, there is no logical reason why families with minor children should be subject to more onerous procedures than those without minor children.

iv. This Policy Makes It Disproportionately Difficult for People Evicted from Shelter to Reenter Shelter

As discussed in more detail below, many people who are evicted from shelter under the 30- and 60- day rules do not have anywhere else to go. As a result, recent immigrants who have been evicted from shelter often wish to reenter shelter. Those evicted from shelter have the right to reenter shelter if they can show that they are eligible for a shelter extension. However, this policy fails to recognize that being evicted from shelter has the perverse effect of making it more difficult to qualify for a shelter extension, and thus, more difficult to reenter shelter.

One reason why it is more difficult to qualify for an extension after being evicted from shelter is that certain services are only available to people who live in shelter. For example, recent immigrants can receive an automatic shelter extension if they have applied for asylum. Many recent immigrants cannot find an immigration lawyer to assist them with their applications, and so they apply for asylum *pro se* with the help of free legal clinics. The largest *pro se* asylum application assistance program in New York City is the Red Cross’ Asylum Application Help



Center (AAHC), which served nearly 70,000 people between June 2023 and September 2024.⁸ This program is only available to those who are living in shelter or who have recently left shelter.⁹ However, Door members report that it is nearly impossible to receive an appointment at the AAHC while no longer living in shelter, as almost all appointments are made through shelter staff. Moreover, the City has instructed AAHC referral sources to turn away individuals who are more than four weeks away from their asylum one-year filing deadline, leaving many individuals without the support that they need to complete their applications and reenter shelter.¹⁰

More generally, many of the actions that recent immigrants can take to qualify for an extension (or to reenter the shelter system) are made more difficult once someone has been evicted from shelter. For example, it is more difficult to secure employment or attend school if one has been denied even the semblance of stability that the HERRC system provides. As a result, this policy only further disadvantages those who are in the extremely vulnerable position of having been evicted from shelter.

IV. There Are Serious Issues with the Implementation of 30- and 60- Day Rules

Even if the 30- and 60- day policy were logically coherent and theoretically beneficial for those who are impacted, errors in the implementation of the policy still result in great harm. Door staff members frequently meet recent immigrants who have applied for shelter extensions and were erroneously denied. Some of these denials seem to be the result of poor training or inadequate knowledge. For example, one Door client living in a HERRC recently requested a shelter extension. In support of his request, he presented documents showing that he had been approved for SIJS – meaning that he was PRUCOL, and thus, eligible for an extension. Due to the worker’s unfamiliarity with SIJS, the young person’s extension request was denied. The worker then instructed the young person to apply for asylum so that he could receive an extension.

Had this denial not come to the attention of the young person’s legal team, it’s likely that he would have been forced to leave his shelter and fend for himself – the unfortunate reality for many recent immigrants who have been denied a shelter extension.

V. 30- and 60- Day Rules Cause Significant Harm to Vulnerable New New Yorkers

At the announcement of the 30- and 60-day rules, NYC Health + Hospitals leadership boasted that the policy would ensure that the City “deliver [s] life-changing assistance for the thousands of asylum seekers from around the world who turned to us for help.”¹¹ It is true that the City’s policy is life-changing for hundreds of thousands of recent immigrants, but not in a positive way. In reality, 30- and 60- day rules cause widespread and detrimental harm to some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

⁸ Daniel Parra, *Who Can Get Appointments at NYC’s Asylum Application Help Center, And Who Can’t?*, CityLimits (Sept. 11, 2024), <https://citylimits.org/2024/09/11/who-can-get-appointments-at-nycs-asylum-application-help-center-and-who-cant/>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*



i. This Policy Creates Instability

These constant evictions, and the threat thereof, make it all but impossible for newly arrived immigrants to develop a sense of stability in New York. Door members subject to 30- and 60-day rules report that it is hard for them to make friends and form support networks. It is also hard for these new New Yorkers to take advantage of community-based resources, like mutual aid groups that distribute food and clothes. By the time that a HERRC resident learns about a resource in their community, or starts to develop a support network there, they will only be able to benefit from it for at most a few weeks before they are forced to leave that community. Others subject to 30- and 60- day rules may find that they never spend enough time in one place to develop any support networks or identify any potentially helpful resources.

ii. This Policy Undermines Access to Education

The threat of constant evictions under the 30- and 60- day shelter rules also makes it very difficult for young people to access education. Door members often report having to spend up to four hours round trip commuting to and from school because they were placed in a shelter very far away from their school. These young people may find it overly difficult to get to school, resulting in lateness, absenteeism, or even causing the young person to leave school entirely. This is particularly worrisome when so many of these young people have already experienced interruptions in their formal education.

Moreover, students who are unhoused or housing insecure generally struggle more in school than their housed peers. In the 2021-2022 school year, Advocates for Children found that students living in shelter were suspended from school about two times more often than students who were permanently housed.¹² Students living in shelter also perform “significantly below grade level” in English Language Arts, and only 11% of students living in shelter in grades three through eight were deemed proficient in math.¹³ Further, concerns about absenteeism and drop-out rates are not just hypothetical. In the 2021-2022 school year, 72% of students in shelter were chronically absent, while the graduation rate for students in shelter was a mere 62.8% – 22.3 points lower than the graduation rate for housed students.¹⁴ In light of the issues that unhoused students face in continuing their education, the 30- and 60- day rules again serve only to further disadvantage a population that already faces significant barriers to achieving their goals.

iii. This Policy Jeopardizes the Immigration Cases of Impacted Individuals

In order to successfully navigate the immigration process, it is crucial that immigrants have a reliable, safe address to which important documents can be sent. As a result of the 30- and 60-day policy, though, impacted immigrants are deprived of such consistency and stability. Door members who have had to move due to the policy often report that they never received key documents. For example, identification cards like Employment Authorization Documents or

¹² *Educational Indicators for Students Experiencing Homelessness, 2021-22*, Advocates for Children of New York (Nov. 2023), https://advocatesforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/sth_edu_indicators_21-22.pdf.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*



social security cards may be sent to an address where the recipient used to live, but to which the recipient no longer has access after being relocated under the 30- and 60- day rules.

Door members also report missing notices for immigration hearings and/or related appointments because those notices were sent to a previous shelter address. This can be disastrous for the impacted individual's immigration prospects. For example, missing an appointment for biometrics after the notice was delivered to an old address could result in the linked application being deemed "abandoned." Even more troublesome, impacted individuals may miss their immigration hearing if they do not receive their hearing notice. An individual who misses their immigration hearing will typically be ordered removed *in absentia*. These individuals may then be forcibly removed to a country where their wellbeing – and sometimes, lives – will be at risk, all through no fault of their own.

Under the upcoming Trump administration, these risks will only be greater. President-elect Trump has repeatedly boasted his flagrantly unlawful plan for mass deportations of immigrants.¹⁵ Those who have been ordered removed, including *in absentia*, will be at the greatest risk of being deported. Therefore, the 30- and 60- day rules are likely to cause even greater harm to recent immigrants come January 2025.

Moreover, recent legal changes are likely to result in increased criminalization of people experiencing street homelessness, including those who are evicted under 30- and 60- day rules. One such legal change is the passage of Proposal 2 ("Prop 2"), which expands the power of the New York City Department of Sanitation to perform dangerous "homeless sweeps."¹⁶ These sweeps have already been used to harm and further destabilize the lives of thousands of unhoused New Yorkers by dismantling tents, throwing away personal effects, and arresting people experiencing street homelessness.¹⁷ Now, those sheltering in public places after being evicted under the 30- and 60- day rules are likely to be subject to even more sweeps, and thus, at greater risk of arrest and criminalization. And, pursuant to recent precedent from the United States Supreme Court, the arrest and criminalization of unhoused people sleeping on public property is perfectly legal.¹⁸

With increased criminalization comes increased immigration risk, particularly for those who have already been ordered removed. A recent immigrant who is arrested may face immigration consequences for their arrest, including being placed in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention, being ordered removed, and even actually being deported. In this way, the 30-

¹⁵ See, e.g., Ted Hesson & Kristina Cooke, *Inside Trump's Plan for Mass Deportations – And Who Wants to Stop Him* (Nov. 10, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/inside-trumps-plan-mass-deportations-who-wants-stop-him-2024-11-06/>.

¹⁶ Mohamed Taguine & Michael Sisitzky, *Why New Yorkers Should Vote "No" on Proposals 2 Through 6*, New York Civil Liberties Union (Oct. 10, 2024), <https://www.nyclu.org/commentary/why-new-yorkers-should-vote-no-on-proposals-2-through-6>.

¹⁷ *Housing First*, Office of the N.Y.C. Comptroller, Brad Lander (June 28, 2023), <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/housing-first/>; David Brand, *Adams Made Homeless Sweeps a Priority. Tracking Their Outcomes? Not So Much.* (Sept 23, 2024), <https://gothamist.com/news/adams-made-homeless-sweeps-a-priority-tracking-their-outcomes-not-so-much>.

¹⁸ See *Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson*, 603 U.S. __ (2024), https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/23pdf/23-175_19m2.pdf.



and 60- day rules will soon be even more disastrous for recent immigrants than they already have proven to be over the last year.

iv. This Policy Causes Street Homelessness and Safety Risks

The most obvious result of this policy is that vulnerable people are being evicted with nowhere else to go. Although there are two several other shelter systems in the City, including the DHS shelter system for adults and families, and the DYCD shelter system for young people ages 16-24, it is nearly impossible for a person evicted from a HERRC to receive placement in either of these systems. Recent immigrants are almost always turned away from the DHS shelter system, regardless of the capacity of the DHS system to house more people.

Similarly, recent immigrants are also almost always turned away from the DYCD system, but this is due to lack of capacity within the DYCD system. Over the last two years, demand for youth shelters has skyrocketed. This increase in demand comes largely from the high number of recent immigrants to New York – many of whom are eligible to live in a youth shelter. However, there is a significant dearth of shelter beds within the DYCD system.¹⁹ On a daily basis, staff members at The Door speak with youth who have been unable to secure a bed in the youth shelter system. Many of these young people have tried repeatedly to find a bed without any success, constantly visiting and calling shelters in hopes that one will have a vacancy.

With essentially no ability to find other shelter placements in New York City, many new New Yorkers who have been evicted from shelter find themselves with nowhere else to go. Therefore, and unsurprisingly, this indefensible policy has resulted in many recent immigrants sleeping on the streets or otherwise entering dangerous living situations. At The Door, staff members regularly speak with young people who have been removed from their existing HERRC placement and have not been able to find anywhere else to stay. These young people are often forced to develop their own strategies for keeping themselves safe, such as gathering with other newly arrived immigrants and sleeping in shifts. For example, at a recent drop-in legal clinic for runaway/homeless youth, Door staff members met a 19-year-old who had spent the last month sleeping in the park, along with other recent immigrants who had also been evicted from shelter.

Other young people succeed in finding a place to stay, but at the cost of their own safety. For instance, when one newly arrived youth was unable to find a shelter placement, he moved into an apartment with several adults. These adults have coerced this young person into performing unpaid domestic labor, trapping him in an abusive setting. It goes without saying that the living situations that recent immigrants face after being evicted under the 30- and 60- day rules are extremely dangerous and completely unacceptable as a matter of policy.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Gwynne Hogan, *Youth Shelter System Locks Out Hundreds as Migrants Seek Entry*, The City (Mar. 12, 2024, 5:00 AM), https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/03/12/youth-shelter-system-locks-out-young-migrants/?oref=nyn_firstread_nl.



VI. Conclusion

The Adams Administration's 30- and 60- day rules are indefensible. They come nowhere near achieving the benefits they purport to achieve and, in fact, cause irreparable harm to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. In the interest of equity, the law, and fundamental human rights, it is imperative that the 30- and 60- day rules end immediately, and that new New Yorkers are treated with the compassion, respect, and care that they deserve.

Thank you.

Ellinor Rutkey, Esq.
Legal Fellow
The Door's Legal Services Center



45 Broadway, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10006
212-967-0322 | www.unhny.org

**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council Committee on Immigration
Council Member Alexis Avilés, Chair**

**Submitted by Paula Inhargue, Policy Analyst
November 19th, 2024**

Thank you, Chair Avilés and members of the New York City Council Committee on Immigration for convening today's hearing. United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is a policy and social change organization representing 46 neighborhood settlement houses, including 40 in New York City, that reach over 800,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life at 770 locations. A progressive leader for more than 100 years, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a broad range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide customized professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

Many of New York's settlement houses started during the last significant wave of migration to New York in the late 1800s, and the work of helping individuals and families successfully settle in New York has never ceased, but merely changed and adapted with the times. The settlement house model of providing multiple supports under one umbrella is time-tested, effective, and continues to help the newest New Yorkers.

Beyond that history and legacy, settlement houses are already working with asylum seekers today. We estimate that settlement houses are serving at least 8,000¹ new arrivals today, showing how quickly these nimble nonprofits can launch and expand supports. Full capacity of the network is limited by the lack of dedicated funding. Despite the numbers served and new programs started, 88 percent of settlement houses stated they have received no dedicated government support to serve this population.

This testimony focuses on the damaging impacts of limiting shelter stays for asylum seeking individuals and families, offers recommendations to provide more stability for asylum seekers

¹ This estimate comes from settlement houses who are tracking their work with this population through a variety of metrics: recording immigration status (when appropriate), housing status, work authorization, length of time in the United States, and country of origin. Many settlement houses have school partnerships, and some shared that their school partners have worked with them to identify asylum seeking children.

to settle in New York City, and supports Resolution 41-2024 in support of the Working Families Tax Credit, a state program that would help many New Yorkers, including immigrant New Yorkers, make ends meet.

Negative Impacts of Limiting Shelter Stays for Asylum Seekers

New York City is one of few places in the country that has a right to shelter, which extended to asylum seekers who began to arrive in New York City in 2022. Citing financial and space constraints, the Adams Administration sought to implement time limits on shelter stays for asylum seekers, stating that they did not have the resources to house individuals indefinitely. The stated goal was that, “Shelter time limits, paired with intensive case management, are designed to help more households achieve self-sufficiency, find stable housing arrangements, and exit from the shelter system.”² However, it is unclear whether the time limits or intensive case management services have resulted in that self-sufficiency. Settlement houses working with this population have described a churn of individuals and families throughout their programs, making it difficult to build relationships and work toward any goals related to stability to self-sufficiency. This policy has been especially damaging for families with children, who see their education severely disrupted in the process.

The City’s policy limiting families’ stays in the homeless shelter system to 60 days has been destabilizing for newly arrived families and has impacted their children’s ability to remain enrolled in early childhood education programs. A settlement house early childhood program director noted, “It’s challenging for the program to see [children] go. We know they need a stable setting with consistency. It’s not what they’re experiencing right now.” In some cases, a child may be enrolled for just a few weeks before they reach the 60-day limit and are forced to move. Providers have reported that families who re-apply for shelter after the 60-day limit are typically relocated to a different borough and struggle with traveling to their child’s early childhood education program. However, settlement houses have shared that some families continue to commute as long as two hours to their child’s center, demonstrating the urgent need for child care among newly arrived families.

It is also challenging for afterschool programs, where children cycle through in a short period of time due to time limits on shelter stays. During a recent meeting with our members, a Queens-based settlement house shared that they have had to remove 35 students from an afterschool roster in the last week due to families being displaced due to shelter rules. We also must note that it is often difficult for asylum seeking children to participate in afterschool programming at all, because there is no guarantee of bussing back to the shelter at the end of the program. This means that children are losing access to programming simply because of a lack of transportation.

The 30-day shelter limit for single adults and 60-day shelter limit for families with children have also impacted enrollment and participation in adult literacy and workforce training programs run by settlement houses. One settlement house on the Lower East Side has shared that new arrivals have been reluctant to sign up for their ESOL classes due to the uncertainty of not knowing where they will be living once they reach their limit in shelter. In other instances, new

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https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/report-on-the-investigation-of-the-implementation-of-the-60-day-rule-for-asylum-seeker-families/#_ftn4

arrivals who may have participated in the settlement house's employee work authorization clinic or culinary training program informed staff that they had to leave these programs due to reaching their limit in shelter. This not only creates instability for settlement houses and other CBOs providing services for new arrivals, but the 30/60 day rule is a barrier to improving the economic self-sufficiency of new arrivals who are eager to learn English, obtain work authorization, and learn new skills in order to gain employment and create a better life for themselves and their families.

In order to support new arrivals to successfully settle in New York City, UNH recommends that the City do the following:

- Ultimately end the 30/60 day rule, which has been especially destabilizing to asylum seeking families with children. The City should adopt an intensive, coordinated approach to combining temporary shelter, legal assistance, workforce development, and case management to promote actual self-sufficiency and to help people move from shelter in a sustainable way. Settlement houses have been doing this work on their own since asylum seekers started arriving, and are eager to do so in a strategic way in coordination with the City. Unfortunately they have not been viewed as true partners by the City as they have contracted with large for-profit companies.
- If the City continues to implement shelter limits for asylum seekers, it must do so in humane ways. For example, families with children should not be moved while a child is enrolled in school or an early childhood education program. Individuals enrolled in English classes or workforce development classes should be able to remain close to these programs for their duration. Exceptions also must be made for people with medical conditions who are seeking treatment.
- Focus on resettlement in New York City if that is an individual or family's goal. The case management services offered to asylum seekers in shelter have seemed to focus on resettlement outside of New York City. Many settlement houses have reported that their participants are staying here after exiting shelter, often in crowded housing situations. The City must not be blind to this reality, and should focus on supports that help people resettle here if that is their wish.

New York State Working Families Tax Credit

UNH supports the creation of a "Working Families Tax Credit" (WFTC), a State legislative proposal (S.277B Gounardes/A.4022B Hevesi) that would streamline and expand existing tax credits – including the Empire State Child Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, and Dependent Exemption – and provide increased cash assistance to New York's neediest families. The Working Families Tax Credit is an effective poverty-fighting tool that puts much-needed cash into the hands of New Yorkers to pay for food, rent, and other essentials. We are grateful to Council Member Aviles for advancing this resolution in support of the WFTC.

In January 2024, UNH and Educational Alliance released a report, [*Progress Lost: Hardships Persist for New York Families After the End of the Expanded Child Tax Credit*](#), which highlights the challenges facing many New York families within the settlement house network. The report is a follow-up to the [*Settlement House American Rescue Plan \(SHARP\) Impact Study*](#) released in Fall 2022. The first report surveyed more than 1,000 families within the settlement house network in New York on the impact of the expanded federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) included in the 2021

American Rescue Plan Act, which enabled qualifying families to receive a portion of the credit as advance monthly cash payments from July 2021 through December 2021. This first study found that giving cash to people in need made a difference: the funds provided immediate relief, and families spent the money on basic needs, including 60 percent who used it to pay for food, with rent, clothing, and utilities also highly used categories.

The new report highlights the ongoing economic precarity and persistent hardship facing many New York families within the settlement house network since the end of the expanded federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) in December 2021. The follow-up report is based on a second wave of surveys conducted in late 2022 (October 2022 through January 2023) after the expanded CTC expired. The new data shows that families continue to experience persistent, ongoing challenges such as food insecurity, financial precarity, debt burdens and housing instability since the expiration of the expanded federal CTC. Among the key findings are:

- Nearly 40 percent of parents surveyed said that they “always” or “often” ran out of money in the past six months
- One-third (33 percent) of surveyed parents had visited a food bank in the last seven days.
- Nearly half (48 percent) of surveyed parents said that it was hard to pay for their housing; Black and Latinx parents were more likely than other parents in the full sample to have reported experiencing housing-related hardships.
- More than one in five surveyed parents reported carrying more than \$10,000 in non-mortgage-related debt, such as credit card or student loan debt.

Census data showed an historic reduction in child poverty thanks to the temporary expansion of the federal CTC. Unfortunately, recent data released by the Census Bureau confirms the difficult reality faced by many families: child poverty more than doubled nationwide since the expiration of the CTC and child poverty rates in New York are on the rise again.

Survey participants highlighted the importance of tax credits in providing for their families, and as such, the report features the Working Families Tax Credit in its recommendations. The WFTC, which would be implemented over a five-year period, would increase the maximum credit to \$1,600 per child, indexed to inflation, with the lowest-income families receiving the largest credit. Regardless of income, the WFTC would provide a \$500 credit per child. It would be paid out quarterly, providing families with four payments per year instead of one annual lump-sum payment (this was highlighted by survey respondents as a helpful policy), and would be available to all New Yorkers regardless of citizenship status. We strongly encourage the Council to adopt this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. For questions, I can be reached at pinhargue@unhny.org.



November 19, 2024
City Council Hearing on Immigration

Testimony: Harm and Impact of 30/60-day Shelter Rules

My name is Jackeline Cruz and I am the Social Work Supervisor at UnLocal, an organization dedicated to immigration legal representation and community education. Through my work with newly arrived clients, I have witnessed the harm inflicted by the inhumane and impractical 30/60-day shelter limitations.

This past August, I worked with two recently arrived families who received pre-60-day notices, instructing them to prepare to leave their shelters despite not yet having received official eviction notices. One family, led by a single mother with three children under 13-years-old, became overwhelmed knowing that homelessness would threaten her ability to maintain employment and access mental health services. The second family, also led by a single mother supporting two sons and her sister, learned that displacement could negatively impact her son's ongoing family court proceedings related to pursuit of Special Immigrant Juvenile designation.

The pre-60-day notice contains misleading, contradictory, and fear-inducing language. It suggests prioritizing an exit plan while school is out, but was issued two weeks before school openings, leaving people with only 14 days to uproot their families, identify safe and immediate housing, and transfer children to new schools. The notice also fails to provide housing alternatives or resources and was accompanied by inadequate case management from shelter staff, requiring supplementary advocacy from an organization like ours.

Without this kind of community advocacy, displacement may become inevitable, with profound repercussions for already housing insecure populations such as those newly arrived. Frequent relocations disrupt communication with attorneys, hinder the receipt of legal mail, and sever meaningful connections to critical services and community organizations intended to stabilize, empower and transition individuals to independent living. The impact is even greater on children, who face academic disruptions and increased anxiety due to constant school transfers and residential mobility—both of which are known risk factors for the development of adjustment disorders.

New York City has long committed to welcoming and sheltering all people including immigrants, and we urge the Adams' administration to honor that commitment by addressing the housing crisis for newly arrived immigrants with humane, sustainable, and ethical solutions. If self-sufficiency is the goal guiding the 30/60-day rule, displacement and destabilization is not the answer.

Sign-on Statement

Submitted to The New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Immigration

Oversight – Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers

November 19th, 2024

Statement authored by: Undocumented Women's Fund and Movement for Rank and File Educators

If you would like to join our list of signatories, either as an individual or as an organization, please fill out [this form](#).

In January 2024, Mayor Adams' Administration implemented an egregious 60-day eviction policy to recently arrived immigrant families with children who are placed in Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs) operated by the New York City Health and Hospitals (H + H), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM), and the Department for Youth and Community Development (DYCD). By August, this policy evicted over 12,000 immigrant families with children, including over 18,000 children. At this time, despite the number of evictions, New York State officials greenlit the expansion of this policy to families with children living in NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters – opening the risk of eviction for roughly 30,000 more recently arrived parents and children. As of November 2024, the city currently houses roughly 58,000 immigrants in upwards of 150 shelters.

Ten months in, the fears of immigrant families and advocates have materialized—the policy has been proven to be cruel and disruptive for newly arrived immigrant families settling into schools and communities. Namely, the city has failed to provide adequate information upon issuing an eviction notice. This leaves families scrambling, trying to figure out how to reapply for shelter, how to relocate their personal belongings and mail, and how to keep their children enrolled in school. This purposeful chaos created by the Adams

Administration is needlessly cruel, and continuously shuffles newly arrived immigrant families around the city, disrupting access to their right to shelter and coordinated services.

Family evictions have arbitrarily relocated families to shelters far away from where they were once placed, leaving parents and children unable to build a network of care and community that would begin to create a sense of stability and normalcy in the city that is their new home. City data shows nearly 80% of evicted families who applied for re-intake did not return to the same shelter, some of whom were placed in a new neighborhood, or an entirely new borough. The decision of where the family is placed—current shelter or forcibly relocated to a new shelter—has been inconsistent at best. Further, prior to changes in state regulations, the city's 60-day policy did not have explicit rules to place families with elementary school-aged children (between kindergarten and 7th grade) in a DHS Sanctuary Site, which would have created more stability for these young children and their families.

Evicted families, educators, and on the ground organizers, have all attested this inhumane policy has led to severe consequences to recently arrived children's education, including but not limited to:

- **Displacement from current schools.** The city's Family Welcome Centers have seemingly placed students wherever there are spaces, with no regard for location. Families who are relocated to remote shelters have suffered from extended commutes and have not been offered clear guidance on how to advocate for relocation to a hotel that is closer rather than further from their child's school of origin. While some families have been able to obtain letters from their children's school requesting that they are not relocated out of the school's neighborhood, families have done so on their own volition. As a result, students are frequently shuffled between schools, and supportive, yet overburdened, NYC teachers, social workers, and staff are constantly having to adjust their classroom setup and curriculum to accommodate the students moving in and out of the classroom every 30-60 days. In addition, the constant moves significantly impact the classroom dynamic and peer-to-peer relationship building.
- **Increased absenteeism.** Many children have missed school due to evictions. Children must be present during the eviction and reapplication process which can take up to 72 hours. This has created confusion and instability in the lives of

already vulnerable children as they are restricted to waiting areas with nothing to do. For many, this means they fall even further behind in school. The impact of absences during the eviction and reapplication process on recorded attendance has not been clearly communicated to caregivers.

- **Unreliable transportation to school.** School staff have received conflicting information on how to support families who are evicted to access school buses, particularly in a context where bus routes were already collapsed. Transportation is a right of NYC Public School students, and if busing is not available, schools must provide OMNIcards for students and their caregivers. Many caregivers have also reported that their school's Students in Temporary Housing Liaison is out of OMNIcards. In some cases, elementary school students receive an OMNIcard, but their parent or guardian does not, resulting in the family being unable to access public transit and escort young children to school.
- **Detrimental impact on student learning.** While many educators have worked tirelessly to accommodate newly arrived students through efforts such as increased English Language Learners (ELL) programs, engagement with parents, and individualized assessment of their academic and social-emotional needs, shelter limitations continue to create serious disruptions in learning. Learning thrives on stability and repetition, and this policy creates a detrimental educational impact on recently arrived students. The policy, by design, interrupts children's sense of consistency, stability, and wrenches them out of their school communities, often with little notice.
- **Traumatic impact on families.** After two months in a shelter, students are just settling into a new school and building a sense of normalcy and stability with their daily routines, possibly making new friends and building relationships with their teachers. Recently arrived children, who have already faced traumatic experiences of relocation, are now routinely uprooted as they try to settle into their communities. This leads to increased stress and fatigue, which research demonstrates negatively impacts the children's academic performance and mental health.
- **Inability for families to access services and care.** Due to the lack of and/or ineffectiveness of social services provided at hotels and shelters, caregivers—who are disproportionately women—spent an inordinate number of hours traveling

between agencies and organizations trying to access life-sustaining services. Being relocated to remote settings where many of the hotels are sited, further isolates them and makes it even more difficult for them to access services, as well as any form of remunerated activity, adult education, and/or work training opportunity.

In short, this policy has resulted in devastating consequences for the educational advancement of children, as well as caregivers and schools.

It is clear that the consequences of this policy have been disastrous for newly arrived families in New York City. Despite protections for unhoused students under the McKinney-Vento Act, we are seeing this destructive family shelter eviction policy intentionally create housing instability that results in children leaving their schools.

Therefore, we urge the New York City Council and the Adams Administration to consider the following actions to immediately end family shelter evictions and instead invest in a coordinated and compassionate response to support newly arrived immigrant families in NYC.

- City Council must **pass the Stop Shelter Evictions Act**, Intro. 210-2024 (Hanif), which would put an end to the City's cruel and inefficient 30- and 60-day shelter limitations. We urge all Council Members who have not yet sponsored the bill to do so, and for the Council to proceed with a vote.
- **Guarantee paths to stable, accessible, and dignified housing and protections against evictions for all, regardless of immigration status.** This includes rolling out the expansion of the CITYFHEPS program (which the Adam's Administration refuses to implement, even if it has been passed by City Council) and removing immigration status and other barriers to accessing public housing, subsidized housing, and rent relief programs.
- **Preserving and building affordable housing.** This includes funding both public housing, as well as programs to maintain rent-stabilized apartments; forcing landlords to open up the more than 80,000 rent-stabilized apartments that are currently being warehoused in NYC; passing intro 503, which calls for the conversion of commercial units to residential units; and having the City invest in the legalization, regulation and safety of converted accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

- **Put an end to the parallel shelter systems** created during recent years, increased oversight on DHS shelter contracts, and judicial action on the no-bid multi-million-dollar contracts the Adams Administration has signed with private contractors to run the parallel shelter system
- **Establish universal access to public benefits and social services**, regardless of immigration status, including social workers for recently arrived families.
- **Provide additional funding and resources to our overstretched schools** so that educators can serve the children who are already in their schools. The DOE must open up budget lines to fund schools according to their per pupil ratios post-October 31st. With accurate per pupil funding, schools would be able to hire more ENL trained staff, more social workers, and curriculum materials specific to the needs of SLIFE (students with limited or interrupted formal education) students. Recently arrived students may have endured traumatic experiences on their journeys north and must be supported emotionally with trained social workers and counselors in order to be able to learn and grow as creative thinkers in their content classes.
- The DOE must provide **consistent transportation to and from school for students** who have been relocated as long as they are no more than 50 miles away from their school.
- The DOE must **provide OMNIcons to parents and guardians of elementary school children**, and not just to the children themselves.
- The DOE must **make meaningful efforts to recruit, train and hire more bilingual and ENL educators**. The Bilingual school model must be expanded in all boroughs as families have reported less accounts of bullying in these environments. Schools with ENL programs must return to providing stand alone English Language classes so that students have the opportunity to develop language skills independently from an additional course subject cognitive burden.
- **Elementary school students should be placed in the schools closest to their residence.**

Now is the time for the city to take swift and immediate action to welcome its newest New Yorkers, which begins with providing safe and stable housing.

Signed,

If you would like to join our list of signatories, either as an individual or as an organization, please fill out [this form](#).

ORGANIZATIONS:

Undocumented Women's Fund

Movement for Rank and File Educators

Jews For Racial & Economic Justice

NYC DSA

Parents for Responsive Equitable Safe Schools (PRESSNYC)

East Village Neighbors who Care

North Star Fund

Bula Arts & Culture

PS 124 PTA

PS 958 Parent's Association

PS 139 for Palestine

Parent Association of PS139 Alexine A. Fenty

District 15 Parents for Middle School Equity

D28 Action for Equity

DC37 Local 375

Brooklyn High School of the Arts Parent Association

New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE)



La Iglesia del Pueblo

EV Loves NYC

DGSC Student Parents Organization (CUNY Graduate Center)

Alliance for Quality Education

D15 Coalition for Equitable Schools

Project Hajra

Comrades with Kids

Floyd Bennet Field Neighbors Mutual Aid

Black Lives Matter at NYC Schools

Crown Heights Tenant Union

Bushwick Ayuda Mutua

Mil Mundos en Común

Collective Kind

National Women's Liberation

New York State Youth Leadership Council

NYC Opt Out

Queers' Gambit

Independent Working Class Organizing- Tenant Base Building (IWCO), NYC-DSA

Refugee Congress

Mi Casa No Es Su Casa (Mi Casa Resiste)

Economic Empowerment Program, Sanctuary for Families

El Puente



INDIVIDUALS:

Paulette Healy, *Parents for Responsive Equitable Safe Schools (PRESSNYC)*

Naomi Harper, *ENL Teacher*

Naomi Sharlin, *Teacher*

Mike Shaffer, *Teacher, UFT*

Sara Edwards, *Teacher, UFT*

Martina Meijer, *Teacher, MORE-UFT*

John Mermelstein, *Teacher, MORE-UFT*

Lois Harr, *Volunteer with Immigrants*

Stephen Baumgarten, *Teacher, MORE-UFT*

Allison Demas, *Teacher*

Jessica Beck, *East Village Neighbors who Care*

Shelby Shoup, *Teacher, MORE-UFT*

Stephanie Gaitan, *Parent*

Gabriel Fontes, *Teacher*

Jennifer Ching, *North Star Fund*

Melissa Escano, *School Social Worker*

Jay Grinberg-Ayala, *Teacher*

Tzami Rios, *Community Member*

Iker Suarez, *CUNY Graduate Center*

Rachel Weaber, *Parent*

Cara Zwerling, *Parent*

Stephen Gurney, *Parent, BED Tenant Union*



Molly Crabapple

Katina Rogers, *Parent and District 15 CEC Member*

Gabriela Alvarez Castaneda, *Teaching Artist, Bula Arts & Culture*

Nora Almeida, *CUNY Professor*

Jordan Feigenbaum, *Parent and CEC13 Member*

Darrel Ganesh Sukhdeo, *Volunteer, Caribbean Equality Project*

Courtland Buchanan, *PhD Student*

Anna Patil, *Parent, Secretary of PA 124 PTA*

Elyssa Garcia, *Teacher*

Arelis Figueroa, *Parent, La Iglesia del Pueblo*

Catherine Mackenzie, *PS 124 Brooklyn PTA Treasurer*

Haley Hoffman, *Co-Presidents of PS 958 Parent's Association*

Yadira Hadlett, *Co-Presidents of PS 958 Parent's Association*

Kate McCreary, *Teacher, MORE-UFT*

Ana Fabrega

María Pérez

Devyn Reidy, *Vocational/Employment Specialist in supportive housing in the South Bronx*

Elizabeth Cohan, *Parent, SLT Representative*

Arianna Friedman

Jacinda Tran, *Former Shelter Operational Lead*

Catherine Shenoy, *Social Worker*

Anna Bernstein, *Social Worker*

Carly Zurcher, *Teacher*



Elodie St. Fleur, *Social Worker, Mckinney Vento Liaison at Williamsburg Charter High School*

Dayna Hamann, *Parent, School SW, SLT member*

Humeyra Celik, *Student*

Stephanie Kadison, *Teacher*

Romina Burger, *Social Worker*

Melissa Flower Gladney, *PhD Student at CUNY Graduate Center*

Katharina Kempf, *Teacher*

Liza Bloom, *Social Worker*

Shannon Cullen, *Social Worker*

Marti Michael, *Volunteer*

Lauren McGuinness, *School Counselor*

Frederica Lewis, *Teacher*

Kasi Whitaker, *Teacher*

Mariel Acosta, *Mother, SLT Member, Title I PAC co-chair*

Kat James, *President of Brooklyn High School of the Arts Parent Association*

Paula McMillan-Perez, *Department of Education Service Provider*

Kristin Wunder, *PS 124 Parent & PTA Co-President*

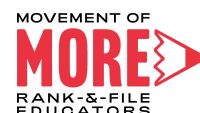
Raine Reilly, *Teacher*

Sara Finley, *School Social Worker*

Miko Brandini, *Teacher, UFT*

Megan Demarkis, *Parent & Student Advocate, Silberman School of Social Work*

Maria Marin, *PS 124 PTA Co-President*



Patricia Maher, *Citizen & Taxpayer*

Rachel Seidman, *School Social Worker*

Morella Ortiz, *Teacher*

Elizabeth McCune, *Teacher, MORE*

Graciela Barz, *Teacher*

Anna Steffens, *School Social Worker*

B Kaiser, *Advocate*

Genesis Ledesma, *NYPL Adult Literacy Center*

Ana Jimenez-Bautista

Damaris Rostran, *Mesa de trabajo NY/NJ- Diaspora Nicaragua*

Kate Tellers, *Parent*

Rachel Libon, *Parent*

Katie Hoy, *School Social Worker*

Sebastian Baez, *Astoria Tenant Union and NYC DSA*

Destry Sibley, *Parent, Graduate Student Parents Organization, CUNY*

Rebecca Sander, *Retired CUNY Professor; Active Bronx Resident*

Kathy Blaise, *Midwifery Student*

Liza Trinkle, *Teacher and Parent, MORE*

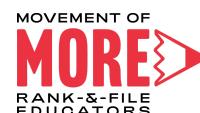
Hannah Conti, *Parent*

Marlaina Riegelsberger, *PS 40 Assistant Teacher*

Laura Wieschaus, *School Counselor*

Ilona Nanay, *Teacher, MORE-UFT*

Melissa Rock



Jennifer Gold

Jessica Klynsmá, *Parent*

Jennifer Roesch, *Teacher*

María del Rocio Méndez Ocampo, *Académica*

Maureen Flaherty, *Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors Mutual Aid & Parent Association Member*

Saki Sato, *Volunteer*

Lexi Quintero, *Connected to the Shelter System via IMT (Intensive Mobile Treatment)*

Alexandra Dobin, *Community Member*

Maria Nava Palma, *Paralegal at NYC Nonprofit for Legal Services*

Charlie Monlouis Anderle,

Holly Spiegel, *Parent*

Aldo Crossa, *Parent*

Carly Edelman, *Teacher*

Megan Greco, *Parent & Teacher, MORE*

Janvi Pamnani

Jules Hollander, *Teacher*

Sarah Clore, *Social Worker*

Maried Rivera Nieves, *Bilingual Generation (company serving multilingual families)*

Lydia Muhrer

Maya Vesneske, *Former Teacher, Current Housing Advocate*

Jenny Navasky, *Social Worker*



Eric Ost, *Parent Association Member*

Dorian Karchmar, *Parent*

Laura Jordan, *Parent*

Miriam Nunberg, *Community Advocate, District 15 Parents for Middle School Equity*

Tazin Azad, *PS217 SLT Parent Member*

Heather Suarez

Nicole Valentin, *Counselor*

Most Akhtar, *Parent*

Catherine Wiley

Annie Tummino, *Librarian*

Jody Perlberger, *Parent*

Cat Gómez, *Federal Service*

Anny Chen, *Bushwick Ayuda Mutua, Mil Mundos en Común, Teacher*

Anne Detjen, *Parent*

Camila Sanguinetti, *Mil Mundos, Educator*

Nydia Davila, *Parent*

James Antonaglia, *Teacher*

Alyssa Vine, *Parent*

Clareese Saunders, *High School Social Worker*

Kady Safar, *Teacher*

Brooke Parker, *Parent Advocate living near the Clinton Hill Shelter*

Katherine Cunningham, *Parent Association Member, Compass Charter School/Clinton Hill Mutual Aide*



Emily Padilla-Chicas

Michaela White

Amalia Uribe, *Student*

Shobana Ram, *Physician*

Adam Blazej, *Parent*

Noah Heau, *Independent Working Class Organizing - Tenant Base Building*

Taylor Ray

William Hunnicutt

Cindy Gorn, *Parent/SLT Member, PS 139 for Palestine*

Anna Ellis Nesser, *School Administrator*

Alicia Gerstein, *After School Teacher and Teaching Artist*

Nancy Cruz, *Parent Leader*

Reilly Butler

Marybeth Tamborra, *Teacher, Parent to DOE Student, CUNY - Graduate Center*

Jacqueline Martin, *Parent*

Jill Humphrey, *Public Health Nurse*

Alexis Diaz, *Social Worker (formerly in schools), CUNY Professor*

Lee Sessions, *Parent*

Debra Kaufman, *Teacher*

Paul Duke

Virginia Marshall, *Teacher at CUNY*

Sarah Vandervennet

Stacy Parker Le Melle, *Parent*



Sarah Madigan, *Community Member*

Kat James, *President of Brooklyn High School of the Arts Parent Association*

Amy DeFrank, *Parent / PA Officer*

Kellyn Nettles

Lisa Khandhar, *Parent Association Member*

Lisa Hsiao Chen, *Neighbor*

Leah Plasse, *School Social Worker*

Karen Swann, *Volunteer*

Lila Becker

Naomi Becker, *Community Member*

Lauren Sharpe, *Parent*

Janice Northia, *Social Worker, Manager of Community Engagement, NYC*

Ana Ramirez Rojas, *Researcher working with Head Start Centers*

Cory Choy, *Parent*

Margo Gregory, *Former Educator*

Alicia Martinson, *Teacher*

Andrew Hsiao, *Community Member*

Aamna Raza, *District 15 Parent*

Camilo Hernandez Joya, *Medical Student*

Ani Simon-Kennedy

Lesley-Ann Hix Tommey, *Assistant Minister, Plymouth Church*

Joessie Mathews

John Licht, *Teacher*



Ana Maria Ramirez, *Public Health Nurse*

Amanda Fucelli, *Parent*

Kevin Winkler, *Math Educator*

Lina Cherfas, *A Good Question*

Anna Mae Dick, *Retired from Field of Adult Education*

Aly Dahlmann, *School Social Worker*

Julie Strong, *Parent*

Kelly Williams, *Community Member*

Emilie Castillo

Brenna Rodriguez, *Bushwick Ayuda Mutua*

Zakieh Tayyebi, *Working with Impacted Families*

Mariela Meza, *Support Staff*

Jennie Spector, *LCSW, Immigration Advocate, Mutual Aid Organizer*

Maggie Golder

Tingting Wang, *Teacher*

Alexandra Lopez Reitzes, *Teacher*

Sonja Hansen, *Former Teacher*

Niki Cross, *Former Teacher, Queens' Gambit*

Alana Moskowitz

Vanessa Dos Santos

Blair Blue

Kaitlyn Brown

Jasmeen Nijjar, *Social Worker*



Shayna Warner, *Community Member*

Mitra Rastegar, *Teacher and Parent*

Daliah Barg, *Community Member*

Kerry Recht, *NYC Resident*

Lee Nonnamaker, *Teacher*

Mae Howard

Lily Fawcett, *Teacher*

Maida Galvez

Jessica Phillips, *Teacher & Parent*

Kara Murray, *Parent and PS 130 Parkside PTA Co-President*

Luda Bryzzheva, *Teacher Educator (Bilingual and Multicultural)*

Jude Brandt

Jessica Velez, *Education Professor*

Eric Nava-Perez, *Parent Association Member*

Caleb De Jong, *Teacher*

Jaz B, *Community Member*

Katie Herman, *Parent*

Martina Vargas, *Parent, Teachers Aide*

Tate Benson, *Tax Payer*

Kaliris Salas, *SLT member at two Public Schools*

Renee Greene Levitt

Carol Cho, *Parent*

Donah Sandford, *Parent*



Ximena Frankel, *Parent*

Nitika Nadgar, *ENL Teacher*

Theodore Young, *Teacher*

Tess Kim

Sara Rodas

Amanda Hambrick Ashcraft, *Consulting Minister for Justice & Organizing at Middle Church, Parent and CEC Board Member*

Bianca Bockman, *Parent*

Ayishah Irvin, *Community Education Council Member*

Adriana Brau-Diaz

Leela de Paula, *CUNY Law Student*

William Wells, *School Social Worker @ HSACS*

Ixmucane Pereira, *Chairwoman Hudson Valley Patriots For Immigration Reform*

Pati Rodriguez, *Mi Casa No Es Su Casa (Mi Casa Resiste)*

Adolfo Riffo, *Teacher*

Aly Massey, *Teacher*

Damaris Santiago, *School Social Worker*

Austin Kuras, *Teacher*

Jessie Pemberton, *Teacher*

Maribel Hernandez, *School Counselor*

Isaac Duarte

Beth Baltimore, *Immigration Lawyer for NYC Youth*

Brooke Vittor



Francely Flores, *Paraprofessional*

Rebeka Cabrera

Teresa Arieta, *Parents Organizer, El Puente*

Alex Cuff, *Teacher, UFT*

David Stess

Ronit Kory

Jon Lemay, *Community Member*

Nikhil Shimpi, *PTA Member*

Jack Lundquist

Brittney Moseley, *Concerned Tax-Paying Citizen*

Danny Kaplowitz, *Academic Union Staff*

Sam Ghitelman, *Parent*

Chandler Luebbbers, *Student-Teacher*

Kara Kokinos

Jazz Hooks

Marshall Weimer, *DC37 Local 375,*

Max Helfand, *Community Member*

Olivia Gonzalez Killingsworth

Dr. Marina Weiss, *College Counseling Center Psychologist*

Terah Ehigiator

Sarah Swihart, *Community Member*

Elise Sommers, *Teacher*

Sara Zielinski, *Teacher*



In support of 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers

The 30- and 60-day rules for asylum seekers has helped New York City manage an unprecedented strain on its shelter system. These measures have begun to alleviate some of the pressure that has overwhelmed our city in recent years. I feel that the 30- and 60-day rules should stay intact.

In January 2024, 4,000 migrants were arriving every week and the city's shelter system was broken. But thanks to the 30- and 60-day rules, the situation is improving. By November 2024, the number of new arrivals dropped to 600 per week, and 1,400 people are now leaving the shelter system weekly. The number of asylum seekers in shelters dropped from about 70,000 to about 58,000. This is getting closer to what the system can successfully manage.

The problem is not the 30- and 60-day rules but the federal government's requirement that migrants be in the country for six months before receiving a work permit. Our efforts would be better spent trying to change that requirement to something much shorter. Thank you.

Adam Simon

[REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY, 11205

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The **30- and 60-day rules for asylum seekers** have proven essential in helping New York City manage the unprecedented strain on its shelter system. These measures, alongside President Biden's executive action, have begun to alleviate some of the pressure that has overwhelmed our city's resources in recent years. I strongly believe the 30- and 60-day rules must stay intact.

At the height of the migrant crisis, nearly **70,000 asylum seekers** were living in New York City shelters—**doubling the size** of the shelter system, which was already housing around **60,000 New Yorkers** experiencing homelessness. This rapid influx strained a system that was never designed to handle such a large number of people, particularly those facing the unique challenges of seeking asylum.

New York City's Right to Shelter law was enacted with the understanding that the city would provide shelter to those in need—but the law was not designed to bear the weight of an ongoing crisis of this magnitude. We have witnessed firsthand the burdens it has placed on our city's taxpayers and services.

To date, **New York City has already spent over \$5 billion** to house and support asylum seekers. This cost is unsustainable for local taxpayers, especially when **the federal government has provided limited financial assistance**. As the crisis continues, it is clear that without further support—**both in terms of funding and policy adjustments**—New York City cannot continue to shoulder this responsibility alone.

That is why I strongly support the **30- and 60-day rules** for asylum seekers. These rules are not just reasonable—they are **necessary**. They provide a structured, fair, and effective framework for managing asylum seekers while also allowing the city to continue supporting those who are already experiencing homelessness or in need of shelter.

In **January 2024, 4,000 migrants were arriving every week**. At that rate, the city's shelter system was at breaking point. But thanks to the **30- and 60-day rules**, the situation is beginning to stabilize. As **Camille Joseph Varlack**, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, recently stated, by **November 2024**, the number of new arrivals has dropped to **600 per week**, with **1,400 people leaving the shelter system** to continue their journey. While the **number of asylum seekers in shelters has decreased** from its high of 70,000 to about **58,000**, we must continue to build on this progress.

Cities like **Denver** and **Chicago**, which have also faced significant strain on their shelter systems due to the migrant influx, have had to adjust their policies and take similar steps to limit the duration of stay in emergency shelters. They know, like we do, that we simply cannot allow the shelter system to remain overwhelmed indefinitely.

We must manage the crisis in the short term and ensure that **New York City remains a place of hope and opportunity** for those who need it most. The **30- and 60-day rules** are a step in

the right direction, giving asylum seekers time to stabilize their lives while also ensuring that New Yorkers and migrants alike are treated with dignity and fairness.

Let us continue to work together to implement sustainable solutions and ensure that our city can manage its responsibilities in a way that is both compassionate and responsible.

Thank you.

Allia McKee



Brooklyn, NY 11205

Alexa Avilés, Immigration Committee Chair
Diana Ayala, General Welfare Committee Chair
New York City Council

November 20, 2024

Re: Oversight hearing on updates on the implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules for asylum seekers

Good afternoon Chairs Avilés and Ayala and Members of the Committees on Immigration and General Welfare,

My name is Bianca Bockman. I am a parent of a student in the Spanish dual-language program at PS139 in Brooklyn. Last year at around this time, myself and other parents in the same 2nd grade class learned that several children in my daughter's class were going to be evicted from their shelters due to the new 30/60 day rules. While always concerned about our country's treatment of migrants, this hit home in a deeper way - these were our neighbors and our kids' classmates and friends, it was our community. So, as we saw the city causing chaos and hardship all around us, we stepped in to help. Our help included attempts (some successful, some not) at finding them more secure housing near the school, raising money, making food for them while they were still in the shelter (as the food in the shelter was often non-existent or inedible), and more.

I am writing to testify in support of extending the limits. While what is on the table is an extension of 120 days for families, I think that extension should be to the end of the current school year, at least. Today, we still have students in our classrooms that are bouncing from shelter-to-shelter, some that are over a one-hour commute away, but they love our school and their parents are still making the commute with them to keep them here - and, we want them here. The families that are migrating in huge waves here in NYC right now are often doing so because they are escaping traumatic political and economic instability. Their routes here are often treacherous. They are coming to establish a life in a city that is both full of promise, but also where rental costs are simply out of reach and where there are many other boundaries to survival. One of those boundaries is this inhumane rule that moves families around, making it impossible to establish any sense of stability for their children, and that is costing the city so much money that could instead be spent on supporting these families to thrive here.

This is a city of immigrants and instead of making their lives so brutal in order to get them to leave, we need to instead find ways to welcome, to support, and to enable our new neighbors to build a life here.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Bianca Bockman
Parent
PS 139

Negative Impacts of Shelter Policy on Student Learning

Children within my daughters' school have been living in shelters while attending bilingual education classes with them. We have noted, through relationships with the parents and children, that the city's policy of moving the families in and out of school districts during the school year is very disastrous for the children – developmentally and academically. They are unable to attend class and do homework with normal frequency. As a group of concerned parents, we have taken it upon ourselves to help the students and families find housing and resources, but it has been an incredible strain. It feels like we are doing the job of the government. As I also happen to work in the field of English Language Learning – I am the Vice President of Outreach for NYS TESOL – I can attest that these city policies put undue strain on the teachers trying to fulfill their duties accordingly, “The McKinney-Vento Act states that children and youth who lack “a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” will be considered homeless.” Helping SIFE students – Student's with Interrupted Formal Education – is a major topic at our state conferences and events. I've yet to meet a teacher who supports the shelter policy as being beneficial to the students. I would ask that you reconsider the mayor's policy on behalf of the students and teachers who are harmed by it.

Sincerely,
Christian Perticone

Testimony to the General Welfare Committee

City Hall-NYC

November 19, 2024

Daniela, Victor, Evelin and Alejandro

Two couples traveled to New York City by foot from Venezuela. They have lived at the HERRC shelter with their four children since Summer 2023. In their country of origin they worked as chefs at tourist resorts until economic collapse and violence forced them to make the dangerous journey north with their kids. Here in New York City they started building a network of support. They started by meeting families at their elementary school in Flatbush, Brooklyn and built trust with fellow parents who were willing to lend their kitchens so that they could prepare healthy and culturally appropriate food for their families. Soon they began taking orders and sharing with fellow parents at school and with the surrounding community. At the HERRC shelter they have not had access to healthcare or adequate shelter. The bathrooms and showers are shared with hundreds of residents. The food is highly processed and has caused gastroenteritis issues with their youngest children. They travel two hours in each direction to bring their children to school as the bus system has not been reliable and they don't want them to have a disrupted education. The children are thriving at school. One of the moms is now 7 months pregnant and is expecting a child in the spring. She is terrified that the authorities will deport her for being pregnant. The families have become valuable members of their school community and have made use of every service offered. They have tried to earn enough money by selling arepas to rent a room or an apartment but have not had luck in finding a landlord. Their asylum cases are stuck in limbo. Without access to caseworkers and legal support at the HERRC shelter, they have not been able to receive reliable information about their cases or the next steps they need to take to make progress towards citizenship or asylum protections. They have been told that if they leave the HERRC system it will cause a delay in their case and could complicate their approval for asylum. Now facing their second winter on Floyd Bennett Field, they are also worried about deportation and eviction. With this testimony, we ask that the residents at the HERRC shelter receive priority case management and legal support so that they may find stable housing and medical care while their children continue to attend school and grow through the trauma they have experienced during their journey and the discrimination and uncertainty they continue to face in the HERRC system. To do this the city must END the 30-60 day rule and STOP evictions.

My name is Heidi Heilig, and I have lived in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, since 1998. I am writing today in support of stable and dignified housing for all of our neighbors, regardless of when they arrived in the city.

The Adams administration's 30/60 day shelter eviction policy is intentionally cruel and destabilizing to families and individuals seeking to build community, work, educate their children, and connect with legal supports that would enable them to integrate fully into their new lives here in New York City.

Furthermore, this policy is wasteful. According to the Independent Budget Office, the policy will cost an extra two billion dollars a year due to increased costs of healthcare for the displaced, transportation/bussing costs for students, and the economic impact of missed work authorizations.

Additionally, according to NYC Comptroller Brad Lander, this policy is “haphazardly implemented,” creating an atmosphere of uncertainty which is ripe for abuse. With no standardized procedures, people with limited legal resources and employment opportunities will be left in flux, sleeping on the streets, and unable to find their footing.

Immigration has been a vital part of our city for countless generations, bringing new ideas, new energy, new workers, and new friends to our neighborhoods and schools. Immigrants make up 43% of our work force, and contribute millions to state and local taxes. They are more likely to be employed, to create jobs by starting businesses, and to be law abiding citizens and good neighbors.

As a proud long-time resident of this great city, I request we welcome our new neighbors with respect, solidarity and community support by providing stable and dignified housing for all of our neighbors. We are all "Everyday New Yorkers."

Joint Statement from Mutual Aid Groups Against Migrant Shelter Stay Limits and Evictions

We, a coalition of mutual aid volunteers, organizers, and concerned New Yorkers, stand united against the unjust and inhumane policies targeting migrant families and individuals in our city that destabilize lives and violate basic human rights.

We collectively demand an immediate end to the Mayor Adams's cruel 30/60-day shelter eviction rule that has wreaked havoc on thousands of lives, evicting over 12,000 immigrant families—including more than 18,000 children. This heartless policy regularly shatters the lives of single men and families, disrupts education for children and youth, and endangers the well-being of pregnant women and new mothers. It was obvious from the time that this policy was initiated that its only intent was to create a deterrent for migrants to stay in New York City and to create chaos in their lives.

Families are being forced from shelter to shelter, often relocated hours away from their jobs, schools, and support networks. Children are missing school, violating the McKinney-Vento Act and denying them their right to education. The administration's deliberate chaos leaves families scrambling without adequate information, severing community bonds and amplifying isolation and despair.

As we face the threat of a second Trump presidency and a worsening climate crisis driving more people to seek refuge, New York City's identity as a sanctuary is under siege. The looming possibility of federal crackdowns at places like Floyd Bennett Field—a site that could become ground zero for mass detentions because it is on federal land—exposes the hypocrisy of our so-called sanctuary city.

Mayor Adams's policies not only betray our city's principles but also pit New Yorkers against each other with false narratives. There is **no shortage of housing**—over **90,000 rent-stabilized apartments lie empty**, alongside countless vacant NYCHA units. Yet, billions are funneled into private contracts that do little to help those in need.

The Callous 30/60-Day Shelter Rule and Its Devastating Impact

In **January 2024**, Mayor Adams's administration implemented an egregious **60-day eviction policy** for recently arrived immigrant families with children placed in Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs) operated by various city agencies, including the New York City Health and Hospitals (H+H), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM), and the Department for Youth and Community Development (DYCD).

By **August**, this policy had evicted over **12,000 immigrant families with children**, including over **18,000 children**. Despite this humanitarian crisis, New York State officials greenlit the expansion of this policy to families with children living in NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters—opening the risk of eviction for roughly **30,000 more recently arrived parents and children**. As of **November 2024**, the city currently houses roughly **58,000 immigrants** in upwards of **150 shelters**.

Ten months in, the fears of immigrant families and advocates have materialized—the policy has been proven to be cruel and disruptive for newly arrived immigrant families settling into schools and communities.

We have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of these policies:

- **Lack of Adequate Information:** The city has failed to provide adequate information upon issuing eviction notices, leaving families scrambling to understand how to reapply for shelter, relocate their personal belongings and mail, and keep their children enrolled in school.
- **Families Are Being Evicted and Shuffled Between Shelters:** Often relocated hours away from their jobs, schools, and support networks, families are forced into an endless cycle of uncertainty and instability.
- **Children Are Forced to Miss School:** This violates the **McKinney-Vento Act**, which mandates educational stability for homeless youth, and disrupts their right to education.
- **Pregnant Women and New Mothers Face Heightened Health Risks:** Stripped of crucial support systems during vulnerable times, their health and well-being are jeopardized.
- **Community Bonds Are Severed:** The continuous shuffling hinders integration and the formation of essential support networks, exacerbating feelings of isolation and despair.

This purposeful chaos created by the Adams administration is needlessly cruel and continuously disrupts access to the right to shelter and coordinated services.

A Critical Moment in History

As we approach a second Trump presidency and as more people flee the intensifying climate crisis, it is imperative to keep xenophobic policies out of New York City. The city's identity as a sanctuary is under threat, and the administration's actions contradict the very principles we claim to uphold.

Moreover, the looming threat of a federal crackdown under a new administration adds terrifying uncertainty. **Floyd Bennett Field**, sitting on federal land, could easily become ground zero for mass detentions:

1. **Federal Access:** The land's federal status makes it susceptible to raids without city intervention.
2. **Concentration of Families:** Housing over 2,000 families, it presents an easy target for mass detention.
3. **Infrastructure for Detention:** Existing facilities can be rapidly converted into detention centers.
4. **Family Detention Policies:** Plans to reinstate family detention put children's mental and physical health at grave risk.
5. **Sanctuary City Hypocrisy:** Allowing such actions betrays the very principles New York City claims to uphold.

The Right to Shelter Must Be Upheld

While **all New Yorkers have the legal Right to Shelter**, the Mayor's policies suggest that this right should not apply to new immigrants. We firmly and urgently disagree—**all families and individuals deserve stable housing**. The administration's approach pits New Yorkers against each other, falsely claiming that new immigrants are the reason our city is struggling, all while mismanaging funds and granting government contracts to his allies.

This is not just a failure of policy but a moral crisis. There is **no shortage of housing**—over **90,000 rent-stabilized apartments lie empty**, warehoused by landlords, alongside countless vacant NYCHA units. Yet, billions of taxpayer dollars are funneled into contracts for private companies running shelters that offer minimal benefits to those in need.

We support the City [Council's CityFHEPS reforms](#) that would expand eligibility and we condemn mayor Adams blocking these important changes. Programs like FHEPS, CityFHEPs and Section 8 are critical to

help low income families acquire and retain housing, particularly as [rising rents](#) are making the city unlivable for working class people. The city should invest more to fix administrative and operational issues to [help these programs function effectively](#).

We call on Mayor Adams, Molly Schaeffer, and all city officials to act with the humanity and integrity that this situation demands. Stop the endless bureaucracy, the forced relocations, and the attempts to push vulnerable people out of sight and out of mind.

Our Demands Are Clear and Non-Negotiable:

- **End All Shelter Evictions Immediately:** Cease the inhumane 30/60-day shelter limit policy that violates human rights and undermines the city's legal obligations.
- **A Stable Housing Plan Now:** Immediately establish permanent, stable housing for all migrants, prioritizing residents of Floyd Bennett Field within the next 60 days.
- **Closure of Floyd Bennett Field Facilities:** After ensuring families are safely rehoused, dismantle the infrastructure to prevent future misuse.
- **Protection Against Federal Overreach:** As a sanctuary city, NYC must actively protect our neighbors from potential federal raids and mass detentions.
- **Utilize Available Housing:** Open up vacant apartments and NYCHA units to provide real homes, not temporary shelters.
- Increase case management staffing to adequately meet the needs of migrants

Liberate these apartments. House the people. Honor the spirit of sanctuary not just in words, but in deeds.

Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors Testimony

Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors Testimony

Committee on Immigration Hearing on the 30 and 60 Day Rules for Asylum Seekers

Council Chambers, City Hall

11/19/24

Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors (FBFN) is a mutual aid volunteer collective dedicated to assisting residents of Floyd Bennett Field (FBF.) We help cover basic needs, navigate the system, improve quality of life, and provide a humanizing and welcoming experience as they go through one of the most difficult and uncertain periods of their lives. Above all, we remain in solidarity with our new neighbors.

We came into existence last December when many of us - on our commutes on the Q35 bus (the only form of public transport to the area) and in our local schools - saw recently-arrived FBF residents shivering in flip flops and tank tops, presumably the clothing they were wearing when they arrived to NY after a long bus ride from the border. We jumped into action to clothe our new neighbors. Our involvement has deepened since then.

We have continually been against the 30 and 60 day rules - we see how they have upended the lives of so many of the residents that live at FBF and caused franticness and fear. From January 9 (when the 60 day rule went into effect), through March 2024, we received frantic requests for suitcases by hundreds of FBF residents. Because of it, we organized a suitcase campaign, where we were able to provide a suitcase to every single family that requested one. Every last one of the resident families were getting ready to upend their lives once again.

While we continually have advocated against the cruel 30-60 day rule, today we are here to alert the City Council of what is possibly in store for Floyd Bennett Field residents. We have a new request for the Mayor's Office + City Council and we demand a plan.

Like many of you, we are saddened and angered by the election results of earlier this month. But we are fearful of what this means for our new neighbors at Floyd Bennett Field. The City leased land from the federal government to establish the shelter at Floyd Bennett Field. If it's not clear, THE TENTS ARE ON FEDERAL LAND.

We push City Council to establish a stable housing plan for all migrants living in NYC with priority to the residents of Floyd Bennett Field in the next 60 days. With this rapid response, we demand the closure and removal of all infrastructure from Floyd Bennett Field.

We have serious concern that FBF may get raided early on because:

- 1) FBF is federal land. The federal government has easy access;**
- 2) Because 2000 families are already there, a sweep for mass detention is a major risk and would be easy;**
- 3) The camp/tent infrastructure already exists and can be easily converted into a detention center;**
- 4) Trump has plans to restart the policy of family detention and detaining parents with their children. FBF is a HERRC for families exclusively. Children's mental health is on the line;**
- 5) NYC is a sanctuary city. The administration will be looking for press around massive sweeps in sanctuary cities.**

According to NBC news on Sunday, the incoming Trump Administration is considering locations...[for] immigrant detention centers that would hold immigrants before they are deported as part of the new administration's promised mass deportation plan. So far, people working on the plans with the Trump transition team are assessing which areas might need temporary facilities to detain migrants as part of the deportation effort. The administration might also need to reopen, expand or build new facilities in the Northeast to hold migrants arrested around New York City, the source said." Another source familiar with the plans said "so-called sanctuary policies in Democratic cities should not prevent ICE from expanding detention there." Floyd Bennett Field meets this criteria.

Similar to why we are against the 30-60 day eviction rules, we demand to learn what the City's plans are to protect people living at FBF. If that plan is for FBF to close down in advance of inauguration day, we demand that a stable housing plan is in place so that the lives of our new neighbors are not upended to the max - via detention and potential deportation and being forced back to the dangerous situations they escaped from. As a sanctuary city, NYC must stand up to the federal government and anticipate what's to come. The City must take preemptive action to protect our newest neighbors.

MARIEL ACOSTA Testimony

My name is Mariel Acosta, CUNY student, public school kids' mom and a mutual aid volunteer and organizer supporting newly arrived migrants for the last year and a half.

I'm here today to denounce and stand against the unjust and unreasonable 30/60 day shelter limit created by Molly Schaeffer (director of the Office of Asylum Seeker Operations) that began to be implemented

last summer at single adult shelters, in Jan 2024 at family shelters and that more recently has expanded to DHS run migrant family shelters. Evicting people, shifting them around after they've found some stability only so that city officials can eliminate them from the system or claim that they have "moved on" is not a laudable feat, as Schaeffer and the Mayor's Chief of Staff have touted in self-congratulatory remarks. For the last two years the Adams administrations has put forth two contradictory discourses, on the one hand the claim that NY is a sanctuary city and stands with migrants, on the other, discourses that vilify and criminalize immigrants and portray them as a financial burden that have costed taxpayers billions and who the city needs to get rid off. The latter is exactly what this shelter limit policy does as a deterrence tactic that involves extra layers of unnecessary kafkaesque bureaucracy, that aims to get rid of people through this arbitrary rule without first supporting asylum seekers' transition to stable permanent housing.

A number of families supported by our mutual aid network have been relocated to shelters in boroughs far away from jobs, schools and the communities they started forming and becoming a part of. I know families who have been transferred to shelters hours away from their kids' schools, moved back to their old shelters with the second eviction and reapplication process, then be moved away to a different borough yet again. In this sense, this unconscionable shelter limit rule represents a blatant violation of the McKinney-Vento act.

This inhumane and destabilizing policy intersects multiple human rights issues: the right to stable housing, access to education, to services, it disrupts formation of community and support networks and job stability, exacerbates reproductive rights issues in the case of pregnant and new mothers, and the list goes on.

One last thing that I want to highlight is that there is no shortage of housing for anyone (long-time and new New Yorkers) in NYC, as it was reported earlier this year, there are about 90k empty rent stabilized apartments warehoused by landlords and who knows how many thousands of empty NYCHA apartments. There are more empty apartments than there are people that need housing. Not to mention the gross mismanagement of city funds in no-bid contracts for private companies to run shelters where immigrants and asylum seekers have been the least benefited from the billions of dollars invested.

Liberate these apartments and house the people!

Statement authored by: Undocumented Women's Fund and Movement for Rank and File Educators (the MORE Caucus of UFT)

In January 2024, Mayor Adams' Administration implemented an egregious 60-day eviction policy to recently arrived immigrant families with children who are placed in Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs) operated by the New York City Health and Hospitals (H + H), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM), and the Department for Youth and Community Development (DYCD). By August, this policy evicted over 12,000 immigrant families with children, including over 18,000 children. At this time, despite the number of evictions, New York State officials greenlit the expansion of this policy to families with children living in NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters – opening the risk of eviction for roughly 30,000 more recently arrived parents and children. As of November 2024, the city currently houses roughly 58,000 immigrants in upwards of 150 shelters.

Ten months in, the fears of immigrant families and advocates have materialized—the policy has been proven to be cruel and disruptive for newly arrived immigrant families settling into schools and communities. Namely, the city has failed to provide adequate information upon issuing an eviction notice. This leaves families scrambling, trying to figure out how to reapply for shelter, how to relocate their

personal belongings and mail, and how to keep their children enrolled in school. This purposeful chaos created by the Adams Administration is needlessly cruel, and continuously shuffles newly arrived immigrant families around the city, disrupting access to their right to shelter and coordinated services. We call on Mayor Adams, Molly Schaeffer, and all city officials to act with humanity and integrity. End the endless bureaucracy, the forced relocations, the attempts to push vulnerable people out of sight and out of mind, and the real possibility of putting migrant families in harm's way.

Our Demands Are Clear and Non-Negotiable:

- **End the State of Emergency falsely implemented by the Mayor.**
- **Pass Intro 210 and End All Shelter Evictions Immediately:** Cease the inhumane 30/60-day shelter limit policy that violates human rights and undermines the city's legal obligations.
- **Create a Stable Housing Plan Now:** Immediately establish permanent, stable housing for all migrants, prioritizing residents of Floyd Bennett Field within the next 60 days.
- **Closure of Floyd Bennett Field Facilities:** After ensuring families are safely rehoused, dismantle the infrastructure to prevent future misuse.
- **Protection Against Federal Overreach:** As a sanctuary city, NYC must actively protect our neighbors from potential federal raids and mass detentions.
- **Utilize Available Housing:** Open up vacant apartments and NYCHA units to provide real homes, not temporary shelters.
- **Pass Intro 210 with a package of bills, including Intro 942,** which would create minimum standards for emergency shelter **and Intro 943,** which would require notification of the right to be placed in a DSS shelter when there are vacancies.

The eyes of the world are on New York City. Will we stand by our principles, or will we allow fear and prejudice to dictate our actions? The time to choose is now.

Immigrants Are Welcome in NYC — End Shelter Evictions!

I am writing on behalf of the residents of 10 Grand Avenue in Brooklyn, which is adjacent to two large migrant shelters—the Hall Street Complex and 29 Ryerson Street in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn.

We strongly support the 30- and 60-day rules for asylum seekers.

The significant influx of migrants has overwhelmed our neighborhood. From our windows, we can observe social groups forming on the street and the violence that frequently erupts between them. We are concerned that extended shelter stays could lead to increased conflicts among residents, potentially resulting in more criminal activity and disturbances in the community. There is substantial evidence of organized crime, and the 30- and 60-day limits help mitigate this by ensuring a flow of people through shelters, thereby weakening the ability of criminal groups to establish themselves.

New York City's Right to Shelter law was created to ensure that those in need could access shelter. However, it was not designed to manage a crisis of this magnitude. The strain it has placed on our city's taxpayers and public services is immense. The 30- and 60-day rules help alleviate this burden by easing the financial and logistical pressures on the city's already struggling services.

These rules provide asylum seekers with an opportunity to stabilize their lives while ensuring that both New Yorkers and migrants are treated with dignity and fairness. We firmly believe that the 30- and 60-day rules must remain intact.

Josephine Schiele

[REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY 11205

@hall_st_migrant_shelter (our building's Instagram site documenting life next to the shelters)

.

I am writing today in support of stable and dignified housing for all of our neighbors, regardless of when they arrived in the city.

The Adams administration's 30/60 day shelter eviction policy is intentionally cruel and destabilizing to families and individuals seeking to build community, work, educate their children, and connect with legal supports that would enable them to integrate fully into their new lives here in New York City.

Furthermore, this policy is wasteful. According to the Independent Budget Office, the policy will cost an extra two billion dollars a year due to increased costs of healthcare for the displaced, transportation/bussing costs for students, and the economic impact of missed work authorizations.

Additionally, according to NYC Comptroller Brad Lander, this policy is “haphazardly implemented,” creating an atmosphere of uncertainty which is ripe for abuse. With no standardized procedures, people with limited legal resources and employment opportunities will be left in flux, sleeping on the streets, and unable to find their footing.

Immigration has been a vital part of our city for countless generations, bringing new ideas, new energy, new workers, and new friends to our neighborhoods and schools. Immigrants make up 43% of our work force, and contribute millions to state and local taxes. They are more likely to be employed, to create jobs by starting businesses, and to be law abiding citizens and good neighbors.

As a proud resident of this great city, I request we welcome our new neighbors with respect, solidarity and community support by providing stable and dignified housing for all of our neighbors. We are all "Everyday New Yorkers."

To the New York City Council,

I am writing to express my opposition to Mayor Adams' 30/60 day shelter eviction policy. This is far too short a time to secure housing, a job, and legal counsel for someone new to this city. All of my great grandparents were immigrants. It is a grand tradition of this country, it's in our longline for God's sake, so why are we treating newcomers with such animosity? These are people, like my great grandparents, who want better lives and opportunities for themselves and their children.

Why not give these people ample time to get their footing? Not only is it destabilizing for our new neighbors to be kicked out of their shelters, it is a huge waste of taxpayers money. And it is plain stupid from an economic perspective. We don't want our money spent this way. It is for all these reasons that I beg you to overturn this policy.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Kelsey

My name is Laurel and I'm a volunteer at Bushwick City Farm, a community garden in Bed-Stuy which has become a space for mostly West and North African migrants to cook and spend time. We serve as an *actual* respite from the "respite" centers and shelters that are controlled by the city and run by contractors who clearly do not know what they're doing.

For the last year and a half, BCF's space has been in heavy daily use by asylum seekers from all over the world. Many of these new neighbors spend the night outdoors at the farm and on the streets nearby because they've been made homeless by the Mayor's office's, and Molly Schaefer's, inhumane 30 day shelter limit policy. Without enough material and language support, our current volunteers are overwhelmed and the farm has gone into serious disrepair.

Forcing people to move every 30 or 60 days is extremely destabilizing. Moving is destabilizing for any person, regardless of their situation. Moving every month or two is insane. Evicting people and forcing them to move every month or two, usually to a completely new neighborhood, far from where they were previously living, is inhumane.

Moving disrupts work, community, education, and more. For asylum seekers, it also disrupts their asylum process due to a constantly changing address. Without a stable mailing address, people can't reliably receive important documents and information about appointments. Not to mention paperwork about jobs, school, housing...

City officials like Molly Schaefer and Anne Williams-Isom claim that the 30/60 day shelter limit policy will make people get on their feet more quickly. But the reality is that the policy has the opposite effect. Uprooting someone at all, let alone uprooting them every 30 or 60 days, does not help anyone get on their feet. It causes them to have to start all over again.

At best, this policy is succeeding at "getting rid" of people by making it so difficult to build a life here that they self-deport. Offering bus and plane tickets for asylum seekers to go to other cities where they also do not have a support system from either community or government is not a solution and is not a way that a self-proclaimed sanctuary city should treat people.

Asylum seekers deserve a dignified place to live and stable housing NOW!

**Joint Oversight Hearing of the Committees on General Welfare and Immigration:
Updates on the Implementation of the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers
November 19, 2024**

Presented by Linda Tewksbury, M.D.,
New York City Pediatrician (ltewksbury16@gmail.com)

On behalf of:

Benard Dreyer M.D. Pediatrician
Arthur Fierman, M.D. Pediatrician
Allen S. Keller, M.D. Adult Primary Care
Shobana Ramasamy, M.D. Adult, Primary Care
Helen Rhim, MD Pediatrician

Thank you for the privilege of speaking at the hearing on November 19, 2024. My name is Dr. Linda Tewksbury. I am a pediatrician who has proudly cared for underserved children and families in New York City for over 30 years.

We submit this testimony to voice concerns that the 30 and 60-day rules for asylum seekers housed in New York City shelters are harmful to the health and well-being of these recently arrived immigrants.

This testimony is behalf of myself and a group of colleagues, including other pediatricians and internists, who have been meeting on a regular basis for almost 2 years to try and better understand the health concerns facing our migrant patients, and how best to address their health needs. The opinions expressed in this testimony are our own and not that of any institution or organization.

We are proud to be health professionals practicing in New York City, a city that has a long history of opening its doors to immigrants. We are grateful to our city agencies and the greater NYC community for stepping up once again in an extraordinary manner to quickly develop and implement systems for meeting the basic needs of this newest wave of immigrants, including housing and medical care. To this end we offer a special shout out of thanks to New York City Health and Hospitals and to Dr. Ted Long, who spearheads the HERRCS initiative.

In caring for recently arriving asylum seekers, we have learned of their incredible resilience as they seek to forge a better life for themselves and their children. They have endured unspeakable horrors forcing them to flee their home countries and heartbreaking trauma on their dangerous journey here, yet they persevere on. They are immensely grateful for the temporary roof over their heads, the opportunity to enroll their children in school, and ability to obtain necessary medical care. They are also highly motivated to leave the shelter system as quickly as they can and become independent, productive and contributing members of our society. However, it can take many months before they are able to get the basic resources that they need to do so.

The 30 and 60-day rules contribute little or nothing to moving these temporarily housed asylum seekers into more stable, long-term housing. To the contrary: These rules can undermine and delay long-term stabilization through disruptions in their access to critical services and exacerbations of their mental health and medical conditions.

Many of our asylum-seeking patients arrive with a myriad of complex, medical, psychological and social health concerns. Stable, albeit temporary, housing for them is not a luxury. It is a health necessity. Forcing vulnerable individuals with no alternative housing options to leave their shelters is stressful, disruptive and potentially harmful to their health. Important medical appointments are missed as the families have to instead pack up their things and move from one shelter to another. Our doctors and social workers spend countless and often fruitless hours trying to track down patients to reschedule missed appointments, follow up on abnormal labs, or ensure the proper delivery of needed medical supplies. Some of these patients bounce around to different health care facilities resulting in duplication of services. Some don't follow up at all.

One can easily imagine how having to move just as an individual or family is settling into a new living situation can take a significant toll on one's physical and mental health. It has indeed been well established in the medical literature that stress can exacerbate chronic medical conditions. One young woman suffering from a chronic illness required multiple hospitalizations and ER visits for exacerbation of her pain and trauma related symptoms. She identified her unstable housing situation to be a key contributing factor to her emotional stress and physical pain.

Just receiving a notice that a family will be forced to move out of their shelter is enough to significantly exacerbate symptoms of anxiety and PTSD. Here is another example. A woman subjected to female genital mutilation as a small child then forced out of her home under the threat of death after having a special needs daughter, fled her country with her daughter and made the treacherous journey to the United States. Since arriving in NYC, they have been staying in temporary housing and are now receiving intensive, holistic health services. The mother, whose nights were sleepless and haunted by nightmares, was finally better able to sleep. She has filed her asylum application and is eagerly awaiting work authorization. She repeatedly tells how grateful she is for all that New York City has done for her and her daughter. Recently, however, she presented for a follow up visit in tears. She held a letter that slipped under her door a week before stating she would have to leave her shelter. She told my colleague that since receiving that letter, her nightmares had returned, and she was again unable to sleep. "I have nowhere to go." In addition to a worsening of this mother's mental health, the resulting exacerbation of her symptoms may also impact her ability to care for her child.

Another woman who also suffers from severe physical and psychological consequences of her trauma recently had to vacate the hotel shelter room where she and her 3 school age children had been initially placed. They returned to the Reception Center and spent the night there before being assigned to another hotel shelter. The mother described how scared her children were by having to leave their initial hotel. Despite her attempts to calm and reassure them, her 5-year-old daughter repeatedly cried, "Please mommy, don't let them send us back to the jungle." - showing how the 60 day rule can impact the mental health of even our youngest patients.

As we hope this testimony and brief examples demonstrate, the 30- and 60- day rules for Asylum Seekers have been unnecessarily disruptive, stressful and harmful to the health and wellbeing of the recent immigrants who have been subject to them. We hope the city administration, in hearing this and other testimonies, will consider eliminating these rules and focus on other efforts to safely and humanely assist asylum seekers who have landed in New York City get on their feet and become independent, healthy and productive members of our society, which they so desperately desire.

My name is Mariel Acosta, CUNY student, public school kids' mom and a mutual aid volunteer and organizer supporting newly arrived migrants for the last year and a half.

I'm here today to denounce and stand against the unjust and unreasonable 30/60 day shelter limit created by Molly Schaeffer (director of the Office of Asylum Seeker Operations) that began to be implemented last summer at single adult shelters, in Jan 2024 at family shelters and that more recently has expanded to DHS run migrant family shelters. Evicting people, shifting them around after they've found some stability only so that city officials can eliminate them from the system or claim that they have "moved on" is not a laudable feat, as [Schaeffer](#) and the [Mayor's Chief of Staff have touted](#) in self-congratulatory remarks. For the last two years the Adams administrations has put forth two contradictory discourses, on the one hand the claim that NY is a sanctuary city and stands with migrants, on the other, discourses that vilify and criminalize immigrants and portray them as a financial burden that have costed taxpayers billions and who the city needs to get rid off. The latter is exactly what this shelter limit policy does as a deterrence tactic that involves extra layers of unnecessary kafkaesque bureaucracy, that aims to get rid of people through this arbitrary rule without first supporting asylum seekers' transition to stable permanent housing.

A number of families supported by our mutual aid network have been relocated to shelters in boroughs far away from jobs, schools and the communities they started forming and becoming a part of. I know families who have been transferred to shelters hours away from their kids' schools, moved back to their old shelters with the second eviction and reapplication process, then be moved away to a different borough yet again. In this sense, this unconscionable shelter limit rule represents a blatant violation of the [Mckinney-Vento act](#).

This inhumane and destabilizing policy intersects multiple human rights issues: the right to stable housing, access to education, to services, it disrupts formation of community and support networks and job stability, exacerbates reproductive rights issues in the case of pregnant and new mothers, and the list goes on.

One last thing that I want to highlight is that there is no shortage of housing for anyone (long-time and new New Yorkers) in NYC, as it was reported earlier this year, there are about [90k empty](#) rent stabilized apartments warehoused by landlords and who knows how many thousands of empty NYCHA apartments. There are more empty apartments than there are people that need housing. Not to mention the gross mismanagement of city funds in no-bid contracts for private companies to run shelters where immigrants and asylum seekers have been the least benefited from the billions of dollars invested.

Liberate these apartments and house the people!

Melineh Kurdian – [REDACTED] -

Written Testimony in support of Stable and Dignified housing for all of our neighbors

11/19/2024, 10am – Committee on Immigration (jointly with the Committee on General Welfare

Testimony:

I am writing today in support of stable and dignified housing for all of our neighbors, regardless of when they arrived in the city. The Adams administration's 30/60 day shelter eviction policy is not only intentionally cruel and destabilizing, but has wasted millions of taxpayer dollars by creating enormous barriers to families and individuals seeking to build community, work, educate their children, and connect with legal supports that would enable them to find stability and integrate fully into their new lives here in New York City, as has been done for countless generations.

I would like to make clear to the legislative body that I reject the narrative that newly arrived families and individuals are unworthy of respect, solidarity and community support. We are all "everyday New Yorkers."

Thanks so much for your time.

To whom it may concern,

I am a teacher at P.S. 139, and I am writing this to illustrate how the 60-day eviction rule currently in place at NYC shelters for asylum-seekers impacts these students' school experiences.

P.S. 139 is located near the Vybe Hotel, which was converted into a shelter for families with young children in 2023. Over the past year, over 25 immigrant students from this shelter have attended our school. Our school has a Spanish dual-language program, where we teach students in English and Spanish. Therefore, we welcome these students warmly, as we have the skills and resources to service their needs.

They come to our school, are placed in the bilingual class, and quickly receive academic instruction in both languages. The parents can communicate easily with the teachers, and students who speak both Spanish and English surround the students. It is safe to say that they acclimate very well.

The problem is that when the 60 days are up, the students are forced to leave the shelter and be placed elsewhere. This causes a significant disruption in their lives. Many students must leave the community created and form a new one in their new school. Many students love our school so much that they commute daily from their new shelter. These shelters are all over the city. This impacts their ability to learn significantly. Our goal as teachers is to mold these students to be the best members of society they can be, and if they are not fully present, then it makes that more complicated, leading to severe emotional issues.

This school year, we have also had transfer students from other shelters. For some of our students, this is their third or fourth school. Thus, if the city tries to create urgency in our asylum-seeking families to find jobs, it will not achieve those results. Many are simply moving from shelter to shelter. Finding work and a place of residence in this city does not happen through urgency and pressure. Instead, one needs stability. How can a family focus on finding a place to live/work if they are worried about the next 60 days? Not only does this rule hurt their lives, but also it is also ineffective in pushing these families to seek permanent housing.

Lastly, it also dramatically affects our schools. When we are constantly receiving new students in the school, it has the potential to disrupt classroom routines and procedures. We must cater to these students immediately. Teachers cannot ignore them, forcing them to restructure their classrooms and teaching methods. While we are happy to do this several times over the year, only seeing the students leave causes a significant disruption for all students.

I hope the city can find a new way to support these asylum-seeking families, and I thank you for reading this testimony.

Thank you,

Rebecca Quiñones

Dual Language Teacher and Coach at P.S. 139

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I believe the 30- and 60-day rules have been vital in helping New York City navigate an overwhelming shelter crisis. With nearly 70,000 asylum seekers at the peak of the influx—doubling the capacity of an already strained system—these rules have offered a necessary framework to stabilize both the city's resources and the lives of migrants.

Our shelter system, while rooted in compassion, was not designed for crises of this magnitude. New York City has shouldered over \$5 billion in costs, with minimal federal support. The rules have helped reduce new arrivals from 4,000 to 600 per week and allowed 1,400 people to transition out of shelters in November alone.

These policies are not only fair but essential. They balance immediate humanitarian needs with the long-term sustainability of our city, ensuring dignity and opportunity for all.

Let's continue to prioritize compassion with responsibility. Thank you.

Sasha Olney

██████████ Brooklyn, NY 11205

Hi, and thanks for giving me a chance to speak today.

New York City's Right to Shelter law was created to ensure we provide shelter to those in need. But let's be real—it wasn't designed to handle an ongoing crisis of this size. The rapid influx of asylum seekers has taken a massive toll on taxpayers and city services.

At one point during the migrant crisis, nearly 70,000 asylum seekers were living in NYC shelters, doubling a system that was already housing about 60,000 homeless New Yorkers. It was an overwhelming situation for a system never meant to handle this kind of demand, especially with the unique challenges asylum seekers face.

The numbers show how much strain this has put on the city. So far, New York City has spent over \$5 billion to house and support asylum seekers. That's a staggering amount for local taxpayers, especially considering the limited financial help we've gotten from the federal government. We can't keep this up without more support and smarter policies.

That's why the 30- and 60-day rules are so important. These rules aren't just reasonable—they're essential. They provide a fair, structured framework to help asylum seekers while making sure we can also support New Yorkers who are already in need of shelter.

We're already seeing progress thanks to these rules. Back in January 2024, the city was seeing 4,000 migrants arriving every week—pushing the shelter system to the breaking point. But by November 2024, that number dropped to 600 arrivals per week, and 1,400 people are leaving the shelter system weekly to move on with their plans. The total number of asylum seekers in shelters has dropped from a high of 70,000 to about 58,000.

Other cities like Denver and Chicago are also facing similar challenges and have had to adjust their policies. They know, like we do, that it's not sustainable to let the system stay overwhelmed.

New York City is a place of hope and opportunity, and we want to keep it that way. But we need to balance compassion with practicality. The 30- and 60-day rules help give asylum seekers a chance to stabilize their lives while ensuring fairness and dignity for everyone.

Let's keep working together on sustainable solutions to ensure our city can manage its responsibilities responsibly and compassionately.

Thanks for your time.

Tim Walker

[REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY 11205

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am writing to express my strong support for the continuation of the 30- and 60-day rules for asylum seekers in New York City, which have proven critical in managing the significant strain on the city's shelter system.

These measures, along with President Biden's executive actions, have already started to relieve some of the pressure that has long overwhelmed our city's resources. As the migrant crisis persists, I believe it is essential that we maintain these rules as part of a balanced, compassionate, and sustainable approach to addressing this ongoing challenge.

At the height of the migrant crisis, nearly 70,000 asylum seekers were living in New York City shelters—nearly double the number of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, who already numbered around 60,000. This influx placed unprecedented strain on a system that was never designed to accommodate such large numbers of vulnerable individuals, particularly those navigating the complexities of seeking asylum.

New York City's Right to Shelter law was enacted with the understanding that the city would provide shelter to those in need, but it was not meant to bear the weight of an ongoing crisis of this scale. We have seen firsthand the immense burdens this crisis has placed on the city's taxpayers, service providers, and critical infrastructure.

To date, New York City has already spent over \$5 billion to house and support asylum seekers. This cost is unsustainable for local taxpayers, especially given the limited financial support from the federal government. Without further assistance—both in terms of funding and policy adjustments—New York City will struggle to continue bearing this responsibility alone.

That is why the 30- and 60-day rules for asylum seekers are not just reasonable—they are necessary. These rules provide a fair, structured, and effective framework for managing the arrival of new asylum seekers while allowing the city to focus resources on those who are already experiencing homelessness or in urgent need of shelter.

As we saw in January 2024, the city's shelter system was at a breaking point, with 4,000 new arrivals every week. However, thanks to the implementation of the 30- and 60-day rules, the situation is beginning to stabilize. According to Camille Joseph Varlack, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, the number of new arrivals has dropped significantly to 600 per week as of November 2024. Additionally, 1,400 people have left the shelter system to continue their journey. While the total number of asylum seekers in shelters has decreased from its peak of 70,000 to approximately 58,000, we must continue to build on this progress to ensure the system remains manageable and sustainable.

Other cities, such as Denver and Chicago, which have faced similar challenges, have also adjusted their policies to limit the duration of stay in emergency shelters. These cities, like New York, understand that we cannot allow our shelter system to remain overwhelmed indefinitely. We must take the necessary steps now to prevent further strain on our resources while maintaining our commitment to those in need.

New York City has always been a place of hope and opportunity for people seeking a better life. By continuing to implement the 30- and 60-day rules, we are not only helping asylum seekers stabilize their lives but also ensuring that we can continue to provide for our residents with dignity and fairness.

I urge you to support the continuation of these essential measures. Let us work together to build sustainable solutions that uphold the values of compassion and responsibility, while also safeguarding the well-being of all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Venetia Williamson Noble

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Venetia Williamson Noble.

Brooklyn, 11205

New York

November 19th, 2024

Dear Mayor Adams and NYC Council,

My name is Virginia Marshall and I am a resident and homeowner in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. For the past two years, I have seen many new neighbors arrive at Hall Street Shelter just blocks away from my home. I have heard their stories of perseverance, fleeing untenable, dangerous, and unsustainable situations in their home countries. They have come to New York for safety and a chance to make a better life for their children, as millions of people have done for centuries. I am so proud to live in a city that has been a welcoming spot for immigrants, a place of freedom and safety for people fleeing war and persecution. Please, please keep our city a place I can be proud to call home.


The Adams administration's 30/60 day shelter eviction policy is cruel and destabilizing, forcing adults and children to lose connection to life-sustaining communities, to their schools and jobs and English classes. Moving them around the city is unjust. It has wasted millions of taxpayer dollars by creating enormous barriers to families and individuals seeking to build community, work, educate their children, and connect with legal supports that would enable them to find stability and integrate fully into their new lives here in New York City, as people have done for countless generations.

I urge you to be humane and generous. Be New Yorkers. Stand up for immigrant well-being. It makes all of us, including those who were born here—better, happier, and safer. We must not desert our neighbors now.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Virginia Marshall

, Brooklyn, NY 11205

I am writing in support of safe and dignified housing for all of our neighbors regardless of when they arrived in the city or their documentation status. The 30/60 day eviction policy is destabilizing and a poor use of funds, helping folks settle into a community, schools and work though more stable longer term housing is a more just and cost effective system to help families integrate into communities rather than remain unsettled.

I am writing in protest of Mayor Adams' 30/60 day shelter eviction policy. This is a cruel and senseless metric, but even setting aside the cruelty, it is also a massively wasteful, destructive, and, frankly, costly decision that wastes millions in potential NYC tax-paying dollars. Why waste time and resources constructing hurdles in front of newly arriving New Yorkers who might otherwise integrate into the fabric of our society and make their home in NYC, as generations of immigrants have done before now?

NYC is the home of all immigrants. We won't stand for performative cruelty enacted on newly arrived in service to some narrative that they are "taking" from us. The only person who is actively depriving New Yorkers of daily necessities and impoverishing civic life is Mayor Adams himself, whose senseless and pointless budget cuts to social services and education make every single life in NYC harder.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

11/19

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laetitia Duler

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Armando Breart

Address: [REDACTED] Hillside Ave

I represent: Myself (with Mixteca)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Teresa Clara

Address: Brooklyn

I represent: Myself (with Mixteca)

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jorge Per Reyes

Address: to

I represent: Mixteca Organization

Address: [REDACTED] 23rd St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jacob Bernier

Address: Jbernier@house.gov

I represent: Alphabet Budget Office

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Olivia Salazar - Independent Budget Office

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY, 11201

I represent: Independent Budget Office

Address: 116 Williams St

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Allen S. Keller, M.D.

Address: [REDACTED] 741, NY, NY

I represent: myself

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tonia Ponder

Address: [REDACTED] NEW YORK, NY 10036

I represent: FONDO DE MUJERES INDOCUMENTADAS

Address: [REDACTED]

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY POKRZ

Address: [REDACTED] 10012

I represent: Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Address: [REDACTED]

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11-19-94

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rocio Gonzalez Ramirez

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Fondo de mujeres indocumentadas

Address: [REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kelly Gonzalez

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: fondo de mujeres indocumentada

Address: [REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robin Altman

Address: 80 Maiden Lane, 14th floor

I represent: Catholic Charities Comm. Services

Address: 80 Maiden Lane, 14th floor

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carlos Rosales

Address: [REDACTED] Astoria NY

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children of NY

Address: 14 Wall St Suite 4E NY NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Nov 21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANGELA ELVA GONZALEZ

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: NYC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHRISTINE QUINN

Address: _____

I represent: WIN (WOMEN IN NEED)

Address: ONE STATE STREET BAZA, 10th Flr.

NY NY 10004

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jackie Cruz

Address: _____

I represent: UnLocal, Social Work Supervisor

Address: 45 W 29th St, New York, NY 10001

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Silvia Velazquez

Address: [Redacted] Ave Brooklyn NY 11217

I represent: Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Frida Alvarez

Address: [Redacted]

I represent: Fondo de Mujeres Indocumentadas

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAULA INHAREVE

Address: _____

I represent: UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSES

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Linda Tankersley, MD

Address: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] NYC, NY

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 19 Nov. 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karim Walker

Address: 40 Beeton St 9th floor

I represent: SNP

Address: 40 Beeton St 9th floor

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chandra Miranda

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn NY

I represent: Myself 11226

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19/29

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ariane Hellerman

Address: _____

I represent: Floyd Bennett Field Neighbors

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mariel Acosta

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

I have to
leave at 12:45pm

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellenor Rutkey

Address: _____

I represent: The Door's Legal Services Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathryn Kliff

Address: 40 Worth St, New York, NY

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: 40 Worth St, New York, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lamine Kante

Address: Request French Interpreter

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Airenakhue Omoragboy

Address: _____

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Minghaekhu DaGnostagboy

Address: _____

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: Requires French Interpreter

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Madatena Lutete Leticia

Address: _____

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: "French" Interpreter Needed

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Abdou Karim Dialle

Address: _____

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: Request French interpreter

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maura Heron

Address: _____

I represent: Sanctuary for Families

Address: 30 Wall St Ste A NY NY 10005

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 210 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eddie Okporo

Address: 3333 Broadway, NY, 10031

I represent: Refuge America

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rudy S. Giuliani, Executive Director

Address: _____

I represent: HRO

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Halema Wali

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Afghans For A Better Tomorrow

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lauren Migliaccio

Address: 17 Battery Place # 731 NY NY 10004

I represent: Immigrant Justice Corps

Address: 17 Battery Place # 731 NY NY 10004

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Ashton, Senior Advisor

Address: _____

I represent: NYCEM

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Ted Long, Senior VP of Ambulatory Care & Population Health

Address: _____

I represent: HFH

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Molly Schaefer, Director

Address: _____

I represent: DASO

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Iris Rodriguez, Chief of Shelter Operations

Address: _____

I represent: DHS

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆