



**Department of
Homeless Services**

*New York City Council
General Welfare Committee
Oversight on Homelessness
December 9, 2015*

Introduction

My name is Gilbert Taylor and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the General Welfare Committee about the work of DHS.

When I started as Commissioner in January 2014 it was clear that many reforms were needed. For instance, we didn't have a comprehensive rental assistance program in place. After Advantage was cut in 2011, the City had seen a consistent increase in homelessness, without any programs in place to help families and individuals exit shelter. There were no systemic shelter repair and inspection processes in place and there were no formalized policies regarding case management in shelters.

Disinvestment in critical programs supporting the City's homeless population combined with increasing inequality -- low wages, lack of affordable housing, and the increased cost of living -- have caused so many New Yorkers to find themselves in very difficult situations that no one should have to experience. Approximately 46-percent of New Yorkers live near or at the poverty line and approximately one out of every five New Yorkers are below this line. This disheartening reality directly manifests in our shelter system, now housing approximately 58,000 individuals -- the majority of whom are families with children.

When the de Blasio administration came into office, we systematically began to create, fund, and implement new rental assistance programs. We expanded existing prevention programs and created new ones. We expanded street homeless outreach, took over the subway outreach contract, and expanded transitional housing options such as stabilization and Safe Havens beds for homeless individuals who are resistant to shelters. We created the shelter repair squad to systematically inspect and repair all of our shelters. We ramped up our supports and services for minor children, the largest and most vulnerable population in our shelter system.

I am proud to announce that through the new subsidy-based programs we created after coming into office, that 22,215 New Yorkers have exited shelter and moved into permanent housing. We've also enrolled over 104,487 New Yorkers into HomeBase, a proven homelessness prevention program, helping New Yorkers access legal services, emergency rental assistance, and other supports to ensure that they remain in the community.

Prevention Services

One of our key focus areas is preventing homelessness before it starts. Shelter must be a last resort. Homebase is nationally-recognized and proven to be 95-percent effective. Prevention programs are best for families and individuals and they come with financial savings for New York City taxpayers -- the City saved \$1.37 for every City tax levy dollar invested in

HomeBase. Homebase helps families and individuals remain in their homes and out of shelter. We know Homebase works by the many examples that come to our attention every day. Such as Kesha, a mom, raising her three children with limited resources and a pay check away from eviction. Kesha saw our Homebase subway ad and sought assistance at one of our 23 offices. A social worker immediately was able to help Kesha develop a plan, obtain a lawyer, pay down her rent arrears, and enroll in a home care attendant program. Most importantly, she and her three children were able to remain stably housed.

Since July 1, 2013, over 104,487 individuals have been served by this program. Our budgetary expansion was reflected in the number of families and individuals we served, as we nearly doubled our efforts from 34,000 individuals in FY14 to 59,000 individuals served in FY15. In FY16 to date, Homebase has already enrolled 11,487 clients. Homebase continues to support families to avoid the trauma of homelessness and ensures families stay connected with their communities.

This milestone was met through intensive outreach work. Earlier this summer DHS launched its first-ever Day of Action to spread the word about the program near selected Homebase offices in high-risk neighborhoods in each of the five boroughs. And we will continue our prevention outreach efforts year-round. Towards the end of meeting people where they are at, DHS' provider CAMBA launched a mobile Homebase effort, entitled the You Can Van.

In addition, in a joint effort to further promote homelessness prevention services to at-risk households, DHS, the Department of Education (DOE) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) put in place a Summer Strategy to proactively reach out to families who self-reported to DOE that they are living in vulnerable and unstable housing situations. To actively address this issue, the City prioritized outreach to the top 25 schools with the most children at risk and did a day of action to connect them with Homebase services followed by a telephone campaign where more than 20,000 calls were made to parents that might need assistance.

Street Outreach

In addition to preventing homelessness for families and individuals already housed, DHS is committed to serving all street homeless individuals in the city. Street homeless individuals are defined as people living without shelter either on the streets, in the NYC transit system, or other outdoor public places. We are committed to helping individuals living on our streets and subways come into shelter and get the services they need and deserve. Throughout the city, we deploy teams around the clock to engage people living on the streets and in subways to encourage them to move into transitional and permanent housing

In order to maximize our ability to help individuals transition indoors and to accept housing placement, we have considerably enhanced the services being offered and the funding committed to this population. We have made an unprecedented increase in services for street homeless individuals, including outreach, drop-in centers, and special shelter beds. The latter two are both innovative program models designed to reach people living on the streets who are reluctant to enter the City's shelter system. Specifically, drop in Centers are store front programs where clients can literally "drop in" to seek shelter, get a meal and a shower, and also connect to case

management and other social services. These programs are open on a 24/7 basis and connect to a network of churches and synagogues that run small shelters in their buildings that clients using drop in centers can access. Special shelter beds include models such as Safe Havens and Stabilization beds that were designed with input from individuals on the streets. They generally appeal to individuals who reject the mainstream shelter system because they tend to be smaller, afford more privacy and have fewer rules and more flexibility.

Since January 2014, DHS outreach teams have made 2,571 placements from our streets into shelter. Our street outreach work is especially crucial during extreme temperatures such as those we had this summer and last winter.

These enhancements are in addition to the substantial increases in funding to outreach efforts in the NYC transit system in July 2014 from \$800,000 to \$6 million. In partnership with the MTA, DHS has tripled the number of outreach workers in the subways, from roughly 20 to 60 full time staff. This investment has paid great dividends as outreach workers made over 700 placements from the subway system during the first year. We now perform outreach services in all 469 subway stations across the City. Outreach teams ensure that all subway stations and train cars are assessed for homeless activity on a routine basis. Our goal is to help transition as many people as possible off the streets and subways into homes of their own.

We are also working for the first time on a comprehensive plan to monitor and close down all encampments across the City. We define encampments as locations where at least two individuals consistently bed down and there is a structure erected – such as a tent or an established living space. We launched this effort in September when we worked in partnership with the NYPD, Department of Transportation, Sanitation, Parks and others to close 21 encampment locations. Through this effort, we were able to not only close 21 encampments but placed 55-percent of the individuals we encountered, and removed 400 tons of debris and over 2,600 syringes at these locations. In coordination with the NYPD and the Mayor's Office of Operations, we continue to visit these locations multiple times daily to monitor them for re-population and to address any issues that arise. Reports indicate the sites remain clean and no homeless individuals have repopulated the locations. Additionally, in November we have started a second initiative and have identified 25 new encampments locations and are coordinating efforts with our partners to close down these encampments to address the needs of homeless individuals at these locations.

In order to be truly successful in helping people come indoors from the cold, we need to not only build the capacity and infrastructure of our outreach teams, but we also need to continue to invest in the development of special beds for individuals who are unwilling to enter traditional shelter. To this end, DHS has added 214 Safe Haven and stabilization beds to our system since January 2014. The total Safe Haven budget for FY16 is \$24.8 million.

We are now working aggressively to develop an additional 500 beds this winter. To this end, DHS announced its "Opening Doors" Initiative in collaboration with the Mayor's Clergy Advisory Council, the Archdiocese of New York, and other houses of worship. The goal of Opening Doors is to partner with faith leaders throughout the City, to use their unoccupied space

to provide shelter and social services to the city's street homeless population. We are on target to launch the first round of the "Opening Doors" program in January 2016.

Shelter and Social Services

Providing shelter and social services for those in need continues to be DHS' core function and mandate. We provide temporary, emergency, and safe transitional housing to eligible families and all individuals in need of shelter.

As part of our operational plan, DHS is working to improve social service delivery in shelter by creating an enhanced model of practice. Using already established methods, the model is a four layered approach to providing quality services to all clients in shelter. This model of practice requires that all DHS shelter providers use the following in their work with clients.

The first layer is consistent and comprehensive documentation of case activities in CARES. CARES is an electronic case management system used by DHS and all of its providers to collect client level information about reasons for entry into shelter through to a permanent placement out of shelter. The second layer is Critical Time Intervention (CTI). CTI is an evidence-based practice model that engages a family or individual in shelter, identifying client needs to assist them through placement back into the community. The third layer consists of Rapid Rehousing (RR), which focuses on housing first, incorporating a comprehensive housing plan and search. The fourth layer is Motivational Interviewing (MI), a client engagement method that enables the client to express his/her needs to a case worker/shelter staff. The combination of all four of these elements has strengthened our work system wide and improved outcomes for our clients.

To attend to the safety and well-being of the 23,000 children within our system, DHS has expanded the scope of work in our Family Services division. In the fall of 2014, we launched the Safety First Team initiative. The Safety First Team was a group of master's level social workers charged with assessing over 1,900 families deemed to be at high risk for child neglect or abuse based on meeting three or more of the following factors: being a single parent, being a parent under 21, having more than three children, having children under the age of four, having medically fragile children, and having had prior child welfare involvement. Following this pilot initiative and lessons learned, DHS received funding to establish a Clinical Services Unit (CSU). The CSU launched in the fall of 2015, comprises one director, three supervisors and 24 master's level social workers who engage providers and our most vulnerable families to determine plans of action and services as needed, such as referrals for mental health treatment or education advocacy. The team coordinates with DHS Family Services and shelter providers through case conferencing, coaching, and interventions to support the family in keeping children safe while in shelter.

DHS is also creating Permanency Specialist Teams within the agency to work with program and shelter staff to support their efforts in helping clients exit shelter and move into permanent housing. Beginning in January 2016, these highly trained teams will be comprised of 30 multi-disciplinary staff who will review cases, offer technical assistance to providers and DHS staff, and support efforts to create Independent Living Plans (ILPs) for all clients. The Permanency

Specialist Teams will support our agency's aftercare efforts connecting clients to community-based supports and services to help them maintain housing in the community.

This spring, in order to further improve our shelter system for all residents, the administration created the Shelter Repair Squad -- bringing together for the first time five monitoring agencies (DHS, HPD, DOB, FDNY and DOHMH) to systematically inspect and repair all homeless shelters in NYC, committing \$12.5 million through FY16. There was no previously existing inspection and repair methodology for our shelter system, and the Shelter Repair Squad will now conduct biannual inspections of all NYC shelters to ensure the environment is healthy and safe for our clients and staff. Since the Shelter Repair Squad was launched over 10,000 violations have been cleared and we have started work on all long-term repairs at DHS facilities. Eighty-three-percent of violations at the inspected shelters have been closed out and action plans have been created and are being implemented to resolve all outstanding issues.

DHS is also part of "NYC Safe", an evidence-driven program to support the narrow population of New Yorkers with untreated serious mental illness who pose a concern for violent behavior. NYC Safe has changed the way in which the City intervenes to stop and respond to violence committed by mentally ill individuals, whether housed or homeless. This new initiative includes a series of interventions that together create a continuum of services to meet the specific needs of this vulnerable population, from timely intervention to treatment and follow up with a law enforcement response, when necessary.

The city has invested \$3.5 million to hire additional clinical support staff in DHS mental health shelters for single adults, including case managers, social workers and psychiatrists at 11 shelters city-wide. In addition, DHS received \$5 million to increase the number of peace officers at mental health and large shelters throughout the City.

Housing Permanency

In fall 2014, the City, working collaboratively with the state, introduced the Living in Communities rental assistance programs, also known as LINC, to move our clients out of shelter and into permanent housing. LINC is a program that targets families and individuals based on their specific needs, and unlike the Advantage Program, LINC offers aftercare to families to keep them stably housed. LINC is helping families like Cynthia's, who was living in shelter while she worked full time.

Cynthia wanted desperately to have her own apartment, but working a minimum wage job she found that she was unable to save enough money to move into a place of her own. Then Cynthia qualified for the LINC program, and was able to successfully move out of shelter with her daughter into their own apartment. These are the kind of real life stories that DHS is working to promote, and that this Administration is making happen.

These and other programs such as CityFEPS and HPD Section 8 have succeeded in exiting 22,215 clients from shelter and into permanent housing through subsidy-based programs from the beginning of FY15 to the present.

Organizational Excellence

The final goal of our operational plan is to strive towards organizational excellence in all of the work that we do, ensuring that our systems support best practices to improve outcomes for our clients.

Toward the end of achieving organizational excellence in all of our agency's work DHS has also put in place quality assurance tools to support the implementation of the model of practice described earlier. These tools include launching Home.STAT within the agency and developing a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) unit within the division of Policy & Planning.

Home.STAT is a management accountability and quality improvement tool that was created to examine DHS' practice and work in shelters. During Home.STAT, a list of action steps and recommendations are generated, and then provided to the facility and/or program under review to improve practice and housing permanency work. It is also a way to help shelter staff improve and share best practices with clients.

As a part of our Operational Goal related to Organizational Excellence, the Division of Policy and Planning created its Continuous Quality Improvement Unit (CQI) in May 2015. CQI is a method to evaluate and improve client services on an ongoing basis. This is done by performing case record reviews, site inspections, and interviews with clients and staff. CQI provides performance findings that pinpoint the service delivery areas that are working well and those that need improvement.

Conclusion

New York City has a legal mandate to offer shelter to those who seek it. However, we understand that we must balance our responsibility to provide such shelter with engaging communities and being more proactive and transparent. To that end, we have begun to work closely with the communities hosting our shelters by partnering with surrounding community organizations, and institutions of faith to ensure that all individuals in shelter have the support they need to get back on their feet.

In addition, after a new shelter is opened, DHS works with communities through the Community Advisory Board (CAB) where faith leaders, non-profit providers, local business owners, neighborhood residents and elected officials convene to ensure operations are running smoothly and to better integrate shelters into communities through the formation of partnerships. For instance, at a Queens shelter's recent CAB, it was announced that the Queens Public Library came to the location and held a "library card drive" where 18 adults and 5 children were issued library cards. And other members of the CAB are working on collecting donations for the families staying in shelter. These joint collaboration and spirit of generosity, of helping those who are in need, represents that we are truly one New York.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I now look forward to answering any questions you might have.



Testimony of Commissioner Steven Banks, New York City Human Resources Administration

Oversight Hearing Addressing the Homelessness Crisis, at the New York City Council's Committee on General Welfare – December 9, 2015

Good morning. I would like to thank Chairperson Levin and the members of the General Welfare Committee for giving us this opportunity to testify today.

My name is Steven Banks and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA).

HRA's work in prevention occurs every day in all five boroughs. We are focused on providing supports to those who are working, but whose income is not enough to support a family; providing temporary assistance and training to those seeking to find work; and providing a safety net for those who are unable to work.

As illustrated by the experiences of our clients, it is well documented and well known that the cost of living has steadily increased yet wages are stagnant. Those households that depend on the earnings of low-wage workers can quickly be derailed by unforeseen emergencies and expenses, facing eviction and homelessness as a result. This is especially so for families and individuals who depend on the income of minimum wage workers. For them, these unforeseen emergencies can mean the loss of their home and all of the associated collateral damage.

Moreover, 54 percent of renter households in New York City pay at least 30 percent of their income on housing costs and more than 33 percent of renter households spend 50 percent or more of their income on housing. According to an analysis by Comptroller Scott Stringer, from 2002 to 2012, median apartment rents in New York City rose by 75 percent, compared to 44 percent in the rest of the U.S. and by the end of that period the City had 400,000 fewer apartments renting for \$1,000 or less.

As those figures make clear, lack of affordability, housing instability and associated homelessness are serious problems that were not created overnight, and therefore are not problems that will be solved overnight. Today's housing environment is one that has been shifting for some time and to resolve this crisis will require a sustained commitment over time. This Administration is addressing this challenge head on, implementing both short- and long-term measures, including working to help more New Yorkers earn a living wage, assisting families and individuals in averting the human and social costs of homelessness and working to create and preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing.

Both the immediate and long-term responses to homelessness are critical as the Administration works to provide every New Yorkers with safe, affordable places to live and access to benefits and services that can help avert homelessness and shelter entry in the event of hard times.

HRA has always provided some homelessness prevention services. But understanding from day one that homelessness had become a more serious problem during the years before the change in Administrations, we consolidated all of the HRA homelessness prevention programs into a single unit, the Homeless Prevention Administration, and then expanded it substantially. In addition, since our first year in office, we restored and rebuilt rental assistance programs, which are essential to preventing and alleviating homelessness, and exponentially expanded anti-eviction and anti-harassment legal services, which help to both keep families and individuals in their homes and preserve affordable housing.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight three recent announcements all aimed at meeting the long-term, permanent affordable housing needs for New Yorkers.

- In October, this Administration announced an expansion to the Domestic Violence shelter system for the first time in five years in response to increasing need. We will be working with our providers to expand shelter space to accommodate a total of about 13,300 children and adults a year, nearly a 50 percent increase over the current 8,800 individuals served annually. In both emergency and transitional shelter, survivors receive support services, including counseling, preparation for permanent housing, assistance in locating adequate housing, child care services, help applying for benefits such as public assistance, and access to job readiness and placement programs. These specialized shelters provide survivors with the services that will help them safely return to the community and independence as soon as possible.
- Recognizing the proven track record of supportive housing over three decades, this Administration announced a historic expansion to create 15,000 units which combine permanent, affordable housing with supportive services, including both mental and physical healthcare access, alcohol and substance use programs, and other social services.
- And just last week, to mark World AIDS Day, we announced a \$23 million commitment by the Mayor in partnership with the City Council to prevention and treatment and a commitment to work with our state and Council partners to implement HASA for All to give HRA the resources and support it needs to extend HASA's life-saving benefits to an additional 7,300 New Yorkers with HIV, whether they are symptomatic or not.

These initiatives are clear examples of investing in successful programs that address some of the complicated circumstances driving homelessness in our city.

Results to Date

And while it is early, our programs are producing clear results.

It took a long time to reach this level of homelessness and it will take time to reduce it. But the very real successes from our investments and programs are clear. In fact, our rental assistance programs and other permanent housing efforts have moved 22,214 children and adults in 7,567 households out of shelter since they were implemented just over a year ago.

So far, during the past year, 16,745 New Yorkers have received eviction prevention and anti-harassment legal assistance – including working household heads – and, when our programs are fully in place in

FY17, this will increase to almost 33,000 households a year, including well over 113,000 people next year. To accomplish this impact for low-income families and individuals, we are increasing support for these essential legal services homelessness prevention and tenant support programs 10-fold from approximately \$6 million in FY13 to \$62 million in FY17.

We have also helped more people with emergency rent assistance, keeping thousands of New Yorkers in their homes. In FY13, HRA provided rent arrears to 42,000 households at a cost of \$124 million. In FY15, HRA provided rent arrears to nearly 53,000 households at a cost of \$180 million. The average cost per case is \$3,400, well below the cost of shelter. The increase in spending of 46 percent was due to 11,000 more households being found eligible and to rising rents. As rent levels have increased, the average emergency grant was 15% higher.

These programs are cost-effective and generate savings in averted shelter costs. In FY15, a legal services case averaged about \$2,000, compared to \$37,000 a year for shelter. Investing in legal services gives us a powerful tool to address the deep-rooted and complex challenges that low-income New Yorkers face and allows the City to advance its efforts to provide access to justice in civil legal matters.

I also want to note that clients routinely report that the prevention services are invaluable, help keep them in their homes, and help level the playing field against unscrupulous landlords. For example, the Legal Aid Society recently helped preserve the home of a senior with a disability. The tenant qualified for a Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption; however, the landlord did not account for the benefit correctly, and undercharged the tenant for over a year. When the landlord realized his mistake, he billed the tenant for over \$12,000. The tenant would eventually exhaust her savings trying to pay the rent and the unexpected \$12,000 bill. The landlord then sued her in Housing Court. The Legal Aid Society took on this case and represented the client in court. The court granted Legal Aid's motion for summary judgment and dismissed the landlord's eviction proceeding. Based on equitable considerations, the court found that the landlord should not be able to evict the tenant for claimed rent due more than four months before the case was brought. The tenant paid her rent for the four months prior to the case being initiated, and the eviction case was dismissed.

Today, we are here to discuss this Administration's efforts to prevent and alleviate homelessness and to address income inequality. I will report briefly on HRA's new homelessness prevention capability and the role HRA plays in homelessness prevention and rental assistance. I will describe our new rental assistance and anti-eviction and anti-harassment legal services programs and how we have substantially expanded the City's services in these areas and made considerable investments in preventive efforts to avert homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention Programs

The creation of HRA's **Homelessness Prevention Administration** is a significant expansion of HRA's prevention services. It includes the following units:

HRA's citywide **Homelessness Diversion Program** has specialized Homelessness Diversion Units (HDUs) located in 40 Job Centers and in the Department of Homeless Services' intake facilities in the Bronx and

Manhattan, through which families and individuals facing homelessness seek and obtain shelter. The Homelessness Diversion Units constitute an innovative, focused effort at maintaining permanent housing for families and individuals at risk of eviction, both to avoid their entry into the City's emergency shelter system and to enable them to maintain stable housing in their communities.

Under the de Blasio Administration, the **Diversion Units** at PATH and the other DHS shelter intake facilities have now begun taking public assistance applications from families and individuals referred by DHS. This process is expediting public assistance benefits for these clients and helps families and individuals avert shelter entry.

HRA's **Early Intervention Outreach Team (EIOT)** receives early warning referrals from New York City Marshals, Housing Court judges, and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) as well as HRA's Family Independence Administration (FIA) and Adult Protective Services (APS) programs. EIOT clients also include NYCHA residents with a prior shelter history who have arrears as well as Section 8 recipients and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) clients who need help with current rent payments. All EIOT clients are in arrears, facing eviction in Housing Court or both. EIOT conducts individualized assessments and makes appropriate referrals. In many cases, the referrals are to HRA Job Centers for rent arrears or other eviction prevention assistance, such as allowances to share housing and apartment search expenses. Referrals are also made to Homebase and legal services providers, as appropriate. EIOT was created in December 2014, and, to date, EIOT has reached out to 20,068 clients.

HRA's **Neighborhood Homelessness Prevention Outreach (NHPO)** is currently piloting an outreach initiative to prevent homelessness among certain eligible families receiving Cash Assistance (CA) in selected Bronx and Brooklyn zip codes from which many families apply for shelter. Clients are assessed and once their needs are determined they are directed to their local Job Center for benefits assistance. Referrals are also made to Homebase and legal services providers, as needed. Since June 30, 2015, this program has reached out to 620 "at-risk" families.

These units are critical as they all work to keep families and individuals housed and out of shelter. With these intervention and prevention approaches we are better able to identify and connect families and individuals to programs and services. This might be an application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits/food stamps or a referral to Adult Protective Services. Working closely in communities and with diversion units we are able to be proactive in our approaches.

Additionally, HRA's **Rental Assistance Unit (RAU)** resolves tens of thousands of emergency rental assistance requests every year with HRA staff located in each of the seven Housing Courts in all five boroughs. For example, a vulnerable family may have fallen behind on rent because of a medical emergency or other short-term financial problem. Because that family may be able to demonstrate the ability to pay in the future through employment, third-party assistance, a roommate or other help, rather than pay the substantial costs of emergency shelter after an eviction and potentially lose an affordable housing unit, it makes far more sense to pay the arrears in order to preserve permanent housing and avoid the trauma of homelessness.

Additionally, under the de Blasio Administration, HRA Rental Assistance staff members are now stationed at DHS Homebase offices to directly assist families and help keep them out of shelter, and at the NYCHA administrative hearing offices at 250 Broadway in Manhattan, which allows them to intervene early and help prevent evictions from NYCHA.

Landlords are essential partners in preventing homelessness. HRA's **Landlord Ombudsman Service Unit (LOSU)** addresses pressing needs and concerns of landlords and management companies that provide permanent housing for families and individuals in receipt of public assistance. Intervening in and solving these problems early and promptly can prevent eviction actions and protect the tenancies of HRA clients in affordable housing units. Additionally, the Central Rent Processing Unit centrally processes, issues and delivers Rental Assistance Unit-approved emergency rental assistance grants. This new process has resulted in overall faster and more efficient rent arrears check delivery. Often working with community advocates and other agencies, this has enhanced HRA's ability to prevent evictions and homelessness. LOSU resolved and or responded to 7,046 landlord inquiries between July 1, 2014 and December 2, 2015.

Rental Assistance Programs

Starting in early 2014, and learning from the past, the de Blasio Administration promptly acknowledged the need for rental assistance programs to prevent homelessness and began working to address the need by rebuilding a program that had been dismantled in 2011. Since then, understanding that homelessness has different causes for different families and individuals and requires particularized responses, we have implemented nine programs designed to target and meet the needs of those who are either homeless or at-risk of homelessness and have targeted eligibility as need determined.

The HRA Rental Assistance Program implements the Living in Communities (LINC), the City Family Eviction Prevention Supplement Program (CityFEPS), the Special Exit and Prevention Supplement Program (SEPS), and the HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (HOME TBRA) rental assistance initiatives. HRA operates these programs in collaboration with DHS. The Rental Assistance Program manages the leasing and ongoing payments and administration of the rental assistance programs.

The **Living in Communities (LINC) Rental Assistance Programs** help move individuals and families out of shelter into stable housing.

- **LINC I** assists families in shelter who are working full-time, but are unable to afford stable housing on their own to relocate from the City shelter system.
- **LINC II** assists families in shelter and who have had multiple stays in shelter become securely housed in the community.
- **LINC III** provides rental assistance for families recently affected by domestic violence to relocate from the both the HRA and DHS shelter systems.
- **LINC IV** provides rental assistance to single adults in shelter age 60 or older and adult families in shelter including a senior or someone with a disability who are unable to afford stable housing on their own to relocate from the City Shelter System. LINC IV is also available to single adults and families at risk of entry to shelter.

- **LINC V** assists single adults and families in shelter who are working, but are unable to afford stable housing on their own, to relocate from the City shelter system. Like LINC IV, LINC V is also available to single adults and families who are at risk of entry to shelter.
- **LINC VI** assists families with children, adult families and single adults move out of shelters and reunify with host families consisting of friends or relatives.

The **CITYFEPS Programs** provide a rent supplement to a limited number of families with children on Public Assistance who are in shelter or at risk of entry to shelter. It consists of two programs: the City Family Eviction Prevention Supplement Program for, among others, families who have left or are being required to leave housing that is or was the subject of an eviction proceeding or a City vacate order, as well as survivors of domestic violence; and the City Family Exit Plan Supplement Program for families who are in a DHS shelter that has been identified for imminent closure.

The **Special Exit and Prevention Supplement (SEPS) Program** provides rental assistance to a limited number of single adults and adult families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including: survivors of domestic violence; veterans; those who have lost or are losing housing as a result of an eviction proceeding, a foreclosure proceeding, a City agency vacate order, or for health and safety reasons; and those who have been discharged to DHS shelter from foster care, a residential substance use treatment program or a correctional institution.

The **HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (HOME TBRA) Program** is a federally funded program administered by HRA that provides rental assistance to a limited number of families in shelter, pregnant women in shelter, and chronically street homeless individuals who are in receipt of federal supplemental security income or social security benefits.

In recent months, the Administration has expanded the rental assistance programs effectuated by emergency rules to assist even more New Yorkers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. LINC VI was originally designed for families with children; it has since been expanded to include single adults and adult families. Additionally, families receiving LINC VI rental assistance may now transfer to another LINC program (or CITYFEPS or SEPS) if they would qualify but for the fact that they are no longer in shelter. The programs available to families with children are now available to families consisting solely of a pregnant woman. This reform was put in place so that pregnant woman in shelter no longer have to wait to give birth to take advantage of the rental assistance programs designed for families with children. We have received over 2,000 applications for the 1,200 HOME TBRA slots available and eligible clients will be able to begin looking for apartments this month.

Legal Services

The HRA Office of Civil Justice oversees the legal services programs from all of the various city agencies that the Mayor consolidated at HRA. In the context of preventing homelessness, the most important of these are the programs directed at protecting tenants.

Under the prior Administration, only about \$6 million was available for anti-eviction legal services, which was not nearly enough to level the playing field between landlords and tenants and thereby provide

access to justice in Housing Court. Under the de Blasio Administration, by FY17 there will be \$62 million for legal services for tenants, which is ten times the prior investment, serving almost 33,000 households comprised of more than 113,000 adults and children each year.

This effort includes two programs:

- **Anti-Eviction Legal Services** when fully implemented during FY17 with \$25.8 million in annual funding will serve 19,000 households each year. This program is aimed at communities in which the highest numbers of children and adults are losing their homes and entering shelter.
- **The Anti-Harassment Tenant Protection Program** when fully implemented in FY17 with \$36 million in annual funding will serve more than 13,700 households each year. This program is aimed at preventing tenant harassment in communities that will be designated for rezoning and was announced by the Mayor in the 2015 State of the City.

Domestic Violence Services

While DHS operates most of the City's homeless shelters, HRA operates shelters for survivors of domestic violence. The HRA Domestic Violence shelter system is the largest in the country. And as I mentioned, earlier this year this Administration announced that HRA is expanding its shelters for survivors of domestic violence. We will be working with our providers to expand shelter space to accommodate a total of about 13,300 children and adults a year, nearly a 50 percent increase over the current 8,800 individuals served annually. To accomplish that goal, HRA is adding 700 Tier II transitional family units and emergency beds, almost as many as the 746 that were added from 2002 to 2010. As we have previously testified, it has been five years since the City added any domestic violence units.

HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA)

Unfortunately, there is no cure for HIV and it remains a disease marked by poverty and continued stigma and discrimination. As such, HASA services are essential to ensuring that low-income New Yorkers with HIV obtain the benefits and services they need to remain healthy and live independent lives. Every day the comprehensive services provided by HASA are helping New Yorkers with clinically symptomatic HIV and AIDS to live a better quality of life and to live near-to-normal lifespans. Further, by working with our state and Council partners to implement HASA for All to ensure that clients are not choosing between healthcare and housing or food we are improving public health and decreasing transmission rates through continued attachment to the continuum of care.

As we testified before this Committee in October regarding Council Intro. No. 684 (also known as HASA for All), we agree with the Council that extending HASA benefits – including rental assistance and homelessness prevention efforts – to all HIV positive individuals will have a similar positive outcome and moves us one step closer to the Governor's goal of ending the epidemic by 2020 – and we appreciate the language in the bill providing for certification of available state funding.

Partnering for the future

At HRA, we know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and we are working to make sure that the tools of government that can prevent and alleviate homelessness are accessible and readily available to those who are in need.

We also know that investment in these preventative and restorative services is money well spent. As I just noted, the cost of legal services and rent arrears is much less than the cost of shelter. And that does not include the many other costs that homelessness imposes on adults and children, including the loss of jobs, the loss of social supports that makes them more vulnerable to future crises, the disruption of medical care, and the disruption of education.

In order for HRA's programs to be successful in preventing and alleviating homelessness for families and individuals, it is essential that there is a sustained investment from both the City and State for today and years to come. Moreover, additional investment is needed in supportive housing, rental assistance, an increased public assistance shelter allowance and so much more, in order to prevent homelessness and keep children and adults in stable homes and to move children and adults from shelter to permanent housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We have accomplished a great deal over the past 23 months, but we know that we have much more work to do and look forward to partnering with you during the coming year. I am happy to answer your questions.



FOR THE RECORD

Testimony of the
Supportive Housing Network of New York
for the New York City Council Hearing on
Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis in New York City
December 9, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Laura Mascuch. I am the Executive Director for the Supportive Housing Network of New York and I am here today to testify in support of a new city-state development initiative, the New York/New York 4 Supportive Housing Agreement. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and to comment on the need for and importance of this initiative.

The Supportive Housing Network of New York is a statewide member organization representing more than 200 nonprofit agencies that build, operate and provide services in housing for homeless, disabled and at-risk New Yorkers. Our members provide permanent, affordable housing with on-site services, including case management, mental health services, substance abuse counseling and employment programs to over 50,000 households statewide, 32,000 here in New York City.

Supportive housing is the most cost-effective and humane way to provide a safe, stable home for homeless individuals and families living with disabilities or other barriers to finding and maintaining housing on their own.

My testimony today is about the homelessness crisis in New York and how supportive housing has been shown to be one of the most effective and proven solutions to ending chronic homelessness. First all, the Network would like to thank Mayor de Blasio and his administration for his recent historic announcement committing the City to creating 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next 15 years. These new units will be a crucial part of the City's efforts to end homelessness. The Mayor's investment of \$2.6 billion in capital and operating funding to create and sustain supportive housing demonstrates the City's unwavering commitment to address the City's current homeless crisis and its recognition of supportive housing as one of the most effective and proven solutions to combating chronic homelessness. However, we also need the Governor and the State of New York to match and extend New York City's historic commitment of 15,000 units and to create 30,000 supportive housing units in NYC. New York continues to lead the nation in the production and innovation of supportive housing, in large part due to initiatives like the New York/New York agreements. We need another City-State partnership to maintain these efforts.

The Need for Continued Supportive Housing Development

In New York City (NYC) nearly 59,000 people, including 24,000 children, sleep in a homeless shelter each night. Thousands of others sleep on the streets or in abandoned buildings and makeshift campsites, while thousands more exit foster care, hospitals and other institutions each year without a home. While not everyone who is homeless needs supportive housing, it is the proven long-term solution for individuals who are chronically homeless living with mental illness and chronic health conditions and other vulnerable populations that need access to services in order to rebuild their lives. In order to make strides in ending homelessness, we need at least 30,000 new units in NYC to address this crisis.

Each year in NYC, 20,000 applications for supportive housing are approved, but only one-in-six applicants receive a supportive housing unit. A recent report by CSH assessed the 2013 need for supportive housing in NYC in 2013: 24,155 households. (This number excludes individuals and families escaping domestic violence and individuals

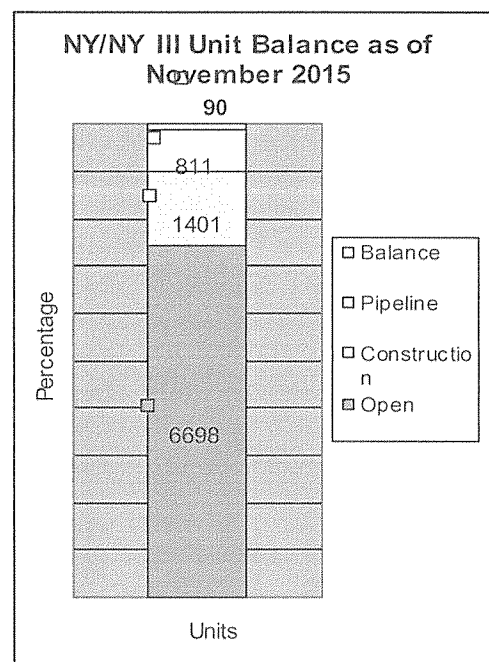
leaving jail and prison.) The people who come to live in supportive housing – chronically homeless individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS, mental illness or other disabling conditions; individuals leaving prison or other institutions; youth aging out of foster care; and now, veterans returning from combat – when left homeless, cycle in and out of expensive emergency services like shelters, hospitals, prisons and psychiatric centers. These publicly funded interventions are significantly more expensive, with hospitals and psychiatric centers costing upward of \$1,000 a day, 20 times the cost of supportive housing. Placement into supportive housing stabilizes tenants and has been proven in dozens of studies from across the country to reduce the use of these expensive services. Among the more recent studies is the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s evaluation of supportive housing, showing a net public savings of \$10,100 per person per year. This well documented cost effectiveness has made supportive housing an integral component in the State’s plan to reduce Medicaid costs.

NY/NY Agreements

Over the last twenty-five years, substantial drivers of supportive housing development have been three state-city agreements known as the New York/New York Agreements through which New York State and New York City committed to splitting the cost of creating a set number of supportive housing units over a set number of years. In all, these three pacts resulted in the creation of 14,000 units of supportive housing. Since funding for the most recent of these – NY/NY III is, for all intents and purposes, exhausted: the final 90 units will be awarded this upcoming year a robust new Agreement is required to continue to meet the overwhelming need.

Overall Impacts of the NY/NY III Agreement

Despite some of the hurdles faced during the implementation and awards process of the initiative, NY/NY III has been an enormous success. It brought together ten city and state agencies to serve nine populations of homeless people – several of whom having never been served in supportive housing – and included a rigorous cost evaluation. The long-term stability created by the Agreement, meanwhile, has brought hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment into supportive housing and has driven the production of supportive housing for the past eight years. Meanwhile, because supportive housing residences mix homeless and low-income tenants, the Agreement created thousands of units of affordable housing in addition to creating 9,000 units of supportive housing. However the NY/NY III Agreement is achieving much more than just the housing units created. In addition to reducing homelessness and saving tax-payer dollars, supportive housing:



- **Increases City & State Collaboration** The initiative set a precedent for remarkable interagency collaboration; NY/NY III has been successful in large part because of the accountability and cooperation between ten signatory City and State agencies in addition to two additional agencies providing capital financing for construction.
- **Serves diverse populations** - By the creation of NY/NY III, the initiative expanded its reach beyond single adults coping with mental illness, to include a total of nine distinct population categories, including, for the first time, families with mental health and medical needs, as well as youth aging out of foster care and young adults with mental illness.
- **Grows the stock of affordable housing in our communities** - Scores of nonprofit developers (sometimes in conjunction with private affordable housing developers) grew their capacity to develop complex affordable housing projects.

- **Creates jobs** - To date, NY/NY III has already created over 7,000 construction jobs and 850 permanent property management and social service jobs, many of which have gone to people in their communities.¹
- **Reduces chronic homelessness** - In large part because of NY/NY III, the DHS has reduced the number of chronically homeless individuals living in shelter or on the street nearly in half.
- **Increases property values** - The initiative, along with the prior two agreements, strengthened neighborhoods, revitalizing distressed streetscapes and increasing surrounding property values.²
- **Cost effective** - More than a dozen studies on the cost-effectiveness of supportive housing have confirmed that when targeted to high-cost users of publicly-funded emergency services, supportive housing can achieve significant public savings in reduced shelter, hospital and institutional costs.³
- **Leverages private investment** - With at least a dollar in private investment leveraged for every dollar of subsidy, the state and city have generated nearly \$1 Billion in private financing with their respective capital subsidies. Supportive housing has proven decade after decade to have the return on investment that investors are looking for. As a clear sign of this commitment, the Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing has been joined by almost 50 corporate partners - one quarter of all the co-signers asking for a new agreement.

Beyond the facts and numbers that demonstrate the success of the New York/New York initiatives, supportive housing providers, residents and other stakeholders have articulated the importance of the initiatives. This fall the Campaign held a community forum where hundreds of New Yorkers, elected officials, advocates and dozens of faith leaders demonstrated a groundswell of support for a new supportive housing agreement during interviews and focus groups. Those currently residing in supportive housing gave some of the most eloquent and significant anecdotal evidence on the importance of the NY/NY III agreement and the need for more supportive housing. One speaker at the forum who was struggling with mental illness for many years and recovering from substance abuse stated: *“Supportive housing helped to save my life. I was tired of doing drugs, being in trouble. Once I was in stable housing and with the help of my case manager, I did better. I have better friends now. I feel so grateful and blessed. It’s an awesome feeling.”*

Moving Forward

With the City’s homeless population at an extraordinary census of nearly 60,000 individuals and families residing in shelters or on the street, the Network asks that the City Council work closely with partners in State government to come match and extend the City’s efforts to create thousands of new units of supportive housing. The Network is grateful to the Council for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to testify on the importance of supportive housing in addressing the homelessness crisis. We are hopeful that with the support of the Council, we can encourage the Governor to extend and match the Mayor’s historic commitment and create 30,000 units of supportive housing for New York City’s most vulnerable residents. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Laura Mascuch

Executive Director

Supportive Housing Network of New York

247 West 37th Street

New York, New York 10018

lmascuch@shnny.org

646-619-9641

¹ Estimates based on calculations found in this presentation: <http://shnny.org/learn-more/what-is-supportive-housing/supportive-housing-slideshow/>

² http://shnny.org/uploads/Furman_Center_Policy_Brief.pdf

³ For more information on the cost savings research literature, go to: <http://shnny.org/research-reports/research/cost-savings/>.



TESTIMONY

New York City Council Oversight Hearing
Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
Presented by Nicole Bramstedt

December 9, 2015

Good Morning. My name is Nicole Bramstedt. I am the Director of Policy at Urban Pathways. Thank you to the New York City (City) Council Committee on General Welfare for holding this hearing on the City homelessness crisis and the opportunity to testify.

Today, Urban Pathways will testify on the City single adult homeless crisis. We will also provide recommendations for ensuring a more responsive and cost-effective single adult homelessness system, namely a re-imagined single adult homeless services system and a robust City/State supportive housing agreement with adequate contract rates, a rent escalation clause in scattered site contracts, and an adequate wage for those delivering homeless services.

About Urban Pathways

Since 1975, Urban Pathways has worked to engage the City's most vulnerable – chronically homeless individuals and those exiting state psychiatric hospitals – and provide them with “a way home”. We provide assistance to all homeless adults, especially those who have tried and failed to remain in shelter or housing. Our continuum of programs, in four of the five boroughs, include six street outreach programs, the Olivieri Drop-in Center, the Hegeman and Travelers Safe Havens, seven supportive housing residences, and nearly two hundred scattered site units. Currently, we are opening the 43-unit Boston Road Apartments permanent supportive housing residence in the Bronx for homeless and low-income veterans as well as 30 units of justice-involved scattered-site supportive housing.

Background

As of December 7th, there are at least 17,000 single homeless adults in the City. A breakdown of the population is as follows. The single adult shelter census is 12,581 - 9,025 men and 3,556 women. DHS also reports serving 465 individuals in drop-in centers, a faith bed census of 155 individuals, and 666 individuals in Safe Haven beds. The 2015 HOPE COUNT estimated 3,182 street homeless adults.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, Urban Pathways assisted 1,976 homeless individuals through consistent engagement and the utilization of a “housing first” approach. The first part of my testimony will address the issues we encounter in providing a continuum of services to homeless single adults. These include a costly, one-sized fits all single adult shelter system and a lack of quality housing exit options.

A One-Sized Fits All, Costly Shelter Response

After street outreach to bring individuals inside, drop-in centers and transitional housing in the form of shelters and Safe Havens provide a temporary respite from the harshness of the streets.¹ Currently, transitional housing, mostly in the form of shelters, constitutes the bulk of the City's adult

¹ In FY 2015, Urban Pathways served 277 homeless adults at our Olivieri Drop In Center in Manhattan and 227 homeless adults at our two Safe Havens in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

TESTIMONY
New York City Council Oversight Hearing
Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
Presented by Nicole Bramstedt

December 9, 2015

homelessness approach. And while the de Blasio Administration has diversified the approach, the system remains a one size fits all model of large shelters.

There are several problems with a shelter approach, however. First, single homeless adults often choose the streets over their right to shelter. A shelter's curfews and schedules may not be conducive for one accustomed to living on the streets. An individual may be impaired due to mental illness and/or substance abuse and unable to commit to treatment or recovery as a condition to accessing shelter. Also, homeless adults often view shelters as dangerous. Accordingly, in 2006, the City began to pilot its first Safe Haven, a temporary housing facility with single or shared rooms as well as meals and case management for chronically homeless adults who have spent at least nine of the last 24 months on the streets. Right now, per POLITICO New York, there are 250 people living on the streets, waiting to take a Safe Haven bed as soon as one opens up. While these individuals are entitled to space at a shelter, they choose to remain on the streets and wait for a Safe Haven bed.

Another problem with the City's shelter approach is that it's increasingly costly for the City. According to an October 2015 City Independent Budget Office (IBO) fiscal brief - Albany Shifts the Burden: As the Cost for Sheltering the Homeless Rises, Federal & City Funds Are Increasingly Tapped - City shelter costs for single homeless adults more than doubled (75 percent increase) from 2007 to 2014, rising from \$196 million to \$343 million.² Also, due to New York State (State) changes in funding rules, the City is increasingly paying a larger portion of this shelter cost. In 2007, the City funded 53 percent (\$104 million) of single adult shelter costs. In 2014, the City paid 73 percent (\$252 million).

A Lack of Exit Options for Homeless Single Adults

Progressing along the continuum of services model for homeless single adults is exit options or housing. Without a robust portfolio of exit options, single homeless adults will only bottleneck in drop-in centers, transitional housing and on the streets, as is currently occurring.

In FY 2015, Urban Pathways assisted 515 individuals through the operation of extended stay and permanent supportive housing. Supportive housing provides more than a way home. It imparts stability, putting residents/tenants on a path to become self sufficient members of their communities. After all, more than three quarters of those who moved into supportive housing financed by the NY/NY agreements, remained stably housed after two years.

² The financial cost of single adult homelessness is more than \$343 million. As IBO acknowledges, \$343 million is the cost to shelter those associated with DHS. There is also the cost to shelter domestic violence victims, persons with HIV/AIDS, and runaway youth through the Human Resources Administration and Department of Youth and Community Development. In addition, there is the cost of outreach programs, drop-in centers and respite beds (\$35 million in 2014) to bring homeless individuals inside. There is also the annual \$40,000 public institutional cost of street homelessness, as estimated by former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan in March 2012.

TESTIMONY
New York City Council Oversight Hearing
Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
Presented by Nicole Bramstedt

December 9, 2015

Unfortunately, the City and State have not employed this supportive housing tool as robustly as they should. For example, while homeless advocates called for at least 10,000 units for NY/NY II, the 1999 NY/NY agreement developed 1,500 units. Similarly, while advocates asked Governor Cuomo for 35,000 units for NY/NY IV, the FY 2016 State budget funded 5,000 units. This is despite the success and cost-effectiveness of supportive housing. This is also despite the need. Each year, more than 20,000 City households are found eligible for supportive housing. However, they must knock on another door since there is only one unit available for every six eligible applicants.

Developing and operating supportive housing does have challenges. Routinely, we encounter resistance when we site supportive housing. Too often, those in opposition harbor the same concerns about supportive housing as they do about a homeless shelter. However, supportive housing is *not a shelter*. Residents/tenants sign a lease or enter into an occupancy agreement with the goal to become members of the community. Supportive housing also enhances neighborhoods. A 2008 NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy study revealed a steady growth in property values for buildings neighboring supportive housing.³ As a result of this opposition, to the detriment of our mission of bringing individuals inside, we devote increasing amounts of time in response.⁴

Another consistent challenge that we face is inadequate government investment that complicates service delivery and staffing. This insufficient investment comes in the form of City contracts with supportive housing providers that are devoid of rent escalations. Particularly this presents challenges for our scattered site units, which are in market rate apartments subject to the tight housing market. Inadequate investment also exists in the form of low wages for those staffing supportive housing. Accordingly, our staff may seek the same services as their clients, and our clients may incur multiple case managers to the detriment of their path from the streets towards self-sufficiency.

Recommendations

In light of these issues, we make the following two recommendations to address the single adult homelessness crisis.

(1) Re-imagine the Single Adult Homeless Services System.

The City and State government must reassess the single adult homeless services system and re-design it. Just as LINC vouchers are tailored to specific populations, the single adult system should be tailored

³ The Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy at New York University. *The Impact of Supportive Housing on Surrounding Neighborhoods: Evidence from New York City*.

http://furmancenter.org/files/FurmanCenterPolicyBriefonSupportiveHousing_LowRes.pdf. November 2008.

⁴ See NYS Assembly Bill 02553A/Senate Bill 04542A, Requires the NYC Planning Commission to Hold a Public Community Forum prior to Approving the Location or Continued Operation of a Supportive Housing Facility or Social Services Center. See also NYC Council Intro 906, Requiring Community Notification prior to the Siting of Certain Social Services Facilities.

TESTIMONY
New York City Council Oversight Hearing
Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
Presented by Nicole Bramstedt

December 9, 2015

to its populations. For the chronically homeless that often choose the streets over shelter, the City should divert dollars from shelters to alternatives to shelters such as drop-in centers and Safe Havens. Also, for single adults at risk of homelessness, the City should divert dollars from shelter to Homebase prevention to provide housing mediation, short-term financial assistance and anti-eviction programs.

(2) The City and State Must Fund Effective Exit Options.

The IBO brief recommends that since the City largely goes it alone in funding single adult shelters, it should focus on reducing the single adult census. Paramount to reducing the census is the City and State jointly funding effective exit options. Most important is a new supportive housing agreement, NY/NY IV. *Accordingly, Urban Pathways urges the creation of a new supportive housing agreement - NY/NY IV - consisting of 35,000 units of supportive housing across the State over the next ten years.*

Adopting a NY/NY IV supportive housing agreement would constitute an instrumental step forward. Still, to truly address the crisis, we need to ensure human service nonprofits and their workforce can develop and run supportive housing residences to their fullest capabilities.

Here, the City should focus on three items. First, *educate communities on supportive housing* to diminish its association with homeless shelters, and the overall opposition to its siting. Second, *include rent escalation clauses in City contracts with nonprofits running the scattered-site supportive housing*. The clause could include a rent increase tied to an indicator such as the Consumer Price Index or the NYC Rent Guidelines Board increase. Or it could be a two or three percent increase. Third, *continue to invest in those who staff supportive housing, the human services nonprofit workforce*. We appreciate the City FY 2016 budget investment in the form of an \$11.50 wage floor, a 2.5 percent cost of living adjustment and a career ladder pilot program. However, there is more to do. *We ask the City to increase the wage floor to \$15 by FY 2018. We also ask the Council to codify this wage floor to ensure salaries do not return to amounts that do not reward work because of who occupies Gracie Mansion. In addition, we encourage the Council to lend its support to State advocacy around fifteen and funding, a campaign to ensure a government funded \$15 hourly wage for human service nonprofit workers.*

Conclusion

Urban Pathways thanks the Committee for the opportunity to testify on the City homelessness crisis and to provide recommendations for ensuring a more successful and cost-effective single adult homelessness system. We look forward to working with the City to make this happen.

Nicole Bramstedt
Director of Policy, Urban Pathways
Phone: 212-736-7385 X233
Email: nbramstedt@urbanpathways.org

Testimony of
Coalition for the Homeless
And
The Legal Aid Society

On

Oversight: Homelessness in NYC

Presented before

The New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare

Giselle Routhier
Policy Director
Coalition for the Homeless

Judith Goldiner
Attorney in Charge, Civil Law Reform
The Legal Aid Society

December 9, 2015

The Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society welcome this opportunity to testify before the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare regarding the ongoing homelessness crisis in New York City.

About the Coalition and The Legal Aid Society

Coalition for the Homeless: Coalition for the Homeless, founded in 1981, is a not-for-profit advocacy and direct services organization that assists more than 3,500 homeless New Yorkers each day. The Coalition advocates for proven, cost-effective solutions to the crisis of modern homelessness, which now continues past its third decade. The Coalition also protects the rights of homeless people through litigation around the right to emergency shelter, the right to vote, and life-saving housing and services for homeless people living with mental illness 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 solutions and include: supportive housing for families and individuals living with AIDS; job-training for homeless and formerly-homeless 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 distributes over 900 nutritious meals each night to homeless and hungry New Yorkers across the streets of Manhattan and the Bronx. Finally, our Crisis Intervention 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, assistance with public benefits as well as basic necessities such as diapers, formula, work uniforms and money for medications and groceries.

The Coalition was founded around the effort to bring the landmark litigation on behalf of homeless men and women in 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 that, "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 monitor of municipal shelters for homeless adults.

The Legal Aid Society: The Legal Aid Society, 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.

The Legal Aid Society 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 over 1,100 of the brightest legal minds. These Legal Aid Society lawyers work with some 700 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, the Society provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel.

The Society'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 the Society's Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, The Legal Aid Society 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.

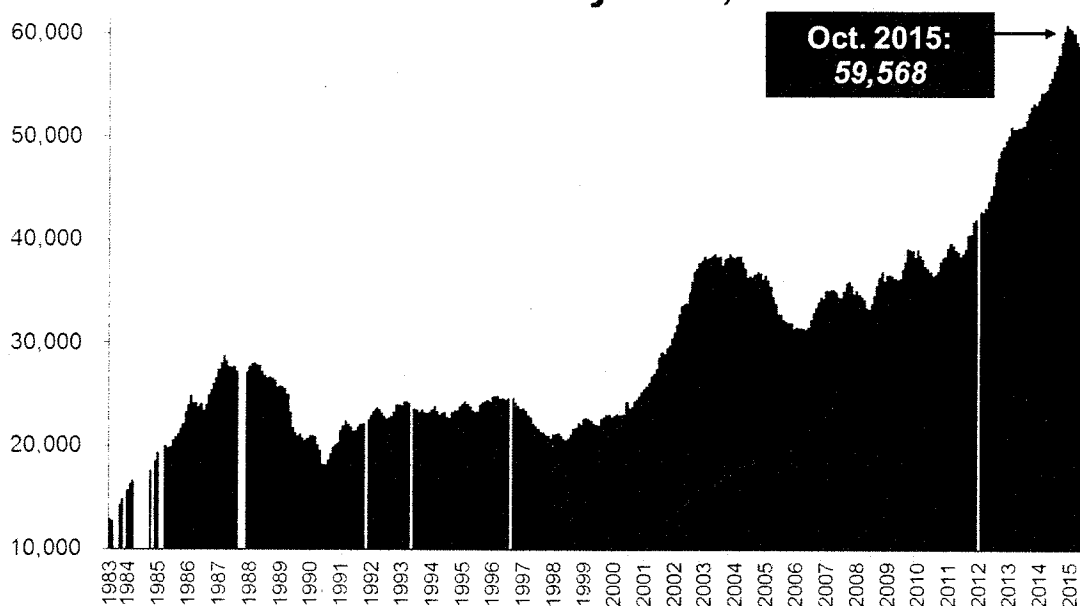
The Legal Aid Society's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of 300,000 individual cases and legal matters, the Society's law reform representation for clients benefits some two 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.

The Legal Aid Society is counsel to the Coalition for the Homeless and for homeless women and men in the Callahan and Eldredge cases. The Legal Aid Society is also counsel in the McCain/Boston litigation in which a final judgment requires the provision of lawful shelter to homeless families.

Background: New York City's Homelessness Crisis

New York City is currently facing an unprecedented homelessness crisis. There are currently over 59,000 men, women, and children sleeping each night in the City's municipal shelter system, including an all-time high of over 13,700 single adults. In addition to the number of individuals in shelter, there are countless more individuals and families sleeping rough on New York City streets.

Number of Homeless People Each Night in the NYC Shelter System, 1983-2015



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYCStat shelter census reports

There are dual forces at work contributing to record homelessness: 1) housing market and economic conditions and 2) government policies. Current economic trends, including the ever-widening gap between wages and rents, are forcing more and more households into precarious and unstable housing, and finally over the edge into homelessness. In New York City, median rents continue to increase at much greater rates than incomes. In 2014, a full 42 percent of very low-income renters were paying over 50 percent of their income on housing costs.¹ At the same time, the disastrous policies put in place under the Bloomberg administration—including the elimination of nearly all permanent housing assistance for homeless families, including priority access to federal housing resources—directly contributed to the 94 percent increase in the homeless population between December 2005 and December 2014.

In 2015, the shelter census slowly began to reverse the previous years' trends in some key ways. The number of homeless families declined for seven consecutive months in 2015, marking the first sustained decrease of this length in nearly six years. Additionally, the percentage of families entering shelter who had at least one previous shelter stay decreased in both fiscal years 2014 and 2015, for the first time since 2009.

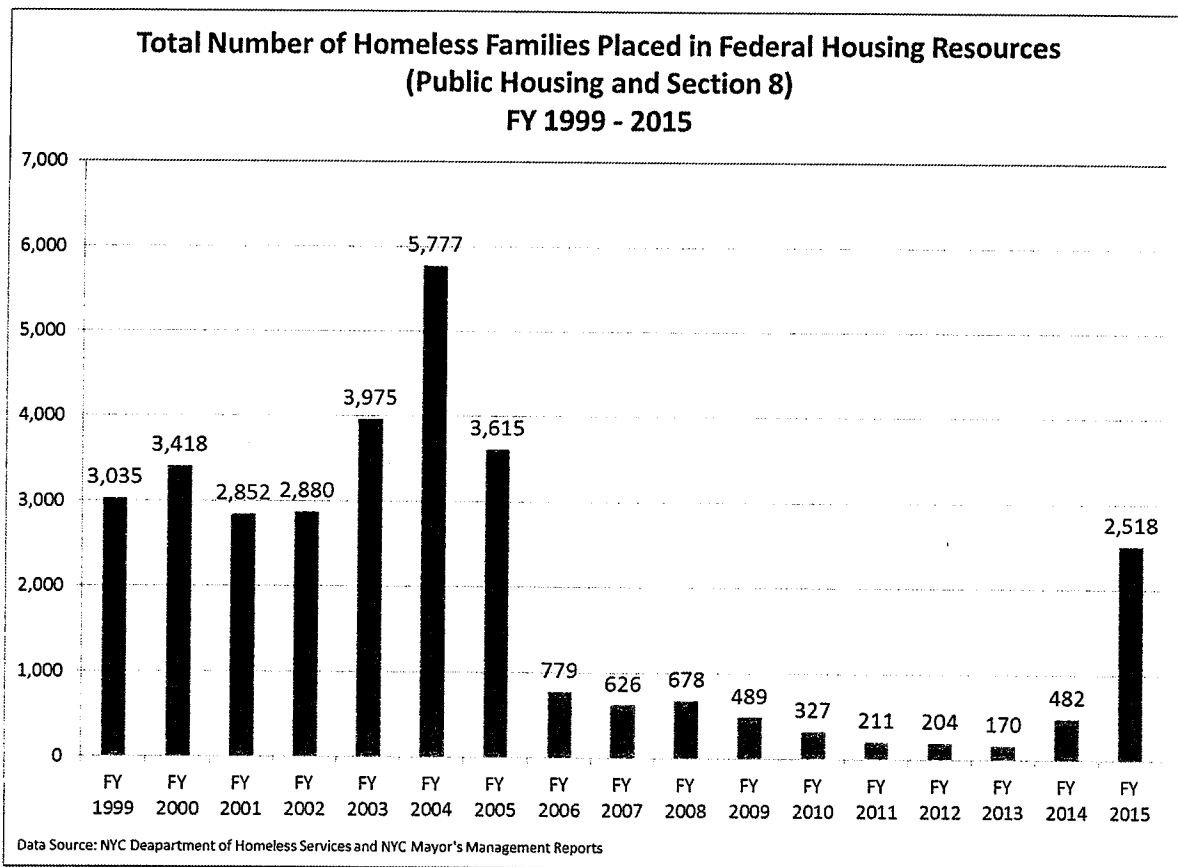
However, concurrent with this significant positive progress, the number of homeless single adults in shelter each night continues to surge – reaching an all-time record level of more than 13,700 adults as of October 2015 (the latest complete data we have). Moreover, the steady reduction in the number of

¹ NYU Furman Center. (2014). State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods. <http://furmancenter.org/research/sonychan>

homeless families in NYC has begun to be eroded, as the family shelter census has once again started to rise slightly in the past three months.

Progress Made: Critical Responses Put in Place by Current Administration

The recent halt in NYC’s unrelenting increase in homelessness followed drastic steps taken by the de Blasio administration – most significantly, key reversals of the previous administration’s most harmful policies. One of the most important policy actions taken by Mayor de Blasio was the reinstatement of priority access to federally-funded permanent housing resources for homeless families, including public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (also known as Section 8). In the past fiscal year, the administration moved over 2,500 homeless families out of costly emergency shelter and into permanent housing via these critical programs. It is hard to overstate the importance of this singular policy reversal, particularly when juxtaposed with the mere 170 such placements made by the Bloomberg administration in its final full fiscal year.



In addition to these vital placements into federally-funded permanent housing, the de Blasio administration also launched an array of locally-funded rental subsidies that improve greatly upon the previous administration’s failed, and ultimately aborted Advantage program, by providing much-needed flexibility and longer assistance times. Through these programs, including LINC I-VI and CityFEPS, the city has moved an additional 2,300 households out of shelter in fiscal year 2015.

Lastly, the mayor's recent commitment to create 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next 15 years marks an extraordinary and unprecedented investment to stem the suffering of our most vulnerable neighbors. A significant subset of men and women living in emergency shelters and sleeping rough on our streets, struggle with oppressive disabilities including mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, and physical or intellectual disabilities. For these individuals (and members of homeless families as well), permanent supportive housing is long-proven the most successful and cost-effective way to end the catastrophe of homelessness.²

However, in order to be truly effective at matching the scale of New York City's current, unprecedented need, we need Governor Cuomo to step up with the State's share of funding for an additional 15,000 units of supportive housing. The Campaign 4 NY/NY, of which the Coalition for the Homeless is a leading member, has consistently called for 30,000 units of supportive housing to be funded by the City and State, as well as an additional 5,000 units outside of New York City to match the extraordinary need.

Shelter Census and Capacity

The de Blasio administration has undoubtedly taken significant steps to begin to address NYC's current homelessness crisis. However, some problems continue to persist, particularly in relation to emergency shelter capacity and the ability of the City to adequately meet the needs of homeless New Yorkers.

With a record number of homeless single adults, shelter capacity has been heavily strained in recent months. Alongside this capacity crunch comes the risk of an exacerbation of practices that deter individuals from seeking shelter, including long wait times for beds and frequent transfers. Recently, DHS has made some progress in adding capacity to the single adult shelter system and the Coalition and The Legal Aid Society will continue to monitor this progress and urge DHS to continue to meet its legal obligations to provide shelter to homeless New Yorkers.

For homeless families, problems continue to persist for those seeking shelter at PATH. With so many families in shelter, it is very difficult for DHS to place children and their families in locations that meet their needs. DHS is scrambling on a daily basis to have enough space for all the families applying for shelter and must place people in whatever unit is vacant at the time the family applies. As a result, children are placed hours away from their schools, adults face epic commutes to work and medical appointments, and individuals with disabilities are offered placements in units that do not accommodate their needs (in some cases, the failure to accommodate makes it impossible for them to access shelter).

Another area of concern is the City's continuing reliance on "cluster" scattered-site placements. As you know, the City currently spends approximately \$3,000 per month to rent approximately 3,000 apartments in private buildings to use as shelter space for families with children. Almost all of these units are rent-regulated and could be a housing resource for families who need permanent affordable housing, although many of the units are in terrible condition and need substantial work. While we share the City's goal to return these apartments to the private market, our clients are frustrated that the City has been unwilling to

² Campaign 4 NY NY Housing. (2015). Platform found at: <http://www.nynycampaign.org/platform/>

take bolder steps to speed their conversion given the current capacity crisis. At one location, 60 Clarkson Street in Brooklyn, DHS has ceased operating shelter units and The Legal Aid Society currently represents dozens of families who seek to remain there as permanent tenants. The City should use its enforcement powers to bring more cluster site landlords to the table or force them to convert these units to decent affordable housing for homeless shelter residents.

The City must also redouble enforcement of discrimination laws that protect shelter residents seeking permanent housing. Many people awarded the City's new housing subsidies (specifically LINC and CityFEPS), are often thwarted when attempting to use them, because landlords illegally refuse to accept their vouchers, in blatant violation of the Council's Local Law 10 of 2008, which prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of the tenant's source of income. The Legal Aid Society brought the only case to date challenging such flagrant discrimination when we sued Spring Creek Towers in Brooklyn (formerly known as Starrett City), for refusing to accept applicant tenants with LINC vouchers. It is imperative that the NYC Human Rights Commission and Office of Corporation Counsel bring more of these cases, so that these commendable new housing programs are allowed to flourish. In addition, HPD must demand greater participation in these programs by the landlords and developers it works with.

Finally, Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society are concerned about rising street homelessness and the very real potential for punitive and harmful responses. Recent heated rhetoric suggesting that our neighbors living on our streets should be swept up, chased, or otherwise made to disappear during business hours are not only ineffective responses to visible homelessness, but are proven to be counterproductive to engaging homeless men and women and helping them find their way to the security and sanctity of permanent housing. Indeed, when these tactics were last unleashed in full force, the net result was that those most in need of assistance were pushed further to the margins of our city and away from outreach workers and others most able to engage and help them. Put simply, without a real, safe, and appropriate alternative to the streets, namely permanent housing, a critical mass of homeless persons will continue to live on our City's streets, suffering in silence.

Next Steps

We commend the de Blasio administration for his efforts thus far, including reinstating federal housing priority for homeless families, creating new permanent housing subsidies, and committing to the City's share of 30,000 units of supportive housing. These policies will undoubtedly make a difference in the lives of thousands of homeless New Yorkers. However, the City must continue to work diligently to make sure progress continues to be made. Specifically, permanent housing placements must continue to remain at levels that match the critical need. The City must:

1. Continue to place at least 2,500 families into NYCHA and Section 8 units;
2. Set aside at least 10 percent of the Mayor's affordable housing plan units for homeless individuals and families;
3. Step up enforcement of landlords who discriminate against voucher holders; and
4. Work diligently to return cluster site units to affordable, permanent housing.

Additionally, the City must ensure that the shelter system responds to the needs of homeless individuals and families; and that our most vulnerable fellow New Yorkers living on the streets are treated with dignity and provided with real, permanent housing options.

**Testimony by Jeff Foreman, Policy Director at Care for the Homeless
to New York City Council General Welfare Committee Oversight Hearing
“Addressing the Homelessness Crisis” in New York City
Wednesday, December 9, 2015**



Chairman Levin and Councilmembers: Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's oversight hearing on Addressing the Homelessness Crisis in New York City.

I am Jeff Foreman, Policy Director at Care for the Homeless. Care for the Homeless is New York City's oldest and largest nonprofit provider of health care services exclusively to people experiencing homelessness of all ages. We currently operate out of 29 Federally Qualified and state licensed health clinics in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens; provide on-the-street medical care in some areas; operate a Mobile Health Clinic in the Bronx and Brooklyn; and operate a 200-bed shelter for medically frail and mentally ill women in the Bronx.

We also advocate for programs and policies to prevent, fight and end homelessness.

We would be remiss if we didn't start today by thanking the City and especially this General Welfare Committee for the significant and dramatic program and policy changes that you have already brought to bear on homelessness and related issues in the past two years. In that time we have advocated for and you have adopted policies that doubled - and then significantly increased again - funding for homelessness prevention programs and eviction prevention programs without which what is truly a crisis would be far worse. You have launched a program to provide needed legal services for tenants facing eviction in housing court, increased the locations those at risk of homelessness can seek counseling and made a major effort to promote availability and access to services.

Where there was no city program to provide rental assistance to victims of homelessness, eight separate programs have been created and funded by this Council for theoretically over 8,000 vouchers this fiscal year. The city has developed a robust mental health initiative and targeted it to include those in shelter and living rough on the streets. Council's efforts in creating the NYC ID program, adopting a strong "Fair Chance Act" and leading efforts to reform the criminal justice system will yield great dividends in the fight to end homelessness.

And you have done far more. For these efforts and accomplishments we thank you and celebrate those victories with you.

Recently, the city announced a new city funded supportive housing plan to deliver 15,000 units in New York City over the next 15 years. No one thing will end homelessness in New York City, but we firmly believe we can end homelessness, and we know a robust supportive housing plan is absolutely essential to that goal.

Historically supportive housing has been a state and city partnership effort vested in the previous NY/NY I, NY/NY II and NY/NY III programs that effectively resulted in creation of 14,000 supportive housing units in New York City, representing nearly half of the supportive housing in the city. It's critically important that the City and State team up again for this proven policy program at a scale that matches our crisis – which we believe to be 30,000 supportive housing units in New York City. Additionally, if we want to effectively combat homelessness in New York City our supportive housing effort should be targeted for a period of 10 years or less, not 15 years.

Care for the Homeless and more than 130 other advocacy organizations, endorse a state and city NY/NY IV plan for 35,000 supportive housing units, including 30,000 units in the City, over not more than 10 years. Not only has this Council enthusiastically supported that NY/NY IV plan, but so have editorial boards across the state and very importantly a large majority of the State Assembly and a large plurality of the State Senate. I should add the Governor has pledged to address the homelessness crisis in his upcoming State of the State address, and as we continue our advocacy we are hopeful and even confident that he will specifically address this issue as a necessary part of any effective plan.

As we begin a real plan to dramatically decrease homelessness and start to end modern day homelessness in New York City, we must commit ourselves to all adequate and appropriate services needed to provide medical and mental health care, social services and other supports to the victims of homelessness. Even as medical care is legally more accessible, the fact is we must work harder to provide outreach and access as well as specialized care to a particularly vulnerable population that often falls through the safety net.

Finally, we must address the stigmatization and sometimes the criminalization of homelessness and poverty. Basic housing and health care should be viewed as fundamental human rights. Unfortunately, this crisis and particularly the media coverage of it has often deeply stigmatized the victims and led to unfortunate and counterproductive outcomes. "Moving victims along" or arresting them provides no solution and only makes this difficult situation worse for the victims as it costs the city substantial public resources without any progress.

The real solution that is the right thing to do, helps victims, improves our neighborhoods and over time saves valuable public resources is to provide housing and appropriate supports. At a Policy Forum on Homelessness that Care for the Homeless held earlier this year, which included participation by several City Council Members, one speaker made the point succinctly when he said, "If homelessness is the problem, housing is the solution, and the rest is commentary." Supportive housing for those who need it, availability of affordable housing with ongoing rental assistance, a greater priority for NYCHA public housing, and an effective effort to provide medical services, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, job training, and other services to those in need even as we work to address the "feeder" systems of homelessness in New York City is the most efficient and cost effective policy.

Thank you.



HOMELESS SERVICES UNITED

446 W. 39RD STREET, 6TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10001-2801
T 212-367-1562
www.HSUnited.org

**New York City Council Committee on General Welfare
Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
December 9, 2015**

My name is Christy Parque, and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United (HSU).

HSU is a coalition of over 50 non-profit agencies serving homeless and at-risk adults and families in New York City. HSU provides advocacy, information, and training to member agencies to expand their capacity to deliver high-quality services. 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.

Homeless Service United's member agencies operate hundreds of programs including shelters, drop-in centers, food pantries, HomeBase, and outreach and prevention services. Each day, HSU member programs work with thousands of homeless families and individuals, preventing shelter entry whenever possible, and working to end homelessness through counseling, social services, health care, legal services, and public benefits assistance, among many other supports.

The de Blasio administration has made notable improvements in expanding safe haven beds for street homeless individuals, expanding homelessness and eviction prevention services, creating the LINC, City FEPS, SEPS and other permanent housing subsidies, and I commend these important steps. We are grateful for the recent announcement by the Mayor regarding the City's commitment to creating 15,000 units of supportive housing and we look forward to Governor Cuomo joining in this commitment to expanding this proven and cost effective solution.

The recent negative media coverage shaming homeless New Yorkers has done nothing to solve the problem but perpetuates myths and stereotypes of who is homeless and why. We as advocates, elected officials and big-hearted New Yorkers must stand in solidarity with our most vulnerable neighbors. We must confront and correct spurious notions that the causes of homelessness are at their root "failure of character" when in reality it is an economic inequality issue.

The drivers of homelessness are poverty and lack of affordable housing options. The lack of economic opportunity for those at the bottom of the income scale, combined with out-of-control rents has resulted in dramatic increases in homelessness. As my esteemed colleagues have presented previously, the best way to address the homeless crisis across the state are to create permanent housing options and increase household incomes so that people can afford to pay for housing costs.

Everyday tens of thousands of New Yorkers struggling in poverty must make the untenable choice between paying the rent or other necessities like food or medication. We can do better as a city and state by creating real opportunities for New Yorker of all income strata to thrive in our communities.

We must create a diversity of solutions that mirror the diversity of causes that led to an individual or family's housing crisis. We must increase eviction prevention services, post-shelter solutions like expanding aftercare, supportive housing and the New York City housing subsidy program, Living in Communities (LINC), that creates a path to housing for homeless and domestic violence shelter residents. Also critical to ending the cycle of homelessness is expanding the reach of the supports and services in shelter including onsite job, GED and education opportunities to address the root cause of homeless—poverty and the inability to of low wage earners to keep up with ever housing costs.

Address Poverty and Increase Household Income and Resources

Public Assistance Sanctions Reform

Another cause of the housing instability that results in homelessness is families who are already living on a below poverty level public assistance grant losing those benefits, as well as essential housing subsidies, due to sanctions. HRA found recently during the first six months of 2013, almost 25% of children and adults applying for shelter were part of cases that had been sanctioned or closed due to noncompliance.

A bill was passed by both houses of the New York Legislature this year (A4250 Wright/S3596 Savino) that would reform sanction policies in ways that would help address the role sanctions play in New Yorkers becoming homeless. Under current law, parents have no way to get out from under a 6 month sanction before it expires. Under the legislation, those same parents would have the choice of complying with the welfare work rules even before the six months are up. Once they comply, the sanction would be lifted. We urge all Council Members and the administration to join us in urging Governor Cuomo sign this legislation which has the bipartisan support of the Legislature.

Raise the Shelter Allowance and Family Eviction Prevention Supplement (FEPS)

To truly address the affordability gap we must raise and reform the shelter allowance and homeless prevention supplements. The current levels are absurdly low and do not come close to allowing true supports for very low income and poor families struggling to pay the rent in New York City.

Additionally we support the following efforts at addressing poverty and increasing household income and stability and encourage the Council to join in the advocacy for these changes:

- **Increase the Cash allowance** -- Although the cash allowance was raised in 2009 it has not kept up with inflation, nor does it come close to keeping people out of poverty or enable them to come close to paying Fair Market Rent and covering household living expenses.
- **Raise and reforming the SSP supplement**--Raise and reforming the SSP supplement to reflect four decades of inflation, and provide for an automatic annual COLA adjustment to the SSP supplement.
- **Raise and reforming the Earned Income Disregard process**--Raise and reform the Earned Income Disregard process, to ensure that public assistance recipients have a stable path to working their way out of poverty.
- **Increase access to SNAP for immigrants with disabilities.**
- **Review the re-certification process for SCRIE and allow additional time**, particularly in cases where the spouse has died and the surviving tenant must re-certify on their own.

Support the heroic staff on the frontlines of the homeless crisis.

We are grateful for the recent 2.5% COLA in the adopted NYC FY16 year budget but this is just the beginning of addressing the needs of our staff who had not received a raise in seven years and has not yet touched the paychecks of our workers although it was adopted in July 2015. **Contracts and budgets must also account for regular staff salary increases and administrative rates that reflect the actual cost of doing the work.**

People experiencing homelessness have higher rates of life-threatening medical conditions such as tuberculosis and HIV as well as increased occurrence of debilitating mental health and substance use problems, as well as trauma. The daily experience of working with clients in desperate circumstances can be overwhelming, and our staff requires extra training and support to avoid fatigue and burnout. **We must do better by our staff who are the unsung heroes of the homelessness crisis.**

Sadly, we are losing many of our best workers to other employers, often in public jobs that have higher salaries and benefits. Many of our shelters have turnover rates of 25% or higher in entry level positions. The result is a staff that is increasingly ill-prepared to go beyond meeting more than the clients' basic needs. A better educated, motivated, and trained staff could increase move outs and reduce recidivism by addressing the complex needs of the most chronically homeless clients who account for a disproportionate share of shelter resources.

Facing soaring demand and shrinking resources, nonprofit providers have been forced to make difficult decisions, such as laying off staff, freezing or reducing salaries, reducing contributions to health insurance plans and other benefits, drawing on reserves, and forgoing much-needed investments in training and infrastructure. With low wages and diminishing benefits, frontline workers are increasingly seeking services themselves. In many instances, it has resulted in low morale and high staff turnover, further exacerbating the challenges social service providers face. For us and the communities we serve, the recession is not over. The funding environment has become untenable.

Homelessness, one of the most complex and tragic manifestations of poverty, is solvable. The solution requires facilities and programs that can provide a stabilizing environment. It also requires staff that can provide the support and caring that helps clients tap into their own unique strengths and identify a path to permanent housing. A staff that can understand and adapt to the complex and rapidly changing systems and rules involving health, housing and other public benefits is crucial to a successful program. And the solution requires an administrative infrastructure for the non-profits and their staff on the front line that provides the support that any program needs to succeed. By failing to invest or even maintain its initially low levels of support, the City and the State are working against itself in resolving the crisis of homelessness. **We must increase the investment in staff and nonprofit programs and provide annually cost of living increases to these workers.**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.



**Testimony by New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)
Before the New York City Council: Committee on General Welfare**

Oversight – Addressing the Homelessness Crisis

December 9, 2015

Chairman Levin, Council Members, and staff, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak about the homelessness crisis in New York City. My name is Kevin Kenneally and I am a Supervising Attorney at the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), a nonprofit law office dedicated to providing free legal services in civil law matters to low-income New Yorkers. NYLAG serves immigrants, seniors, veterans, the homebound, families facing foreclosure, renters facing eviction, low-income consumers, those in need of government assistance, children in need of special education, domestic violence victims, people with disabilities, patients with chronic illness or disease, low-wage workers, low-income members of the LGBTQ community, Holocaust survivors, as well as others in need of free legal services. I am joined today by Richard Jimenez from NYLAG's Housing Project. My testimony was written with Kamilla Sjödin, Associate Director, Housing Law and Julia Lake, Poverty Justice Solutions Fellow.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the City Council for examining the continuing problem of homelessness in New York City and for your ongoing work seeking solutions to ensure that all New Yorkers have safe and adequate housing. We also want to thank the City for the tremendous increase we have seen in funding for anti-eviction and anti-tenant harassment over the past several years. This funding is one critical step toward ensuring that tenants are not improperly forced out of their apartments and into shelters or onto the streets.

Preventing and eradicating homelessness is an essential step in addressing poverty and improving the lives of New Yorkers. In addition to being a humanitarian crisis, homelessness is a drain on City and State resources, from shelter costs to increased healthcare costs to the trauma inflicted on families to the destruction of communities. Finding solutions to provide affordable housing and keep individuals and families housed benefits society and all New Yorkers.

NYLAG represents tenants in Housing Court and before various agencies throughout the five boroughs, where we see firsthand the threats to safe and affordable housing faced by our clients. We also see what our work preventing evictions means to low-income individuals whose already destitute situations would have been made far worse without our intervention. Many of our clients live in the quickly-diminishing stock of rent-regulated apartments in the City, and our goal is both to prevent these individuals and families from losing their homes and to ensure that rent-regulated apartments stay under regulation as required.

Unfortunately, NYLAG also sees many cases where non rent-regulated tenants are repeatedly forced to move from one apartment to another, often annually, leaving neighborhoods, friends, family, support services, and medical providers, and forcing children to change schools frequently. Many of these families are unable to find alternate housing once their leases expire and are taken to Housing Court by their landlords. Where possible, we obtain more time for these families before they have to leave the apartments, but even with additional time, they are often unable to find alternate housing and end up entering the shelter system.

As the City has recognized, one of the most effective ways to address homelessness is to provide access to legal services for vulnerable communities. It is easier and more cost-effective to preserve housing so that an individual or family does not become homeless than it is to house

an individual or family that has become homeless. Attorneys are able to protect tenants' rights, keep tenants in stabilized apartments, assist tenants with obtaining appropriate subsidies, preserve subsidies, ensure housing is safe and habitable, and arm tenants with knowledge regarding their rights. When a tenant has an attorney, a landlord is much less likely to pursue a frivolous claim or try to initiate an unfair buy-out of a stabilized unit. Individuals facing the threat of homelessness with access to an attorney are less likely to become homeless than those who do not have access to one.

For example, a colleague recently assisted Tanya, a woman who lives with her husband and two disabled children in Queens, and was recent brought to Housing Court by her landlord. Through a thorough investigation of the case, NYLAG learned that the landlord was receiving a 421-a tax abatement, and that the apartment was rent-stabilized, meaning that the family was entitled to a renewal lease. After NYLAG helped Tanya amend her answer and assert her defense and counterclaims, the case settled. Under the settlement, the landlord acknowledged Tanya's status as a rent-stabilized tenant, discontinued the case, waived arrears that Tanya owed, and completed repairs that were needed in the apartment. Without NYLAG's intervention, Tanya and her family would have been evicted and likely would have become homeless. NYLAG and other legal services providers in the city handle thousands of cases like this every year, and without our help tenants would be at a very high risk of homelessness.

While increased funding for legal services in Housing Court is an important step, legal services alone cannot eradicate homelessness. In addition to legal services, we need better legal protections for all tenants, not just those who happen to be lucky enough to live in rent-regulated apartments, along with larger and more accessible rental subsidies. For example, NYLAG staffs legal clinics in the Bronx and Manhattan Veterans Administration Hospitals. We see many

veterans there who are homeless or who are at risk of being homeless. Fortunately, there is a special Section 8 subsidy for veterans, HUD/VASH. The creation of this subsidy has gone a long way towards ending veterans' homelessness, and is proof that providing marginalized communities with affordable housing and/or subsidies can result in reducing homelessness. However, despite the great strides made toward ending homelessness for veterans, many of our clients are perpetually at risk of becoming homeless because it is difficult to find safe, habitable, and affordable housing in New York City, even with a subsidy. Further, there are far fewer supportive housing units available than we need to provide for the many veterans in our city who are struggling with mental illness.

We would also like to bring to your attention another critical issue, which is the plight of the medically homeless: individuals not sick enough to require inpatient treatment at a hospital, but not well enough to stay in a general shelter. Currently, there are only two programs in New York City that could be considered medical respite centers equipped to deal with those who are severely ill and homeless. Many individuals who are medically unsuitable for a shelter placement end up remaining inpatient at their treating hospital. Without a way to house and stabilize sick people, resources are spent keeping individuals in hospitals when a hospital stay is no longer medically necessary. New Yorkers with acute and chronic illnesses require supportive housing and access to medical respite to help stabilize their housing, improve their health, and allow them to transition out of homelessness.

In conclusion, New York City must take care of its most vulnerable by providing supportive housing and medical respite programs. More importantly, we need more affordable housing options, including viable and permanent rental assistance subsidies, further protection of the stabilized housing stock, and new protections of the private stock. It is also critical for all

individuals and families at risk of homelessness to have access to free legal counsel. Without the protections of rent-regulated housing, rental subsidies, and emergency rental assistance programs, and without legal assistance to navigate these complex programs, many low-income tenants remain at serious risk of losing their apartments and entering shelter.

We would be happy to discuss our proposals further with the City Council and other advocates and are committed to continuing to work together to eradicate homelessness in New York City.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully submitted,

New York Legal Assistance Group



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Chris Parker Testimony
Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
City Council Chambers, New York, NY
December 9th, 2015

Good afternoon,

My name is Christopher Parker, and I am a leader at Picture the Homeless. I have been homeless for 10 years altogether. Bellevue's intake was the starting process and now I am in a shelter in Far Rockaway, Queens.

When I first became homeless I was sleeping on trains, hallways, roofs, etc. I entered the system and soon got the Work Advantage program. I found an apartment on my own, but six months into the program it was cancelled. My rent was paid for the year through court orders. With the lease up and the cancellation of the program I was back in the system. Intake again from there: Bedford Atlantic then Skyway. Skyway case managers lied on my paperwork then sent me to Wards Island the 'punishment' shelter. To my knowledge there were no programs available at the time.

I was on Ward's Island for the beginning of this year when I received the LINC voucher in April 2015. When I had the LINC voucher it was a fiasco. I took days off of work for housing tours where landlords weren't even showing up. I filled out the LINC application given to me by my case manager at Ward's Island but didn't get any response from landlords. One day I ran into a security guard on the bus who said he had seen my name on some mail. Thinking it may be about housing I went to check but there was no one on duty at the front desk. A few weeks later I received emails from landlords saying that my housing application was denied due to "a lack of interest". Through my own apartment search, no landlords I came across accepted the LINC program, for whatever reason. Case managers aren't given the proper information to help people in the system. That caused even more confusion for inquiring clients. It has become the "Broken" LINC, making the road out of the system a hard one. It has also become a discouragement for the people doing everything the right way.

With all that going on, my work schedule clashed with some appointments and I soon lost my job. By that time I also lost the LINC voucher.

No program that relies on private landlords accepting temporary subsidies will work – we are at their mercy to accept these vouchers, even after DHS and HRA gave them incentives. For the amount they spend on us to put us through the shelter system each month, we could be living in luxury condos. At Picture the Homeless, we always say that money spent on shelters would be better spent on putting people in housing. This is a cheaper alternative and many cities across the



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

country have provided housing first and foremost. We can't rely on supportive housing to get people out of shelters or off the street, either. Not everyone needs those services. But we still have vacant buildings lining our streets and the DHS budget grows every year. We are treating homelessness rather than solving it. Something that both Picture the Homeless and the Mayor agree on is reallocating a portion of shelter funding to housing pilot programs. We have the ideas and the experience, and we look forward to working with council members and city agencies to make this happen.



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Floyd Parks Testimony
Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
City Council Chambers, New York, NY
December 9th, 2015

Good afternoon,

My name is Floyd Parks. I am 60 years old and have been homeless for the last ten years. I am a member of Picture the Homeless, and I have been sleeping on the streets for the last 6 or 7 months on 125th street on Park Avenue. Only recently have I started going to a drop in center. Living on the street, I am constantly being harassed by the police. It is bad enough being homeless and sleeping on the streets, but it is worse being harassed by cops every day and being told to move here or there for no reason when we are not breaking any laws. I have been disrespected by the police, who call me a bum and a derelict. They don't even treat us like second-class citizens – they treat us like third class citizens, like we are the bottom of the totem pole.

When on the streets, my documents were taken by the police or thrown away by the Department of Sanitation. Without identification or my documents, it is extremely difficult to find housing. Now I am on a housing waiting list through CUCS, but I need to wait to get all my documentation.

I was most recently in the shelter system from October 2014 to May 2015, and from then until now I have been on the streets. I got a LINC voucher, but from the beginning I was stereotyped because I was homeless. It happened to me three times in six months. No landlords wanted to take me because I had the LINC program. They figure we are a risk for damaging property or causing chaos just because we are homeless. After being denied for housing three times I got too frustrated. I gave up and went back on the streets. I slept better in the street than I did in the shelter system. In the shelter system I kept having to wake up to make sure my possessions were safe, or because there were too many people in the room.

As I have struggled with homelessness and tried to find a place to live, I came across Picture the Homeless. They allowed me to have a voice and to speak on my experience of being homeless and to make a change. We need the City to talk to us, find out what our needs are, so we can go forward together. Right now the City doesn't want to understand us. There is no housing for us.

The only way we can solve this crisis is by providing housing for homeless people. There are too many city-owned buildings that are vacant and boarded up. I see them now, and I saw them



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

when I was on the street. The City needs to use the money in the shelter system and put it to renovate these vacant buildings and put me in them. The shelter system costs \$1 billion. We need to move some of this money to renovate and build housing for homeless people. The City has plenty of space, empty lots, and empty buildings. These have to be used to house homeless people in permanently affordable housing.

We need to have more programs that reflect our experience, and more housing that reflects our income. These housing programs need to be created by people who have shared our experiences, like Picture the Homeless. The City needs to divert shelter funds to permanent housing that we can afford. When you have housing, it gives you stability to become a productive member of society, and we can look at ourselves and feel good.

The Committee on Public Safety also needs to convene a hearing on how the NYPD abuses and harasses homeless people, in probable violation of the law. There is a simple way to avoid the police from harassing and criminalizing homeless people: give them housing. It is a cheaper and more humane solution than shelters or leaving people to fend for themselves on the street.

Thank you for letting me testify today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have, and also to working with you in the future to create housing for homeless people.



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Jeremiah Murphy Testimony
Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
City Council Chambers, New York, NY
December 9th, 2015

Good afternoon,

My name is Jeremiah Murphy and I am a member of Picture the Homeless. I have been homeless for 3 ½ years and I feel that the City needs to do more to address this problem. During my present stint of being homeless I have been recycling cans and bottles at the 124th and Lexington machines prior to them closing. Now while I do my job I am constantly being harassed by the 25th precinct office, telling me that I am not allowed to sit down on the subway grates to wait my turn to use the machines. I understand they have a job to do, but I only sit on the grate that was in front of the machines, not the rest of them that lie on the block between 124th and 125th street.

The N.Y.P.D. needs to stop arresting people who are not breaking the law because all that happens is that these people are thrown in prison. These people end up missing their appointments and are thrown to the bottom of the housing list. The N.Y.P.D. also needs to be sensitive to the mental health community. A lot of these cops don't know how to relate to these people. They just put them in the hospital and move on to the next person. Maybe if they had some kind of training to deal with these people things would be a lot better and people wouldn't be so defensive when they are confronted by the cops.

While I was in the shelter system my wife had severe medical problems, which the shelter was fully aware of. They asked us to provide documents surrounding my wife's medical conditions, which we did, but instead of accommodating my wife's issues they tried to send us a different shelter that didn't accommodate her at all. We refused this transfer, which we have the right to do, and instead of trying to send me and my wife someplace to help us, they called the police and had us escorted out of the shelter. After that we went on the street.

The Pathmark that I used to shop at was just bought and is now closed. The same company who bought that building is building 11 units of supportive housing – only 11 units. What is supposed to happen to the tens of thousands of other people that are homeless who don't need services? You have people in shelters who have apartment vouchers, but no landlord in the city will accept them, so people are stuck holding these vouchers for months, sometimes years, before they can find a landlord that will accept them. You also have people living in cluster site shelters where the conditions are unbearable, but instead of the city shutting them down and turning them back into permanent housing, they continue to pay these landlords even though things are never fixed. How are people supposed to live in these places when they are worse than living on the street?



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Our Mayor and Governor are fighting over who is doing a better job at addressing this issue when they need to talk to and listen to the people who are living these experiences.

Instead of vouchers and warehousing people in shelters, the city should spend money on the only solution that makes sense: extremely low income, permanently affordable housing. We need to move some of this money in the shelter system towards permanently affordable housing targeted towards people's incomes.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



moving victims of violence from crisis to confidence

Testimony of
Michael Polenberg, Vice President, Government Affairs
Safe Horizon, Inc.

Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis

Committee on General Welfare
Hon. Stephen Levin, Chairman

New York City Council

December 10, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the homeless crisis in New York City. My name is Michael Polenberg, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Safe Horizon, the nation's leading victim assistance organization and New York City's largest provider of services to victims of crime. Safe Horizon's mission is to provide support, prevent violence and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families and communities.

Safe Horizon is pleased that the General Welfare Committee is examining how best to address the homelessness crisis in New York City. While we are grateful that the Mayor has tried to be responsive to this crisis and has enacted some of the proposals we and many others submitted to both his transition team and his Administration, more needs to be done to help ensure that no one is left vulnerable to violence or abuse as a result of homelessness. My comments today will focus on the service needs of two populations who regularly intersect with the City's homeless systems – survivors of domestic violence and homeless youth.

Domestic Violence Survivors & Homelessness

For many years, survivors who sought refuge in domestic violence shelters faced difficult choices when their stay in emergency shelter (a maximum of 180 days) expired. Some went back to unsafe living arrangements. Many others became homeless or left to “destinations unknown.” With no local housing subsidy and increasingly long waits for public housing placements, the domestic violence shelter system in effect became a significant feeder to the homeless shelter system. These shelters, operated through the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), do not provide confidential settings for their residents and lack the trauma-informed counseling and services typically offered by domestic violence shelter providers.

Alarmed by the rate at which domestic violence survivors were becoming homeless after leaving shelter, Safe Horizon and other advocates urged the incoming de Blasio Administration to fund dedicated subsidies to help move domestic violence survivors and their families out of shelter and into permanent housing. In the late summer of 2014, the City announced the creation of the Living in Communities (LINC) housing subsidies for homeless New Yorkers to address this exact need. To date, more than 160 families have left Safe Horizon domestic violence shelters and have moved into their own apartments thanks to LINC and other locally funded subsidies. Each one of these cases represents a profound success and we are extremely grateful to the Mayor and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) for creating these long-overdue housing opportunities for our clients.

And yet, more needs to be done. By and large, the real estate community in New York City continues to view any publicly-funded housing subsidy with suspicion, with many landlords fearing that – as in the past -- the funding might be slashed at any moment and they will be left with tenants in leases who are unable to pay the rent. A recent article in DNA Info found that 80% of LINC vouchers are not being used, and cited stories of landlords refusing to accept tenants with these subsidies. The Comptroller similarly urged the City's Human Rights Commission to more aggressively target landlords who refuse to rent units to prospective tenants based on LINC and other subsidies. And while we are grateful that HRA is expanding the number of shelter units for domestic violence survivors and their families which will reduce the likelihood that survivors would otherwise be forced to enter the DHS system, the shelter system continues to approach 100% capacity on most nights, putting more pressure on providers and the City to convince

landlords to accept LINC and other subsidies as quickly as possible. We urge the City Council to join us in educating the real estate community to hopefully dispel some of the misconceptions that are making it difficult for domestic violence survivors and their families to obtain housing.

Together with our colleagues at the NYC Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Providers, we offered a series of recommendations to HRA to help expedite move-outs from shelter into housing through LINC. These recommendations include:

- Allowing residents in DV emergency shelters to be eligible for all subsidies after 45 days of shelter. Currently, residents must be in shelter for 60 days;
- Increasing the \$1,000 bonus provided to landlords for smaller apartments. Service providers continue to struggle to find landlords who are willing to rent their units to smaller families with monthly vouchers of \$1,213 or \$1,268. Increasing the bonus payment to landlords for these units might make them rent more quickly; and
- Giving discretion to providers to determine which of their shelter residents would be most likely to succeed with LINC and other subsidies, and which residents might be more successful in other settings such as NYCHA.

Furthermore, while the City temporarily placed domestic violence shelter residents at the top of the priority list for housing through the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) earlier this year which was enormously helpful to our clients, the official City policy is to reserve this

priority for residents of DHS shelters instead, placing domestic violence victims at a disadvantage for obtaining these available units.

Finally, we applaud the de Blasio Administration for funding 15,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 15 years for homeless and vulnerable New Yorkers. We join with our colleagues here today who call on the Governor to match this commitment in his upcoming State budget proposal.

Homeless Youth

Often lost in the discussion about the City's homeless crisis are the needs of homeless youth. At any given time, more than 4,000 young men and women are in need of shelter, while there are only 450 units of emergency and transitional units available to meet this need. As a result, estimates are between 2,500 and 4,000 young people engage in survival sex each night as a way to obtain such basic necessities as a bed or a meal. While the shelter system operated by DHS is technically available to young people 18 or over, many homeless young people would rather sleep on the streets than enter the intake shelters, given their reputation for violence, theft and harassment. This is particularly the case for LGBTQ youth, who face particular risks due to gender, sexual orientation and age within the DHS systems. However, fears of the DHS system – often based in personal experience – are pervasive amongst the homeless youth population across gender and sexual orientation.

The de Blasio Administration has taken steps in the right direction by heeding the calls of Safe Horizon and other advocates and funding new shelter beds for homeless youth. In fact, for

many years funding for homeless youth shelter beds were dependent on annual appropriations from the New York City Council, leading providers to wonder each spring if the funding would be fully restored. We are grateful that this funding has been added to the City's budget and is no longer reliant on the annual budget dance. Unfortunately, the City did not allow providers a reasonable timeframe to locate and secure a new facility, making it impossible for providers to participate unless they had an empty or underutilized facility already in their control, and thus dozens of beds have not yet been opened to youth in need. HRA has also been much more accommodating of homeless youth trying to obtain or maintain public benefits, a welcome departure from past practice when our clients were routinely denied basic assistance based on mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

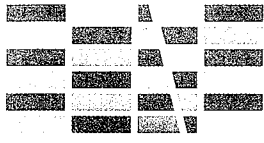
But the demand for shelter for homeless youth still considerably outweighs the supply. The City needs to add significant new shelter capacity as quickly as possible to provide safe, supportive environs for homeless youth and to reduce the prevalence of exploitation and trafficking. We cannot go another winter with thousands of homeless young people fending for themselves on the streets and in our parks, or selling their bodies for a place to sleep or a bite to eat.

In addition, young people who reside in homeless youth shelters funded by the City's Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) do not qualify for any of the LINC subsidies available for homeless New Yorkers in other shelters. Needless to say, those youth who rely exclusively on DYCD drop-in programs because they've aged-out of youth shelters and live on the streets, also have no access to housing subsidies. We think this policy is short-sighted and we urge the City to make housing subsidies available to all otherwise-qualified shelter residents in

New York City as well as those youth with disabilities who live on the streets and rely on city-funded drop-in centers. Finally, the City adheres to an inconsistent policy about allowing youth in DYCD-funded RHY programs to apply for “adult” supportive housing units. More than once, we have been told these units are reserved for older applicants in DHS shelters. Since our applicants are 18 or older, we maintain they should be able to access any supportive housing units for which they meet the necessary criteria and we urge the City to immediately reconsider this practice.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions you may have regarding our recommendations.

FOR THE RECORD



THE GARMENT DISTRICT NYC

Garment District Alliance
209 West 38th Street
2nd Floor
New York, NY 10018

212.764.9600
garmentdistrictnyc.com
#garmentdistrict

Garment District Alliance Testimony
Committee on General Welfare
Wednesday, December 9, 2015
10:00 a.m.
Council Chambers

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Martin Meyer
Chair

Thomas Block
Vice Chair

Dana Comfort
Vice Chair

Barbara Blair Randall
President

Eric Gural
Secretary

Ira Fishman
Treasurer

George S. Kaufman
Chair Emeritus

Scott Galin

Steve Kaufman

Peter Malkin

Robert Savitt

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A.R.T./New York

ABS Partners Real Estate, LLC

Adams and Company
Real Estate, LLC

Anchin, Block & Anchin

Bank Leumi USA

Block Buildings LLC

Callahan Capital Partners

Colliers International N.Y. LLC

Community Board 4

Community Board 5

Constance Kay

Distrikt Hotel

Empire State Realty Trust, Inc.

EVO Real Estate Group

Fashion Institute of Technology

G Holdings LLC

George Comfort & Sons

Gotham Organization

Handro Properties LLC

Hidrock Realty

Hudson 38 Holding LLC

Interpublic Group

Kaufman Organization

Konstantinos Dean Dafis

New York City Council

Newmark Grubb Knight Frank

Office of the NYC Comptroller

Office of the Manhattan

Borough President

Office of the Mayor

Olmstead Properties

Otterbourg

Port Authority of NY & NJ

R/GA

Refinery Hotel

Savitt Partners LLC

Shorenstein Properties LLC

Stan Herman Company

Stitch Bar & Lounge

The Doneger Group

Walter & Samuels, Inc.

Good Morning. My name is Kevin McGinn and I am the director of security at the Garment District Alliance, a BID in Manhattan's Garment District. I am here to speak on behalf of the property owners and the ground floor retail businesses in the Garment District.

The Garment District has seen a tremendous increase in homelessness and mentally ill on our streets over the last year and this condition is having an adverse effect on local businesses, their employees and visitors, and on the many tourists and commuters passing through our midtown neighborhood.

We understand that to solve our street condition problems we must help the homeless/mentally ill solve their problems. And to solve their problem of finding an appropriate, permanent living situation begins with first understanding that, generally speaking, there are three categories of homeless/mentally ill in the area.

As we understand it, the first group is some 60,000 homeless families and individuals who are in the NYC Shelter system. While these people pose a significant issue for the City, they are not a problem on the streets in our area. It is the other two groups that are most dramatically impacting the quality of life and safety in the district.

A second group consists of the young individuals that sit on the sidewalks during the day holding cardboard signs, frequently with pets, begging for money. It is our understanding that these individuals are from out of town, are drug addicts more often than not, and come to midtown Manhattan because begging can be profitable. While a nuisance during the day, these individuals generally leave the area at night, presumably because they actually have someplace to live. Because we no longer have loitering laws and the like, they are able to take up daytime residence on sidewalks throughout midtown Manhattan.

The last group consists of the entrenched, service resistant individuals who have been living on the streets for years. In almost all cases these individuals do not have the capacity to take care of themselves. If

they did they would not be living in filthy conditions, outside on the streets of New York with no bathroom facilities, regular meals and exposed to the elements, rats and other hazards.

This is a tragedy that our city should putting appropriate resources toward solving. We are all familiar with the court-upheld reasons establishing that you cannot legally remove individuals from the streets against their will. That policy condones leaving the least able among us to their own devices for survival. I cannot believe that our city government can be satisfied with that policy. For our part, the Garment District Alliance contracts with Urban Pathways for full-time outreach to these individuals and despite our approaching them every single day, they do not accept services. This is a failed approach to solving this problem.

I urge this committee and the City to look to models of social service practices and policies from other cities to inform this municipality. I strongly urge the City Council to be innovative in our approach with an eye to novel approaches. The Garment District Alliance hopes that the City Council will create a new, high-level task force of professionals, social service providers, elected officials and others with an interest in the sanctity of human life to address the welfare of those less fortunate than ourselves in a way that ensures that they are cared for, fed, housed and attended to in a safe and supervised environment. As past policies and practices have wholly failed these individuals, this problem will require new and dramatic solutions.

From the neighborhood perspective it is unsettling to confront the homeless and mentally ill encampments in the district. In addition to how these conditions weigh on our conscience, many of these individuals act in an erratic manner. They often shout at people passing by, raging at some perceived slight or injustice. They are frankly, very scary to business owners, district employees, visitors and tourists in the district. Their behavior diminishes the perception of the City and harkens back to a foreboding time.

This year I received the highest number of complaints from our ground floor retailers in the 20 years of the BIDs existence due to homeless and mentally ill wandering into their establishments and intimidating customers and pedestrians on the streets. Property owners are frustrated that despite positive economic growth in the district and hundreds of millions of dollars of investment we have a growing, not diminishing situation. In addition to the numerous disturbing altercations, we have had two violent altercations due to the homeless in the area, one a murder and the other an attack with a hammer.

The Garment District has stronger economic indicators with regard to visitors, pedestrian counts, development, investment and jobs than any time in the last 50 years. It is unfortunate that all this good work could unravel because of a social illness that is not adequately being addressed by government.

Thank you for your time.



PICTURE THE HOMELESS

Donna Morgan Testimony
Oversight: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
City Council Chambers, New York, NY
December 9th, 2015

Good afternoon,

My name is Donna Morgan and I am a resident at Franklin Avenue shelter in the Bronx. I am also working full time and part of SEIU 1199, as well as a member of Picture the Homeless. The shelter is in need of a lot of updates. My counselor is a wonderful person but she is new at her job and doesn't know what to do to help get me out of the shelter system. She has to ask questions that I put to her. Franklin shelter is supposed to have a 21 day assessment, but there are people there for months and months. I cannot stay in the shelter for that long. Some people fight every night and the police come all the time. People leave in handcuffs and return the next day to the same bed.

I came to Franklin shelter November 16th, 2015 to no phone system in the shelter. Today is December 2nd and there is still no phone system working in the shelter. I came from a family shelter in the Far Rockaways, but since then my son has decided not to enter the system with me again. Altogether, I have been in the shelter system for 13 months, and no one has helped me get housing. I had the LINC V voucher all summer. Between working full time and commuting over an hour and a half each way to my job, I was constantly looking for housing. As the LINC deadline approached, my case worker was supposed to renew my voucher but she never did it. I lost the LINC voucher and was never shown an apartment. Now I'm stuck in a shelter that forces me to sign in every night, has over 300 beds, and only 3 microwaves. I was never sick before I entered the shelter system. Now I am so sick I have too many ailments to list. Now I know why people don't want to enter the shelter system. They don't care about you as a person, as a human being.

I need help getting my LINC voucher back, but really I need my own apartment for me and my son. They pay thousands of dollars for me each month instead of giving me apartment, which would be cheaper. I see the vacant buildings but nothing is being done to renovate them for us. Those who have extremely low incomes do not have any housing available for them, and even the new programs and housing plans are not affordable to me. We can't rely on temporary subsidies and shelters to get people housing – we need new ideas, and we look forward to developing those ideas with you and the city.

1- The Condition of Shelters & the Unsafe and Unhygienic Operation of the facilities.

FOR THE RECORD

The following are examples of Unsafe Conditions observed in DHS shelters:

1. Some Residents behave by scratching the walls, punch themselves, threatening to fight, fight other residents, and argue with their non-present attacker.
2. Some Residents are under the influence of drugs or alcohol and are allowed to enter the Shelter facility and Dorm Rooms.

The following are examples of Unhygienic Conditions observed in DHS shelters:

1. Often there is Bloody diarrhea in the bathrooms. Residents risk exposure to HIV, Hepatitis C, and other blood borne diseases.
2. Residents are not allowed to wash their clothing, bedding, washcloth, and towel twice weekly.
3. Incontinent Residents are allowed to remain in their urine and feces for days. Sometimes a Resident helps them change their Depends. They are not allowed a Home Health Attended inside the DHS Shelter to assist them.
4. There are some Shelter Homeless Residents that live sometimes in the DHS Shelters usually the colder months and then live on the Streets during the warmer months. They are allowed into the DHS Shelter without a proper medical or psych assessment.
5. On arrival at the DHS Shelters, many Residents are not usually supplied with bath soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrush, comb and brush, washcloth, bath towel, blanket, 2 sheets, a pillow, and a pillowcase.
6. In Women's Shelters Toilette paper runs out much too frequently
7. Paper Towel are supplied only during the Callahan Inspection.
8. MICA, Disabled, Blind, and Refugees are allowed to languish without proper assessment, medical care, or supervision in DHS Shelters for 5 or more consecutive years.
9. LGBTQ not given a single room with privacy.

8/29/15

Criminal Grievance
Wendy O'Shields vs. HELP USA Organization
237 West 107th Street
New York, NY 10025
Ms. N. Richards, Shelter Director
Phone: 646-738-7700 x605
Fax: 212-866-0061
nrichards@helpusa.org

Let the Record Show

The HELP USA Organization is in violation of the below issues addressed in the Department of Homeless Services "STATEMENT OF CLIENT RIGHTS AND CLIENT CODE OF CONDUCT." Please investigate, consider dissolving your City of New York Contract with this entity, and enforce the correct rules on the HELP USA Organization.

STATEMENT OF CLIENT RIGHTS AND CLIENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The **Statement of Client Rights and Client Code of Conduct** sets out the standards for staying in short-term temporary housing assistance ("shelter"). Since shelter is not a home, but rather a stepping stone to permanent housing and rejoining the community, there are certain expectations for you while in shelter. These standards ensure shelters are safe for everyone and that we work together to help you move as quickly as possible from emergency housing to a home.

While in shelter, your rights include:

1. The right to exercise your civil rights and religious freedoms; *Homeless residents religious freedoms are violated by restricting access to their Houses of Worship. The HELP USA Organization withholds metrocards from residents who would like to attend their Synagogue, Church, or their Mosque. The HELP USA Organization is also infringing on our First Amendment Rights which are a cornerstone to the founding of our country. HELP USA Organization does not allow all residents freedom of expression, assembly, and residents right to petition.*

https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/first_amendment

The First Amendment guarantees freedoms concerning religion, expression, assembly, and the right to petition. It forbids Congress from both promoting one religion over others and also restricting an individual's religious practices. It guarantees freedom of expression by prohibiting Congress from restricting the press or the rights of individuals to speak freely. It also guarantees the right of citizens to assemble peaceably and to petition their government.

2. The right to have your personal, financial, social and medical information kept confidential by DHS and shelter staff; *The HELP USA Organization leaves the residents private documents, social security numbers, benefit cards, and other confidential documentation around the offices for all to see. Residents, all Staff, the UPS guy can view our confidential documentation. The HELP USA Staff tends to gossip and divulge confidential information to extraneous other staff such as maintenance or security when there is no issue.*

3. The right to meet and have written communications with your legal representatives in private; *There is no private meeting room designated for the residents to meet with their Attorney or Paralegals.*

4. The right to receive courteous, fair and respectful treatment; *All HELP USA Organization Office Staff is Gestapo like in their treatment of the female residents. The HELP USA Staff are aggressive, threatening, nasty, condescending, contradictory, liars, disrespectful, speak to residents like we are felons doing time, and untrustworthy.*

5. The right to remain in the facility, and not be involuntarily transferred or discharged except in accordance with State regulations and the DHS procedures implementing those regulations; *The HELP USA Organization Office Staff often processes involuntary transfers. Staff claims either the residents was not in compliance or they are mentality ill. Mostly the HELP USA Staff creates fraudulent paperwork to support their criminal lies.*

6. The right to present grievances on behalf of yourself and other residents to your shelter or DHS without fear of retaliation and to receive a timely response; *The HELP USA Organization's Staff retaliates against residents that grieve for themselves or on other resident's behalf. They are operating against the Department of Homeless Services Policy and are committing crimes against the Homeless residents.*

7. The right to manage your own finances; *The HELP USA Organization's Office Staff violates the residents Right to Privacy this is a human right and is addressed in the First, Fourth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments under our United States Constitutional Law see below. As a matter of Privacy, residents have a right to manage their own finances, residents have freedom of speech, right to peaceably assemble, the right to grieve, the right to be secure in one's person, residence, papers, are protected against unreasonable searches and seizures, and zones of privacy complete our protectorate. The HELP USA Organization shall not deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the United State Constitutional laws.*

The most significant law of man is God's law! The law of one! Residents do not relinquish their "Unalienable Rights" while living communally in a City of New York Department of Homeless Services residence. Stop the lawless treatment of your fellow human beings who are Homeless! Do not shit on God and the United States Constitution!

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/rightofprivacy.html>

Bill of Rights (and 14th Amendment) Provisions Relating to the Right of Privacy

Amendment I (Privacy of Beliefs)

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment IV

(Privacy of the Person and Possessions)

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment IX

(More General Protection for Privacy?)

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxiv>

Amendment XIV

Section 1.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

http://www.conservapedia.com/Unalienable_rights

Unalienable rights are those which God gave to man at the Creation, once and for all. By definition, since God granted such rights, governments could not take them away. In America, this fundamental truth is recognized and enshrined in our nation's birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence:

"[A]ll men are created equal...[and] are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

It is important to understand that the very premise of our nation is the fact that these rights are "God-given." If they are not given to us by an Authority higher than human government, then any government action to abolish those rights would be against God's will. Rights that is subject to government restriction or license is called a privilege rather than a right. The Founding Fathers understood this principle and created a revolution in political theory by enacting, for the first time in history, a government specifically established to protect the rights that had been given to man by God.

"That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

8. The right to receive visitors in common areas of the facility Monday through Friday between 6 pm and 9 pm and on Saturday and Sunday between 12 pm and 4 pm; *The HELP USA Organization has no visiting hours or a designated area to receive visitors.*

9. The right to leave and return to the facility in accordance with the 10 pm curfew; *The HELP USA Organization violates our right to sign for our beds at 10:00 PM and leave and return.*

10. The right to send and receive mail without interference or interception; *Often residents United States mail is missing at the HELP USA Organization. Typically, it is government mail from HRA, New York State, the City of New York, Medicaid, and mostly official types of mail. Less frequently residents private mail is missing and usually that mail is of some value a check or cell phone etc...*

11. The right to be free from physical restraint or confinement; and *Unless there is an issue of a resident being released to the DHS shelter system under a court order the HELP USA Organization should immediately stop telling residents they cannot leave if they want to leave. Holding residents against their will is kidnapping.*

12. The right to end your shelter stay at any time. *Unless there is an issue of a resident, being released to the DHS shelter system under a court order the HELP USA Organization should immediately stop telling residents they cannot leave if they want to leave. Holding residents against their will is kidnapping.*

Single acts of the following misconduct may lead to the loss of shelter:

1. You are forbidden to bring weapons and any illegal substances into the shelter. *The HELP USA Organization does their security rounds and smells, Reefer, K2, Crack, and other drugs and ignores that resident and their criminal act. Security should radio downstairs that they smell whatever drugs, have the NYPD called, have the resident arrested, and then sanctioned for life.*
2. Violence, threatened violence, or other illegal conduct is not permitted and will be reported to law enforcement authorities. *The violent mentally ill, violent felons, violent aggressive types, the violent psychotics, typically intimidate, threaten, slap, hit, beat, the normal residents and usually these incidents are covered up behind closed door at the HELP USA Organization. These residents should be arrested, sanctioned for life, and or transferred to an appropriate facility to protect the normal residents from being abused and hurt.*
3. Acts that endanger the health and safety of yourself or others or which substantially interfere with the orderly operation of the facility will not be tolerated. *The violent mentally ill, violent felons, violent behaviorally aggressive types, violent torturous personalities, and the violent psychotics intimidate, threaten, slap, hit, beat, the normal residents and unless the NYPD is called these incidents are covered up by the HELP USA Organization. The violent residents turn over tables in the cafeteria and have tantrums. They attack the normal residents or threaten to beat the normal residents creating a hostile environment in which to live. Physically and or verbally the violent residents threaten the normal residents, they walk the hallways looking to hurt normal residents, and bully normal residents while in the television area, cafeteria, laundry room, and common areas.*

There are some antisocial, sociopathic, and racist residents that daily perform acts against the facility in the form of vandalism and treat the normal residents in a vicious and sadistic manner. Their vandalism is off camera usually the bathrooms and their particularly calculated acts of human cruelty occur inside the Dorm rooms. The deviant has a reasonably plausible excuse for most everything they do and this is how they explain their actions when the HELP USA Staff becomes aware. These residents torture the normal residents behind closed doors. Nothing is done by the HELP USA Staff to stop the deviant's behavior because they have an excuse! The deviants need a proper Psychiatric Evaluation where they must answer for the sadistic deviant behaviors they have displayed at the shelter and inflicted on the normal residents. If many residents have reported, the same or similar torturous acts to the HELP USA Staff that bears further investigation.

Only Psychotherapist trained to spot killers, deviants, and sweet talking criminals will see these residents for what they truly are as their exterior is usually pleasing.

Have this type of resident mandated to have an independent medical institution affiliated with a major teaching hospital perform a Psychiatric Evaluation. Once they determine the severity of their psychiatric illnesses transfer them to the appropriate shelter facility or mental institution. If their Psychotherapist mandates a hospital stay make sure they attend or they are not in compliance with DHS Policy. When they return from the Psychiatric Hospital stay mandate a bi-weekly or weekly appointment with a Psychotherapist to work on stopping their deviant actions; if they are prescribed medications make sure they take them under the supervision of a Physician, Registered Nurse, or other medical professional.

The violent and or deviant residents should be placed in the proper facility to address their behaviors. Going forward if these residents act out while in a "Normal Resident Shelter" with the "General Population" depending on the severity of their act they should be arrested, checked into a Psychiatric Hospital, Sanctioned for life, or Sanctioned for a shorter period of time.

These very violent and or high functioning psychopathic being should not run the DHS Shelter facilities or the Normal Resident wellbeing.

Multiple violations of the following conduct standards may lead to the loss of shelter. However, in some cases, a single violation of a serious nature may also lead to the loss of shelter:

9. Each family member is limited to bringing two bags of personal belongings into the shelter. *The HELP USA Organization does not allow the 2 bags and threatens and harasses residents who have under 2 bags under their bed.*

10. You may not bring in and use: hot plates, space heaters; air conditioners, furniture; televisions larger than 19 inches; cable TV service; or animals (unless you have a disability and require the use of a service animal). *The HELP USA Organization shall supply the medically frail, the Asthmatics, and Allergy residents with Air Conditioners.*

11. You are not permitted to smoke or possess/consume alcoholic beverages in the shelter. *The HELP USA Organizations allows the habitual Alcoholic, the occasion drunk, and the social drinker entry into the HELP USA facility. Please legitimately transfer the lifetime Alcoholic to the appropriate facilities for lifetime care. Have the occasion drinker stay in a common area until they have sobered up and are no longer a detriment to the other residents.*

12. Excessive noise and disrespectful behavior towards fellow residents/shelter staff will not be tolerated. *The violent mentally ill, violent felons, violent aggressive types, and the violent psychotics intimidate, threaten, slap, hit, beat, the normal residents and usually these incidents are covered up by the HELP USA Organization. Some residents are allowed to play music loudly at all hours without correction by the HELP USA Staff.*

13. All residents must be properly dressed while on the grounds of the residence. You may not appear outside your unit undressed or partially dressed. *The HELP USA Staff allows and ignores the female and male residents and male tenants who walk in the hallways in their towels and underwear.*

14. When directed, you are required to leave your unit/the building during fire drills, evacuations, and other safety exercises. *The HELP USA Organization was engaged in conducting "Whisper Drills" in order to report that certain residents did not participate in two or more Fire Drills.*

Compliance with Public Assistance and Client Contribution is a Requirement for Staying in Shelter:

27. You are required to apply for and, if eligible, keep open a Public Assistance (PA) case with HRA. *The HELP USA Organization is in noncompliance! HELP USA purposely neglects the Working shelter resident by not requiring that they maintain an open Single Issue Public Assistance Case at all times.*

28. You must cooperate to determine available resources, and apply for and use any benefits and resources that will reduce or eliminate the need for shelter. *The HELP USA Organization is in noncompliance! HELP USA purposely ignores residents who have an obvious physical or mental disability which qualifies them for Social Security Disability as long as they are a US Citizen or have a Greencard. HELP USA allows this resident to languish for many years without establishing an income for these residents.*

29. If you have income, you are required to pay towards the cost of your stay in temporary shelter. If you have an open PA case, HRA will determine the amount, if any, that you must contribute towards the cost of your shelter. *The HELP USA Organization is in noncompliance they are a no-pay shelter. There is no issue to decide.*

30. If you have income and you are not eligible for PA, you must contribute 30% of your family's gross income towards the cost of your shelter. *The HELP USA Organization is in noncompliance they are a no-pay shelter. There is no issue to decide.*



SHELTER NAME: _____

DATE: ___/___/___

FAMILY COMPOSITION: # ADULTS _____ # CHILDREN _____

LAST NAME (HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD)	FIRST NAME	MI
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	DATE OF BIRTH	CASE #

STATEMENT OF CLIENT RIGHTS AND CLIENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The **Statement of Client Rights and Client Code of Conduct** sets out the standards for staying in short-term temporary housing assistance (“shelter”). Since shelter is not a home, but rather a stepping stone to permanent housing and rejoining the community, there are certain expectations for you while in shelter. These standards ensure shelters are safe for everyone and that we work together to help you move as quickly as possible from emergency housing to a home.

While in shelter, your rights include:

1. The right to exercise your civil rights and religious freedoms;
2. The right to have your personal, financial, social and medical information kept confidential by DHS and shelter staff;
3. The right to meet and have written communications with your legal representatives in private;
4. The right to receive courteous, fair and respectful treatment;
5. The right to remain in the facility, and not be involuntarily transferred or discharged except in accordance with State regulations and the DHS procedures implementing those regulations;
6. The right to present grievances on behalf of yourself and other residents to your shelter or DHS without fear of retaliation and to receive a timely response;
7. The right to manage your own finances;
8. The right to receive visitors in common areas of the facility Monday through Friday between 6 pm and 9 pm and on Saturday and Sunday between 12 pm and 4 pm;
9. The right to leave and return to the facility in accordance with the 10 pm curfew;
10. The right to send and receive mail without interference or interception;
11. The right to be free from physical restraint or confinement; and
12. The right to end your shelter stay at any time.

Single acts of the following misconduct may lead to the loss of shelter:

1. You are forbidden to bring weapons and any illegal substances into the shelter.
2. Violence, threatened violence, or other illegal conduct is not permitted and will be reported to law enforcement authorities.

3. Acts that endanger the health and safety of yourself or others or which substantially interfere with the orderly operation of the facility will not be tolerated.

Single violations of the following may lead to the loss of shelter:

4. Since shelter is temporary housing, you must look for permanent housing and accept any suitable housing that is found.
5. You must cooperate with and complete an assessment conducted by DHS or shelter staff.
6. You must cooperate in developing an independent living plan (ILP) together with facility staff.

Multiple violations of the following conduct standards may lead to the loss of shelter. However, in some cases, a single violation of a serious nature may also lead to the loss of shelter:

7. You must cooperate in carrying out and completing your ILP with facility staff to achieve permanent housing. You must agree to and meet with shelter staff at least once every other week to discuss your progress in complying with the ILP.
8. You are required to keep your unit and the common areas of your temporary shelter clean and orderly. Shelter staff may conduct unannounced health and safety inspections of your unit on a weekly or more frequent basis. You must provide access to shelter staff for these inspections.
9. Each family member is limited to bringing two bags of personal belongings into the shelter.
10. You may not bring in and use: hot plates, space heaters; air conditioners, furniture; televisions larger than 19 inches; cable TV service; or animals (unless you have a disability and require the use of a service animal).
11. You are not permitted to smoke or possess/consume alcoholic beverages in the shelter.
12. Excessive noise and disrespectful behavior towards fellow residents/shelter staff will not be tolerated.
13. All residents must be properly dressed while on the grounds of the residence. You may not appear outside your unit undressed or partially dressed.
14. When directed, you are required to leave your unit/the building during fire drills, evacuations, and other safety exercises.
15. You are responsible for supervising your children at all times, including in all common areas. You may not leave shelter without your children unless arrangements have been made for another adult to supervise the children and these arrangements have been approved by shelter staff.
16. Children under two years of age must sleep in cribs, in accordance with the "Safe Sleeping" guidelines that have been provided to you either in written or video form.
17. School-aged children are required to attend school.
18. With the help of your caseworker, you are expected to take part in activities that will help get you to a permanent home, such as working (or looking for work), looking for housing, or working with HRA. This may require you to be outside of your unit during the day. If you remain in your unit without a valid reason, shelter staff will direct you to some activities, either in the shelter or elsewhere.
19. Shelter staff has the right to check your room every day.
20. Overnight stays outside of the shelter are not permitted unless pre-approved by shelter staff.
21. You must leave your unit keys with shelter security staff when leaving the facility and you must sign in and out with your children when entering and exiting the shelter.

- 22. All shelters have a curfew of 10 pm and children must be in their units with a responsible adult by 9 pm, except in the case of a documented emergency or if you have an approved late pass.
- 23. Visitors are not allowed in units. Visitors are only permitted in common areas Monday through Friday between 6 pm and 9 pm and on Saturday and Sunday between 12 pm and 4 pm.
- 24. You may not change the locks on your unit or add additional locks.
- 25. If you have been placed in a shelter with on-site recreation, day care, or a cafeteria, you must abide by the rules established by the facility for using these services.
- 26. You must notify shelter staff whenever you or anyone in your family becomes ill.

Compliance with Public Assistance and Client Contribution is a Requirement for Staying in Shelter:

- 27. You are required to apply for and, if eligible, keep open a Public Assistance (PA) case with HRA.
- 28. You must cooperate to determine available resources, and apply for and use any benefits and resources that will reduce or eliminate the need for shelter.
- 29. If you have income, you are required to pay towards the cost of your stay in temporary shelter. If you have an open PA case, HRA will determine the amount, if any, that you must contribute towards the cost of your shelter.
- 30. If you have income and you are not eligible for PA, you must contribute 30% of your family's gross income towards the cost of your shelter.

My family is seeking shelter from the Department of Homeless Services. I have reviewed and have had the above "Statement of Client Rights and Client Code of Conduct" explained to me and I understand it. These rights and responsibilities will help my family achieve independence and find a permanent place to live. I understand that my family has the right to file a grievance with the shelter operator and/or DHS without fear of getting in trouble.

IF MY FAMILY DOES NOT FOLLOW THE CLIENT CODE OF CONDUCT:

- 1. *I or my family may have to leave the shelter and have our shelter/temporary housing assistance discontinued if we do not follow the Client Code of Conduct, even if we refuse to sign this document.*
- 2. *My family will not have its shelter/temporary housing assistance discontinued if we cannot obey the Client Code of Conduct due to an appropriately documented physical or mental impairment.*
- 3. *My family has a right to challenge a decision to discontinue shelter/temporary housing assistance by requesting a New York State Fair Hearing and/or an agency conference with DHS.*

Print Name	Signature	Date
------------	-----------	------

Print Name	Signature	Date
------------	-----------	------

Print Name	Signature	Date
------------	-----------	------

STAFF: *I have explained this form to the client.* [] Client refused to sign.

Print Name/Title	Signature	Date
------------------	-----------	------

8/25/15

DHS & HELP USA Organization Violating Callahan Shelter Standards

Criminal Grievance

Wendy O'Shields vs. City of New York Department of Homeless Services

33 Beaver Street, 17th Floor

New York, NY 10004

212-607-5236

Criminal Grievance

Wendy O'Shields vs. HELP USA Organization

237 West 107th Street

New York, NY 10025

Ms. N. Richards, Shelter Director

Phone: 646-738-7700 x605

Fax: 212-866-0061

nrichards@helpusa.org

Let the Record Show

The City of New York's Department of Homeless Services and the HELP USA Organization are commenting crimes against Homeless New Yorkers as they are violating the standards set forth by the Callahan Consent Decree for "Homeless Shelter Standards." They are committing crimes against the Homeless citizenry of the City of New York and flagrantly breaking State of New York Law.

Please investigate. Please criminally charge all involved in this long overdue corruption.

Callahan Shelter Standards

The Callahan Consent Decree

Establishing a Legal Right to Shelter for Homeless Individuals in New York City

Following is the complete text of the 1981 consent decree in Callahan v. Carey, the class action litigation brought by Coalition for the Homeless that established a legal right to shelter for homeless individuals in New York City. The Callahan litigation was filed in 1979 on behalf of homeless men in New York City, and argued that a right to shelter for the homeless existed under the New York State Constitution. The right to shelter was extended to homeless women by Eldredge v. Koch (1983), also brought by Coalition for the Homeless, and to homeless families with children by McCain v. Koch (1983), brought by the Legal Aid Society.

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF NEW YORK

Plaintiffs

ROBERT CALLAHAN, CLAYTON W. FOX, THOMAS DAMIAN ROIG, JAMES HAYES, JAMES SPELLMAN and PAULE E. TOOLE, on their own behalves and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs, Index No. 42582/79

-against-

FINAL

Defendants

HUGH L. CAREY, as Governor of the State JUDGMENT of New York, BABARA BLUM, as Commissioner BY CONSENT of the New York State Department of Social Service,

EDWARD I. KOCH, as Mayor of the City of New York,

JAMES A. KRAUSKOPF, as Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration, and CALVIN REID, as Director of the Shelter Care Center for Men,

Plaintiffs Robert Callahan, Clayton Fox and Thomas Roig, having brought this action on October 2, 1979 challenging the sufficiency and quality of shelter for homeless men in New York City, and plaintiffs Callahan, Fox, Roig, James Hayes, James Spellman and Paul Toole, having filed their Amended Complaint on March 31, 1980, and Defendants Hugh L. Carey, as Governor of the State of New York, and Barbara Blum, as Commissioner of the State of New York Department of Social Services (the "State defendants"), having filed their Amended Answer on January 19, 1981 therein denying the material allegations of the Amended Complaint, and Defendants Edward Koch, as Mayor of the City of New York, Stanley Brezenoff, as Administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration, and Calvin Reid, as director of the Shelter Care Center for Men (the "Men's Shelter") (the "City defendants"), having filed their Amended Answer on January 19, 1981 therein denying the material allegations of the Amended Complaint, and Plaintiffs and defendants by their respective attorneys, having consented to the entry of this Final Judgment without any final adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein and without this Final Judgment constituting any evidence or admission by any party

NOW, therefore, without final adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein and without this Final Judgment constituting any evidence or admission by any party hereto with respect to any issue, and upon consent of all parties, it is hereby

ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED as follows:

Provision of Shelter

1. 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 to physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter.
2. The City defendants shall provide shelter at facilities operated in accordance with the standards set forth in this paragraph as soon as practicable and not later than September 1, 1981. The term "shelter facility" refers to the Keener Building, Camp LaGuardia, the Men's Shelter and any other facility used by the City defendants to shelter homeless men. This paragraph does not apply to the Bowery lodging houses (Palace, Kenton, Union, Sunshine, Delevan and Stevenson) presently used by the City defendants to shelter homelessmen (the "hotels"); if the City defendants choose to shelter homeless men in any additional Bowery lodging house, they will advise counsel for the plaintiffs and a good faith effort shall be made by plaintiffs and the City defendants to agree to operating standards for such facilities.
 - (b) Each bed shall be equipped with both a clean, comfortable, well-constructed mattress standard in size for the bed and a clean, comfortable pillow of average size. *HELP USA Organization fails pillows are rarely distributed.*
 - (c) Each resident shall receive two clean sheets, a clean blanket, a clean pillow-case, a clean towel, soap and toilet tissue. A complete change of bed linens and towels will be made for each new resident and at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis. *HELP USA Organization fails to provide two clean sheets, a clean blanket, a clean pillow-case, a clean towel, soap and toilet tissue runs out often not more than possibly once. A complete change of bed linens and towels is possibly given once for each new resident and is not given at least once a week. If a resident asks for these items they are greeted with a argumentative and nasty attitude. The resident gives up and walks away with nothing.*
 - (e) Laundry services shall be available to each resident not less than twice a week. *HELP USA Organization fails the staff allows a resident to wash their clothing on an assigned day and time once a week. If you miss that day and if they do not want to give you a pass to wash your clothing you must wait until the following week to clean your belongings.*
 - (f) A staff attendant to resident ratio of at least 2 per cent shall be maintained in each shelter facility at all times. *HELP USA Organization fails on the weekends Saturday and Sunday. Please check for proper staff coverage from Monday through Friday.*
 - (g) A staff attendant trained in first aid shall be on duty in each shelter facility at all times. *HELP USA Organization fails.*
 - (h) A minimum of ten hours per week of group recreation shall be available for each resident a each shelter facility. *HELP USA Organization fails.*

(i) Residents shall be permitted to leave and to return to shelter facilities at reasonable hours and without hindrance. *HELP USA Organization fails.*

(j) Residents of shelter facilities shall be provided transportation (public or private) to enable them to return to the site where they applied for shelter. *HELP USA Organization fails.*

(k) Residents of shelter facilities shall be permitted to leave the facility by 7:00 a.m. if they so desire.

(l) Residents shall be permitted to receive and send mail and other correspondence without interception or interference. *HELP USA Organization fails between 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM residents cannot access their United States Mail Monday through Saturday. Often times United States Postal mail is missing the mail that is most frequently missing is the HRA Public Assistance correspondences.*

(m) The City defendants shall make a good faith effort to provide pay telephones for use by the residents at each shelter facility. The City defendants shall bear any reasonable cost for the installation and maintenance of such telephones. *HELP USA Organization fails. HRA pays the HELP USA Organization \$33.00 per month per resident with an active Public Assistance Case for onsite phone usage we are not allowed to use the landline phones. The instances when we are allowed to use the landline phone there is no privacy and staffs listens to the resident's conversation and violates their Right to Privacy.*

Bowery Lodging Houses

4. Hotels presently used by the City defendants shall meet the following standards at the time of entry of this judgment and the City defendants shall maintain such standards thereafter:

(a) Each resident shall receive a bed, a clean mattress, two clean sheets, one clean blanket, one clean pillow and one clean pillowcase. A complete change of bed linens (sheets and pillow case) shall be made for each new resident and at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis. *HELP USA Organization fails residents possibly once receive two clean sheets, one clean blanket, one clean pillow and one clean pillowcase. Almost never a complete change of bed linens (sheets and pillow case) are made. New residents may receive some items once. No items are supplied once a week or as needed ever.*

(b) Each resident shall be supplied with a clean towel, soap and toilet issue. A clean towel shall be provided to each new resident and towels shall be changed at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis. *HELP USA Organization fails possibly once then not again.*

(c) There shall be two trained security guards in the Palace Hotel between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. and one trained security guard between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. There shall be one trained security guard in the Kenton Hotel between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. These security guards shall file with the City defendants incident reports on any incidents of violence or attempted violence occurring in the hotels. *Do the HELP USA Organization Safety employees have Security Guard Licenses from the State of New York? If some do not those employees fail.*

(f) Heat shall be maintained in accordance with New York City guidelines for rental residences. *HELP USA Organization fails the heat and hot water are frequently purposely turned off, the boiler is in need of service, or the oil runs out every winter whether Code Blue or not.*

(g) Cleanliness shall be maintained throughout the hotels at all times. Intake Centers *HELP USA Organization fails with the Bathrooms they are not clean or sanitized as frequently or as thoroughly as necessary for a population of one-hundred and twenty women.*

Appendix A

Space Requirements for Shelters for Adults

(1) Every facility shall have space for dining and leisure activities.

(2) Sleeping areas shall not be considered as dining or leisure areas.

(3) Space provided for dining shall be:

- (i) at least 120 square feet in facilities with a certified bed capacity of less than 10 beds;
- (ii) at least 12 square feet for each additional certified bed. *An outside agency not the Department of Homeless Services or the Coalition for the Homeless possibly an Engineer should measure dining area HELP USA Organization.*

(4) Space provided for leisure areas shall be:

- (i) at least 120 square feet in facilities with a certified bed capacity of less than 10 beds.
- (ii) at least 12 square feet per bed in facilities with a certified bed capacity of 10 or more beds. *An outside agency not the Department of Homeless Services or the Coalition for the Homeless possibly an Engineer should measure the leisure area HELP USA Organization.*

(7) Baths and Toilet Facilities. There shall be a minimum of one toilet and one lavatory for each six residents and a minimum of one tub or shower for each ten residents.

122 residents divide by 6 equals 20.333 or 21 for each toilet and lavatory, there are 14 for the female residents and 1 for the male tenants HELP USA Organization fails.

(8) Sleeping Rooms

(i) In single occupancy sleeping rooms, a minimum of **80 square feet** per resident shall be provided; *An outside agency not the Department of Homeless Services or the Coalition for the Homeless possibly an Engineer should measure the single sleeping rooms area onsite at the HELP USA Organization.*

(ii) In sleeping rooms for two or more residents, a minimum of **60 square feet** per resident shall be provided; *An outside agency not the Department of Homeless Services or the Coalition for the Homeless possibly an Engineer should measure the two or more resident sleeping rooms onsite at the HELP USA Organization.*

(iii) A minimum of **3 feet**, which is included in the per resident minima, shall be maintained between beds and for aisles; *An outside agency not the Department of Homeless Services or the Coalition for the Homeless possibly an Engineer should measure the two and three resident dorms rooms at the HELP USA Organization. Many dorms will fail.*

(iv) Partitions separating sleeping areas from other areas shall be ceiling high and smoke tight; *HELP USA Organization fails on all two and three resident dorms as they are not smoke tight.*

(v) All bedrooms shall be:

- (a) above grade level;
- (b) adequately lighted;
- (c) adequately ventilated;

(vi) light and ventilation for bedrooms shall be by means of windows in an outside wall;

(vii) bedrooms shall open directly into exit corridors;

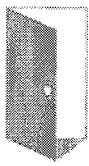
(viii) bedrooms may not be used as a passageway, corridor or access to other bedrooms. *An outside agency not the Department of Homeless Services or the Coalition for the Homeless possibly an Engineer should check the three resident dorms at the HELP USA Organization. Many will fail.*

(9) Adequate storage space for cleaning supplies and equipment shall be provided. *HELP USA Organization fails.*

Appendix B

(2) The operator is able to meet the **food and shelter needs** of all persons in residence; *HELP USA Organization fails because food frequently runs out and residents are hungry. Routinely the staff makes residents sit in the lobby for days waiting for a bed.*

(3) The facility remains in compliance with applicable local building, fire protection and health and sanitation codes; *HELP USA Organization fails on all accounts.*



coalition
for the
homeless

The Callahan Consent Decree

Establishing a Legal Right to Shelter for Homeless Individuals in New York City

Following is the complete text of the 1981 consent decree in Callahan v. Carey, the class action litigation brought by Coalition for the Homeless that established a legal right to shelter for homeless individuals in New York City. The Callahan litigation was filed in 1979 on behalf of homeless men in New York City, and argued that a right to shelter for the homeless existed under the New York State Constitution. The right to shelter was extended to homeless women by Eldredge v. Koch (1983), also brought by Coalition for the Homeless, and to homeless families with children by McCain v. Koch (1983), brought by the Legal Aid Society.

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

COUNTY OF NEW YORK

ROBERT CALLAHAN, CLAYTON W. FOX,
THOMAS DAMIAN ROIG, JAMES HAYES,
JAMES SPELLMAN and PAULE E. TOOLE,
on their own behalves and on behalf
of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

-against-

HUGH L. CAREY, as Governor of the State
of New York, BABARA BLUM, as Commissioner
of the New York State Department of Social
Service, EDWARD I. KOCH, as Mayor of the
City of New York, JAMES A. KRAUSKOPF, as
Commissioner of the New York City Human
Resources Administration, and CALVIN REID,
as Director of the Shelter Care Center
for Men,

Defendants.

Index No.
42582/79

FINAL
JUDGMENT
BY CONSENT

Plaintiffs Robert Callahan, Clayton Fox and Thomas Roig, having brought this action on October 2, 1979 challenging the sufficiency and quality of shelter for homeless men in New York City, and plaintiffs Callahan, Fox, Roig, James Hayes, James Spellman and Paul Toole, having filed their Amended Complaint on March 31, 1980, and

defendants Hugh L. Carey, as Governor of the State of New York, and Barbara Blum, as Commissioner of the State of New York Department of Social Services (the "State defendants"), having filed their Amended Answer on January 19, 1981 therein denying the material allegations of the Amended Complaint, and defendants Edward Koch, as Mayor of the City of New York, Stanley Brezenoff, as Administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration, and Calvin Reid, as director of the Shelter Care Center for Men (the "Men's Shelter") (the "City defendants"), having filed their Amended Answer on January 19, 1981 therein denying the material allegations of the Amended Complaint, and Plaintiffs and defendants by their respective attorneys, having consented to the entry of this Final Judgment without any final adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein and without this Final Judgment constituting any evidence or admission by any party hereto with respect to any such issue:

NOW, therefore, without final adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein and without this Final Judgment constituting any evidence or admission by any party hereto with respect to any issue, and upon consent of all parties, it is hereby

ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED as follows:

Provision of Shelter

1. 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 to physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter.

Shelter Standards

2. The City defendants shall provide shelter at facilities operated in accordance with the standards set forth in this paragraph as soon as practicable and not later than September 1, 1981. The term "shelter facility" refers to the Keener Building, Camp LaGuardia, the Men's Shelter and any other facility used by the City defendants to shelter homeless men. This paragraph does not apply to the Bowery lodging houses (Palace, Kenton, Union, Sunshine, Delevan and Stevenson) presently used by the City defendants to shelter homeless men (the "hotels"); if the City defendants choose to shelter homeless men in any additional Bowery lodging house, they will advise counsel for the plaintiffs and a good faith effort shall be made by plaintiffs and the City defendants to agree to operating standards for such facilities.

(a) Each resident shall receive a bed of a minimum of 30 inches in width, substantially constructed, in good repair and equipped with clean springs.

(b) Each bed shall be equipped with both a clean, comfortable, well-constructed mattress standard in size for the bed and a clean, comfortable pillow of average size.

(c) Each resident shall receive two clean sheets, a clean blanket, a clean pillow case, a clean towel, soap and toilet tissue. A complete change of bed linens and towels will be made for each new resident and at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis.

(d) Each resident shall receive a lockable storage unit.

(e) Laundry services shall be available to each resident not less than twice a week.

(f) A staff attendant to resident ratio of at least 2 per cent shall be maintained in each shelter facility at all times.

(g) A staff attendant trained in first aid shall be on duty in each shelter facility at all times.

(h) A minimum of ten hours per week of group recreation shall be available for each resident at each shelter facility.

(i) Residents shall be permitted to leave and to return to shelter facilities at reasonable hours and without hindrance.

(j) Residents of shelter facilities shall be provided transportation (public or private) to enable them to return to the site where they applied for shelter.

(k) Residents of shelter facilities shall be permitted to leave the facility by 7:00 a.m. if they so desire.

(l) Residents shall be permitted to receive and send mail and other correspondence without interception or interference.

(m) The City defendants shall make a good faith effort to provide pay telephones for use by the residents at each shelter facility. The City defendants shall bear any reasonable cost for the installation and maintenance of such telephones.

3. The capacity of shelter facilities shall be determined as follows:

(a) The capacity of newly constructed shelter facilities shall comply with the standards set forth in Appendix A, except in cases of emergency need as defined in Appendix B.

(b) The City defendants shall disclose to plaintiffs' counsel any plan to convert an existing structure to a shelter facility and the intended capacity for the facility at least 30 days in advance of the implementation or execution of any such conversion plan. A reasonable capacity for each such facility shall be established. The standards set forth in Appendix A shall be used as guidelines in determining whether the planned capacity of the City defendants is reasonable.

(c) Effective December 31, 1981, the capacity of the Keener Building shall not exceed _____ except in cases of emergency need as defined in Appendix B, in which case the maximum number of men who may be sheltered in the Keener Building is _____. Between the date of entry of this judgment and December 31, 1981, the capacity of the Keener Building shall not exceed_____.

(d) The capacity of Camp LaGuardia shall comply - by construction of new dormitory buildings - with the standards set forth in Appendix A, except in cases of emergency need as defined in Appendix B, as soon as practicable and not later than December 31, 1982, except that the individual rooms in the "Main Building" may be used as sleeping rooms for one person each. The construction start of such new dormitory buildings shall occur no later than March 1, 1982.

Bowery Lodging Houses

4. Hotels presently used by the City defendants shall meet the following standards at the time of entry of this judgment and the City defendants shall maintain such standards thereafter:

(a) Each resident shall receive a bed, a clean mattress, two clean sheets, one clean blanket, one clean pillow and one clean pillow case. A complete change of bed linens (sheets and pillow case) shall be made for each new resident and at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis.

(b) Each resident shall be supplied with a clean towel, soap and toilet issue. A clean towel shall be provided to each new resident and towels shall be changed at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis.

(c) There shall be two trained security guards in the Palace Hotel between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. and one trained security guard between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. There shall be one trained security guard in the Kenton Hotel between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. These security guards shall file with the City defendants incident reports on any incidents of violence or attempted violence occurring in the hotels.

(d) Showers shall be available at the Men's Shelter beginning at 7 a.m. and signs advising hotel residents of that fact shall be posted at the front desk in each hotel and at the door of each bathroom in each hotel. Persons showering at the Men's Shelter shall be provided adequate supervision (including safeguarding of personal property), a clean towel, soap and, if requested, a delousing agent.

(e) A lockable storage unit of adequate size to store personal property shall be available either at the Men's Shelter or at the hotels for each man sheltered by the City defendants at hotels.

(f) Heat shall be maintained in accordance with New York City guidelines for rental residences.

(g) Cleanliness shall be maintained throughout the hotels at all times.

Intake Centers

5. The City defendants shall accept applications for shelter at the Men's Shelter, 8 East Third Street, New York, New York and at 529 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York (the "central intake center"). Applications for shelter shall be accepted at all times at the Men's Shelter, and applications for shelter shall be accepted at 529 Eighth Avenue between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., seven days per week. The City defendants shall provide direct transportation to shelter pursuant to paragraph 1, supra. The 529 Eighth Avenue intake center, shall be opened as a central intake center not later than September 1, 1981.

6. The City defendants shall operate additional satellite intake centers on a 24-hour basis Monday through Friday at the following locations:

(a) Harlem Hospital Center, 506 Lenox Avenue, New York, New York;

(b) King County Hospital Center, 451 Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, New York;

(c) Lincoln Hospital, 234 East 149th Street, Bronx, New York; and

(d) Queens Hospital Center, 82-69 164th Street, Jamaica, New York.

Men seeking shelter at the satellite intake centers shall be provided adequate fare for public transportation and clear written directions to either (i) a shelter facility, or (ii) a central intake center - according to the preference of the person seeking shelter. The City defendants shall provide direct transportation from the satellite intake centers to a shelter facility to all men who appear so physically or mentally disabled that they are unable to reach a shelter facility by public transportation. Satellite intake centers shall be opened not later than September 1, 1981. It is understood that the above satellite intake centers shall be operated in conjunction with borough crisis centers. In the event that the borough crisis center program is terminated, the City defendants may, in their discretion, reduce the hours of operation of the satellite intake centers to between 5 p.m. and 1 a.m.

7. The City defendants shall accept applications for shelter at shelter facilities providing that such applicants have applied for and have been found eligible for shelter by the City defendants within six months of the time of application at a shelter facility. Shelter facilities shall also provide shelter for one night to any person who has not previously applied for shelter who seeks shelter at a shelter facility after 8:00 p.m.

Community Participation

8. Each shelter facility, central intake center and satellite intake center, shall utilize the services of available community members to the maximum reasonable extent. These persons are not City employees or volunteers in a City sponsored program within the meaning of section 50(k) of the General Municipal Law and such persons shall execute statements to this effect.

Information

9. The City defendants shall provide applicants for shelter with clear written information concerning other public assistance benefits to which they may be entitled at the time applicants apply for shelter.

Compliance Monitoring

10. Defendant Krauskopf shall appoint qualified employees with no administrative responsibility for providing shelter to monitor defendants' shelter care program for men with respect to compliance with this decree.. These employees shall visit each shelter facility, central intake center, satellite intake center and hotel at least twice a month and will submit to defendant Krauskopf a written report at least twice a month describing compliance or lack thereof with each provision of the decree. These reports shall be made available to plaintiffs' counsel upon reasonable notice.

11. Plaintiffs' representatives shall have full access to all shelter facilities, central intake centers and satellite intake centers, and plaintiffs' counsel shall be provided access to any records relevant to the enforcement and monitoring of this decree.

12. Defendant Krauskopf shall deliver by hand each day to plaintiffs' counsel a statement listing:

- (a) The number of men who applied for shelter at each central intake center and at each satellite intake center;
- (b) The number of men who were provided shelter at each shelter facility or hotel;
- (c) The number of men who were denied shelter at each shelter facility, central intake center and satellite intake center and the reason for each such denial;
- (d) The number of men who were accepted for shelter at each central intake center and satellite intake center who did not reach a shelter facility; and
- (e) The number of men who were provided direct transportation from each satellite intake center to a shelter facility.

13. It is the intention of defendant Krauskopf to conduct daily inspections of the Palace Hotel and to deliver reports of such inspections each day to plaintiffs. It is also the intention of defendant Krauskopf to conduct inspections of the other hotels used by defendants to shelter homeless men not less than three times per week and to deliver reports of such inspections not less than three times a week to plaintiffs' counsel. A sample of the inspection report form to be used is attached hereto as Exhibit C.

No Waivers

14. Nothing in this judgment permits any person, not-for-profit corporation, charitable organization, or governmental entity or subdivision to operate a shelter, as defined in New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Title 18, § 485.2(C), in violation of the requirements of the New York Social Services Law, Title 18, of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, or any other applicable law.

15. Nothing in this judgment should operate or be construed as res judicata or collateral estoppel so as to foreclose any signatory party from any claim or defense in any subsequent administrative or judicial proceeding.

16. Nothing in this judgment shall be deemed to authorize or to prevent the operation by the New York City Human Resources Administration of the Keener Building on Wards Island as a shelter or shelter facility after October 15, 1981, except in accord with a valid contract or agreement among the New York State Department of Social Services, the New York State Office of Mental Health and the New York City Human Resources Agency and with an operating certificate issued by the New York State Department of Social Services.

17. The Commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services agrees to reimburse the New York City Human Resources Agency for the operation of a shelter facility or shelter facilities referred to in this judgment pursuant to New York Social Services Law 153, except if such shelter facility fails to comply with the requirements for shelters contained in the New York Social Services Law or the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Title 18; provided that nothing in this judgment can or does obligate the Legislature of the State of New York to appropriate funds.

18. Nothing in this judgment shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the authority of the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services to enforce and carry out her

duties under the New York Social Services Law, Title 18, of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, or any other applicable law.

Continuing Jurisdiction

19. Jurisdiction is retained by this Court for the purpose of enabling any of the parties to this Final Judgment to apply to this Court at any time for such further orders and directions as may be necessary or appropriate for the construction, modification, or termination of this entire judgment or of any applicable provisions thereof, for the enforcement of compliance therewith, and for the punishment of violations thereof.

New York, New York
August 1981

Appendix A

Space Requirements for Shelters for Adults

- (1) Every facility shall have space for dining and leisure activities.
- (2) Sleeping areas shall not be considered as dining or leisure areas.
- (3) Space provided for dining shall be:
 - (i) at least 120 square feet in facilities with a certified bed capacity of less than 10 beds;
 - (ii) at least 12 square feet for each additional certified bed.
- (4) Space provided for leisure areas shall be:
 - (i) at least 120 square feet in facilities with a certified bed capacity of less than 10 beds.
 - (ii) at least 12 square feet per bed in facilities with a certified bed capacity of 10 or more beds
- (5) When not in use, dining space may be used, with written approval from the New York State Department of Social Services ("Department"), as leisure space.
- (6) An operator may request Department approval of a waiver to reduce the square footage requirements for dining and leisure space. A waiver shall be granted only upon demonstration by the operator that the food service and the program needs of residents can be met.
- (7) Baths and Toilet Facilities

There shall be a minimum of one toilet and one lavatory for each six residents and a minimum of one tub or shower for each ten residents.
- (8) Sleeping Rooms
 - (i) In single occupancy sleeping rooms, a minimum of 80 square feet per resident shall be provided;
 - (ii) In sleeping rooms for two or more residents, a minimum of 60 square feet per resident shall be provided;
 - (iii) A minimum of 3 feet, which is included in the per resident minima, shall be maintained between beds and for aisles;
 - (iv) Partitions separating sleeping areas from other areas shall be ceiling high and smoke tight;
 - (v) All bedrooms shall be:
 - (a) above grade level;
 - (b) adequately lighted;
 - (c) adequately ventilated;

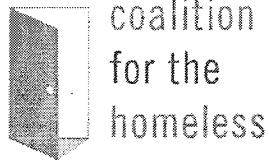
(vi) light and ventilation for bedrooms shall be by means of windows in an outside wall;
(vii) bedrooms shall open directly into exit corridors;
(viii) bedrooms may not be used as a passageway, corridor or access to other bedrooms.

(9) Adequate storage space for cleaning supplies and equipment shall be provided.

Appendix B

Short term emergency shelter may be provided to a number of persons in excess of the capacity of the facility provided that all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) Snow emergencies, excessive cold or other similar circumstances create an emergency need for additional shelter space;
- (2) The operator is able to meet the food and shelter needs of all persons in residence;
- (3) The facility remains in compliance with applicable local building, fire protection and health and sanitation codes;
- (4) The operator advises plaintiffs' counsel of the maximum number of persons to be cared for during an emergency situation in any facility as soon as possible after an emergency situation develops;
- (5) The operator provides shelter to additional persons no more than 30 days in any calendar year; and
- (6) The operator maintains records which document adherence to these conditions.



THE PEOPLE'S CALLAHAN

Minimum Standards for New York City SINGLE Adult Shelters Established in the Callahan Consent Decree

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SHELTER

The *Callahan v. Carey* consent decree, signed in 1981, established the right to shelter in New York. By signing the decree, the city agreed to have certain minimum standards in effect in all of their shelters. Some of these standards are summarized below.

BEDS: All beds are to be at least three feet apart and not placed headboard to headboard. Each bed must be at least 30 inches in width. Each bed frame must be clean and in good repair.

MATTRESSES: Mattresses are to be clean, undamaged, well-constructed, comfortable and proper size for the frame.

LINENS: The following items are to be issued to each shelter resident:

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| A. 1 clean pillow | C. 1 clean blanket | E. 1 clean towel. |
| B. 2 clean sheets. | D. 1 clean pillow case | |

One clean set of linens is to be provided each week and more often as needed.

TOILETRIES: The following items are to be issued to each shelter resident on arrival and on an as needed basis:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| A. Soap | E. Lotion | G. Feminine hygiene |
| B. Deodorant | F. Shaving cream | (women's and co-ed |
| C. Toothpaste | H. Shampoo | facilities) |
| D. Comb | | |

Razors are to be provided based on the procedure of the individual shelter.

LOCKERS: Each resident must be issued a secured locker.

SHOWER/BATHROOMS: There must be one clean, well maintained and working shower for every fifteen residents. There must be one clean, well maintained and working toilet (and/or urinal) and sink for every ten residents. Toilet tissue must be provided.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service must be provided at least twice a week. A schedule of days and times must be prominently posted.

STAFF: There must be one staff member trained in first aid on each shift.

RECREATION: The shelter must provide at least ten hours of recreation time per week for all residents.

MAIL: Residents are allowed to send and receive mail without interception and without interference. A schedule of pick-up times must be prominently posted.

If you notice violations of any of the above requirements, or if you want more information about The *Callahan* Consent Decree, the rights of shelter residents or crisis intervention, please come to:

The Coalition for the Homeless

129 Fulton Street in Manhattan, Monday through Friday. Come early (by 8am) as we only see a limited number of clients each day on a first come first served basis. Take the A, C, 2, 3, 4, 5, or J train to the Fulton Street Station.

If you have been denied a shelter bed you may call the Coalition Sanction Hotline at 855- NYC-CFTH (855-692-2384)

HELP USA Callahan Inspection Theft August 8, 2014

Crime

Grievance

Wendy O'Shields vs. HELP USA Organization

237 West 107th Street

New York, NY 10025

Stacey May, Shelter Director

Phone: 646-738-7700 x605

Fax: 212-866-0061

smay@helpusa.org

Let the Record Show

Callahan Inspection

The HELP USA Staff stole the one hundred and twenty Residents new blankets, new pillows, care packages, sheets, and all other new items that were placed on the beds for their use.

Is theft allowed during a Callahan inspection? Stealing from the Homeless is a crime and reprehensible.

This is a Grand Larceny Criminal Charge. Prosecute.

HELP USA Callahan Inspection Theft February 7, 2015

Criminal Grievance

Wendy O'Shields vs. HELP USA Organization

237 West 107th Street

New York, NY 10025

Ms. N. Richards, Shelter Director

Phone: 646-738-7700 x605

Fax: 212-866-0061

nrichards@helpusa.org

Let the Record Show

2015 February 5th Callahan Inspection the HELP USA Organization again thieved the Homeless Residents Property. Their Care Packages were placed on Residents assigned beds for the Department of Homeless Services and the Coalition for the Homeless representatives to see these items included Blankets, Sheets, Pillows, Pillowcases, Towels, Washcloths, Toiletries: Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Shampoo, Conditioner, and Body Lotion, Hair Brush, Comb, Kleenex, Sanitary Napkins, and other items for personal usage.

Please charge and prosecute the HELP USA Staff with Grand Theft upon finding that a hundred and twenty Homeless Residents Property was removed from the premises promptly after the Callahan Inspection was completed on February 5, 2015. Please investigate.

HELP USA Callahan Inspection Theft August 7, 2015

Criminal Grievance

Wendy O'Shields vs. HELP USA Organization

237 West 107th Street

New York, NY 10025

Ms. N. Richards, Shelter Director

Phone: 646-738-7700 x605

Fax: 212-866-0061

nrichards@helpusa.org

Let the Record Show

2015 August 7th Callahan Inspection the HELP USA Organization for the third time thieved the Homeless Residents Property. Their Care Packages were placed near the Dorm door inside the room for the Department of Homeless Services and the Coalition for the Homeless representatives to see. These items included Blankets, Sheets, Pillows, Pillowcases, Towels, Washcloths, Toiletries: Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Shampoo, Conditioner, and Body Lotion, Hair Brush, Comb, Kleenex, Sanitary Napkins, and other items for personal usage. All very needed by the Homeless residents!

It appears that the HELP USA Organization routinely steals from the residents. The boldness to continue their thieving with the competent authorities watching is a clear challenge to the law! To thieve during the Callahan Inspection is particularly reprehensible and perverse seeing that his death was the law that set forth the standards for the City of New York Department of Homeless Services Shelters.

Please charge and prosecute the HELP USA Organization's Staff with Grand Theft upon finding a hundred and twenty two or more Homeless Residents Property was removed from the premises promptly after the Callahan Inspection was completed on August 7, 2015.

Please prosecute criminally and charge the staff civilly.

Please investigate.

**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: Commissioner Steven Banks

Address: Human Resources Administration

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: Michael Polenberg

Address: _____

I represent: Safe Horizon

Address: re: homeless youth + DV survivors

**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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy O'Shields

Address: _____

I represent: Safety Net Activists

Address: 40 Rector St, 9th Fl NY NY 10006

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: 12/9/15

Name: Christy PARQUE (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 446 W. 33rd St 10001

I represent: Homeless Services United

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: 12/9/15

Name: CHRISTINA WARDON (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 763 Fox Street, Bronx NY 10455

I represent: NYC Residents & myself

Address: All Boroughs of Residents

**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: _____

Name: Nicole Bramstedt (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Urban Pathways

Address: 575 8th Avenue, 16th Floor,
NY, NY ~~10018~~ 10018

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: Jeff Foreman

Address: 30 E. 33rd Street, NY

I represent: Care for the Homeless

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: Ryan Hickey

Address: _____

I represent: Picture the Homeless

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: Jeremiah Murphy

Address: _____

I represent: Picture the Homeless

Address: 104 East 126th 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: Floyd Parks

Address: _____

I represent: Picture the Homeless

Address: 104 East 126th 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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donna DeLong

Address: _____

I represent: Picture the Assistance Group

Address: 7 Hanover Square

**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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Richard Jimenez

Address: _____

I represent: New York Legal Assistance Group

Address: 7 Hanover Sq, NY, NY 10007

**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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name:

Kevin Kennelly

Address:

I represent:

NY Legal Assistance Group

Address:

7 Hanover Square

**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: 12/5/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name:

Kevin McGinn

Address:

I represent:

Garment District BID

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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name:

Clayton Brooksville Realty

Address:

2010 7th Ave #6B / NY NY

I represent:

Covertail House / Coalition

Address:

460 W 48th Street

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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judith Goldner, Giselle Rautner

Address: _____

I represent: The Legal Aid Society / Coalition

Address: For the Homeless

**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: 12/9/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin McGinn

Address: 209 W 38 St

I represent: Garment District Alliance

Address: 209 W 38 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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Gilbert Taylor

Address: _____

I represent: DHS

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms