

New York City Council

Memorandum in Support of Legislation

This memorandum is authored by the sponsor and explains the need for the legislation referenced below, in accordance with Rule 6.00(d) of the Rules of the Council.

Introduction Number:

Int. No. Int 0816-2026

Prime Sponsors:

Council Member Amanda Farías

Bill Title:

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to limiting the documentation of housing history required as part of a family's application for shelter.

Submitted by:

Council Member Amanda Farías

Justification:

When families in crisis arrive at the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) intake center in the South Bronx, they must demonstrate two years of housing history to gain approval. Families cannot always obtain this verification, as landlords or others who formerly housed them may be unwilling to confirm their housing status due to personal conflict. This is especially true for those experiencing doubled-up homelessness, which the Department of Education defines as living with others due to economic hardship, housing loss, or domestic violence. The result is a cycle of "conditional" status in which families return to PATH every ten days for months, unable to access vital city benefits like CityFHEPs and at risk of being diverted to low-quality or dangerous housing in the interim. On average, it took 41 days after a family's first entry to be found eligible for shelter, four times longer than it should. One client in FY25 waited 314 days.

This bill bars the Department of Homeless Services from requiring that families applying for shelter provide any documentation to verify their housing history other than a written attestation that the housing history they provided in their application is accurate. Replacing documentary verification with attestation ends this cycle, removes third-party verification barriers, and protects trauma survivors from having to repeatedly reconstruct their housing history. It also allows families to immediately access the benefits and services that support lasting stability. Our shelter system exists to help the most vulnerable New Yorkers get back on their feet, and this legislation ensures it does.