

**Testimony by**  
**The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development**  
**to the**  
**New York City Council Committee on Housing & Buildings**  
**regarding Housing Lotteries and Introductions 249, 357, 550, 564, 716, and 1211**

**Monday, January 14, 2019**

Good morning Chair Cornegy, and members of the Committee on Housing and Buildings. I am Molly Park, Deputy Commissioner for Development at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HPD's housing lotteries and corresponding legislative package. I am also joined today by Margaret Brown, Associate Commissioner for Housing Opportunity and Program Services, and Baaba Halm, Assistant Commissioner for Economic Opportunity and Regulatory Compliance.

Affordable housing is one of the biggest concerns that New Yorkers face, and correspondingly, it is one of the top priorities of Mayor de Blasio's administration. Our housing lottery process is a vital way to connect New Yorkers to the affordable homes we are producing at record pace.

***Creating and Connecting Affordable Homes to New Yorkers in Need***

It is no secret that there is a housing crisis in New York City. Although we now have the largest housing stock on record, the City's vacancy rate remains low at 3.63%. Building on our successes during the first few years of this administration, we accelerated and expanded our housing plan to achieve 300,000 affordable homes by 2026, and released *Housing New York 2.0*, a suite of new programs, partnerships, and strategies to help thousands more families and seniors afford their rent, buy a first home, and stay in the neighborhoods they love. As a result, five years into the plan, we have established a new baseline for how affordable housing can and should be built in New York City. Already, this administration has financed over 110,000 affordable apartments through Fiscal Year (FY18) 2018, 43,000 of which serve low income individuals making less than roughly \$36,500 per year, or \$47,000 for a family of three.

As we accelerate and expand the goals of Housing New York, we are also looking to speed up the delivery of the affordable housing we are producing and ensure those homes serve the New Yorkers who need them the most. Housing Connect, the City's affordable housing lottery system, allows New Yorkers to search for affordable housing, fill out a profile, and apply for multiple homes with a few clicks of a button. Since launching in 2013, over 2 million people have made accounts on Housing Connect, 1.1 million have submitted applications, and 23,000 households have—or soon will—move into new homes. Now six years after this revolutionary

application was created, HPD is currently building our new and improved Housing Connect 2.0 system.

We have learned a lot through operating Housing Connect over the past six years, and Housing Connect 2.0 (2.0) will provide New Yorkers with a more transparent and user-friendly experience. 2.0 will automate, standardize, and streamline the applicant eligibility review process with an integrated information exchange between housing developers, applicants, and HPD. The new system will also facilitate additional HPD oversight and reporting on housing lottery indicators. Stakeholder engagement has been critical in crafting this system, we engaged with housing developers and marketing agents, applicant advocates and service providers, financial counseling experts, several other agencies and, of course, applicants themselves. We are also working with behavioral research experts to ensure 2.0 will more easily guide users through complex questions, such as how to calculate their income and specifying what types of housing best fits their needs.

As we push forward with these innovations, we will also be looking at every aspect of the Housing Connect system through the lens of fair housing and how we can promote equal opportunities for all New Yorkers. When the Trump administration rolled back the implementation of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing requirement, the de Blasio administration launched our *Where We Live NYC* process. HPD is working with 30 sister agencies to study, understand, and address patterns of residential segregation and how these patterns impact New Yorkers' access to opportunities – including jobs, education, safety, public transit, and positive health outcomes. With these goals in mind, HPD also updated our marketing policies that developers must follow to further limit how credit history impacts housing applicants, address and clarify complexities in income calculations, ensure special protections for survivors of domestic violence, and make the lottery selection process more efficient. These updates demonstrate the City's continued commitment to create more opportunities for all New Yorkers. Importantly, developers must also meet all of the steps outlined in the published marketing requirements before they are able to go forward with selecting applicants.

HPD has also been very focused on expanding our existing outreach tools and education efforts. We currently have robust communication requirements during the marketing process, including but not limited to outreach to local Community Boards, elected officials, and the general public through online and print advertisements both citywide and local.

Understanding that some may find applying for projects to be complicated, HPD provides resources to lottery applicants in a variety of ways. Besides hosting biweekly marketing seminars for potential lottery applicants to teach them about the process, our Housing Ambassador program partners with community-based service providers such as IMPACCT Brooklyn or the Mutual Housing Association of New York who help individuals prepare and apply for open

lotteries. HPD's Ready to Rent initiative also provides free one-on-one financial counseling and assistance with affordable housing applications; and our resource fairs, marketing seminars, and mobile van allow us to assist New Yorkers directly in their communities. Thanks to the City Council, we've also been able to translate application guides into 17 languages.

With this robust and aggressive work in mind, we appreciate the Council's shared goals to increase access to our lottery system, ensure transparency without compromising individual applicant's privacy, and make it as efficient as possible. We are happy to discuss further many of the bills on today's agenda relating to the lottery process. Importantly, we want to keep in mind the ongoing efforts to build out Housing Connect 2.0 so that we are not duplicating the work already being done or codifying practices that will no longer be relevant moving forward.

### ***Doing More for Homeless New Yorkers***

Developing affordable housing for a wide swath of New Yorkers is a core component of HPD's mission and we are deeply committed to addressing homelessness in New York City. As part of our efforts to expand housing production for the formerly homeless while also ensuring that these apartments continue to be distributed in every neighborhood where HPD is doing business, many of our term sheets have 10% or more of the units set aside for homeless individuals and families.

For the benefit of the public, I want to take a step back to explain the process of building or preserving affordable housing in New York City. This work is a public/private partnership, with the City providing gap financing to projects. This has allowed us to effectively use public subsidies in exchange for record levels of affordable housing production not seen anywhere else in the country. A typical affordable housing deal has five or six sources of financing, and it is not uncommon to see even more. These sources are both private and public, at all levels of government, each with its own requirements and restrictions. Losing even one financing source due to incompatible restrictions can stop a project in its tracks. Our hard work packaging together these multiple funding streams not only allows the projects to be built in the first place, but also ensures the financial solvency of the building and therefore a stable housing source for New Yorkers.

Our term sheets, which are available online for all to see, set the parameters for each of our subsidy programs with our many partners in development finance: they outline eligible borrowers and sponsors; required income and rent tiers; how much financing is available on a per-unit basis; equity requirements; design requirements; eligible real estate tax benefits; and other important loan terms. In development finance, term sheets are a critical way to structure and give shape to our programs, and to give consistent guidance to our many partners.

We also continually make tweaks to our term sheets in order to reflect the changing needs of the city's residents, feedback from our many partners, the ever-changing housing market, and the available funding streams at all levels of government. In 2017, we re-tooled our most popular term sheets to require homeless set-asides, and when we see more can be done then we do more. The ELLA (Extremely Low & Low-Income Affordability) and Mix and Match (mixed income) programs now both include 10% homeless set-asides. We have also included homeless set-asides – effective upon re-rental – in nearly all our rental preservation programs. These new set-asides, along with the 30% set-aside in the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA) program, and 60% SHLP set-aside, have enabled us to more than double the rate of our homeless housing production since the onset of *Housing New York*. During the second half of FY 2014, we were producing homeless apartments at a rate of about 1,000 homes annually. In calendar year 2018, we closed on more than 2,500 homeless apartments for a record number. In total, we have created and preserved approximately 10,000 apartments for formerly homeless households since January of 2014.

I think we share the same goals. Speaker Johnson, Council Member Salamanca, Chair Cornegy, and so many sitting here today have worked with us to bring important projects to their communities with units for the formerly homeless. I work at HPD because I deeply believe in housing New Yorkers who need the most help. I used to run the agency's Section 8 program, which is one of the best tools for providing housing assistance to low income families. In my current role, I take great pride that we have increased housing production for both homeless New Yorkers and the lowest income households. However, I do have real concerns about the mechanism proposed in Intro 1211 to reach our shared goal.

Our term sheets must remain highly flexible to respond to outside factors in addition to our policy changes. In 2009, during an especially down housing market, roughly 50% of all new construction in New York City was financed by HPD. We had to stretch our dollars as efficiently as possible to continue the work. Although we are not currently in a major recession, the last two years have seen changing federal regulations and a substantial drop in the value of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit that require updates to our processes. Of course, the ongoing shutdown of parts of the federal government, including HUD, has big potential consequences for the millions of Americans who rely on federal housing assistance. I can say that the operations of HPD have not yet been impacted, but we all know that the longer this disruption in the basic functions of our federal government goes on, the worse it gets. Adding additional layers of restriction through unbending legislation, while other factors fluctuate widely, will make these deals increasingly difficult to complete.

We look forward to having further discussions with the Council to find alternative ways to achieve our shared goals.

### *Safe, Quality Construction of NYC's Affordable Homes*

Lastly, I would like to speak to HPD's multifaceted approach to ensuring that our affordable housing development partners meet the expectations of the agency from project conception through construction completion.

During the pre-development phase of a project, HPD has a formal Integrity Review process to conduct extensive background checks that review code violations, municipal charges and arrears, performance on prior government and private projects, criminal investigations/convictions, enforcement actions, and administrative proceedings.

The agency also provides architectural, engineering, environmental, cost valuation, and construction support services for its new construction and preservation projects. Through a new unit formed in 2012 to make these efforts more robust, HPD ensures developers/sponsors, consultant architects, and engineers comply with all applicable laws, regulations, codes, rules, standards, and HPD requirements. In addition, projects with significant issues during the construction period may be subject to increased oversight and monitoring by the unit, and referred to DOB for construction code violations.

Further, HPD has made significant strides in combatting wage theft. HPD hosts pre-award conferences attended by contractors and subcontractors to review prevailing wage and other requirements, and the Labor Monitoring Unit ensures that contractors and subcontractors working on HPD development projects subject to prevailing wage requirements comply with prevailing wage and labor laws during the course of construction. If the agency determines that prevailing wage violations have occurred, HPD may withhold payments until all outstanding issues are resolved and routinely shares information with law enforcement entities, including the NYC Department of Investigation and NYS Department of Labor, to take actions against contractors who engage in wage theft.

HPD may also place contractors with a history of construction quality issues or construction law violations on its Enhanced Review list. For these contractors, the agency reviews each project on a case-by-case basis to evaluate the participation of a contractor. If those contractors are allowed to proceed, the projects that they work on are subject to greater scrutiny prior to closing as well as proactive contractual and procedural measures during construction.

Finally, HPD has technical staff that receive and review complaints for post-construction conditions. In 2014, the agency hired a dedicated staff person to serve as a centralized intake point to accept complaints regarding post-construction conditions, assess how HPD should respond, and otherwise assist the homeowner or building owner in identifying the appropriate remedy. The staff person also tracks the outcome of each complaint and reports any findings of construction defects to other parts of the agency.

This interdisciplinary effort has become more robust over time and been effective to ensure that the vast majority of our projects result in safe and lawful construction practices, and therefore in quality affordable homes. Although we understand that Intro 357 is meant to give the agency additional tools to address construction issues in our projects, we are deeply concerned about the potential unintended consequences of this bill. HPD would not want to create an impression that it has a special relationship to certain contractors nor negate our recent work to encourage a wider array of businesses to participate in projects that HPD finances, especially M/WBEs. This legislation would limit the list to more established contractors and not support these emerging, mission-focused entities with close ties to their communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions.



**Testimony of Habitat for Humanity New York City**

**To the New York City Council Committee on  
Housing & Buildings**

**Concerning Intro 1211-2018 A Local Law to amend the administrative code  
of the city of New York, in relation to requiring developers who receive city  
financial assistance for housing development projects to set aside a  
certain percentage of created or preserved dwelling units for homeless  
individuals and families**

**January 14, 2019**

**Testimony respectfully submitted by:**  
Matthew Dunbar  
VP, External Affairs  
Habitat for Humanity New York City  
Check against comments

Good afternoon. My name is Matthew Dunbar, VP of External Affairs for Habitat for Humanity New York City. I want to begin by thanking Chair Cornegy, Councilmember Salamanca and the full Committee on Housing & Buildings for the invitation to testify on Intro 1211 and the need for greater investment in housing units affordable to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.

Habitat for Humanity New York City knows the power and importance of affordable housing as we've spent the past 35-years building and preserving more than 700 homes with low- to moderate-income families in all five boroughs. Habitat homeowners build side-by-side with volunteers to complete their home and the homes of their neighbors, concluding the process with an affordable mortgage and long-term housing stability.

While Habitat NYC has historically only built and rehabilitated affordable single- and multi-family homes for ownership, we have recently expanded our housing ministry with our first rental project currently in the ULURP process. We are honored to be a co-developer on Haven Green, a 123-unit, deeply affordable, LGBT-friendly, senior housing project in Little Italy with a 30% set-aside for formerly homeless seniors. It is only by prioritizing critical projects like Haven Green and increasing the number of units available to homeless individuals and families that we can truly impact the housing crisis felt most harshly by the most vulnerable among us.

Habitat for Humanity New York City greatly appreciates the Council's commitment to tackling our homelessness crisis with this legislation, but want to express Habitat NYC's concerns with it passing without amendments.

As drafted, the bill includes every type of housing project receiving public assistance, even homeownership projects. While this may be an oversight, Habitat NYC strongly objects to the City requiring any set-asides of affordable homeownership units requiring purchase by currently or formerly homeless households. Homeownership projects, which involve additional factors in the mortgage underwriting and approval processes – including debt-to-income ratios, longer-term employment histories, higher credit scores and sign-off for lending by banks, HPD, and often the State of NY Mortgage Agency – would put undo burden on both the developer sponsors as well as potential homebuyers. Homeownership developers would face difficulties in finding purchasers that would both qualify and complete the months long mortgage process and homeless New Yorkers face the need for more immediate rental housing solutions.

Based on our homeownership program history, Habitat NYC and SONYMA have never been able to sell a home to a currently homeless applicant. However, we have approved formerly homeless families and often sell Habitat homes to NYCHA residents whose vacated unit could be prioritized for households exiting

the shelter system. Affordable homeownership is a critical piece of the housing continuum in that homebuyers often create vacancies in public or rent stabilized housing units that end up leased to households facing greater housing instability. Affordable homeownership itself should not be viewed as a direct solution for those currently experiencing homelessness and requiring quicker and more flexible housing solutions.

Additionally, Habitat NYC has concerns about the project threshold being too low and its applicability to preservation projects seeking to remain or convert to low-income cooperatives. Including smaller properties and those cooperatives recovering from distress and seeking economic sustainability may create a financial burden. Without addressing how such projects might receive additional financial resources to ensure building sustainability and how homeless individuals and families in need of special services will be provided them in these smaller and cooperative projects, Habitat NYC will not be able to support such legislation.

Habitat NYC is dedicated to advocating for affordable housing policies in our city and we believe legislation like this will assist some of our city's most vulnerable residents. We encourage you to support a homeownership exemption amendment and clarify how the City will provide the additional funds to ensure smaller and preservation projects would be economically feasible.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding our position on this legislation and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the City in serving low-income families in need of affordable homeownership and expanding our impact to current and formerly homeless seniors through the approval and construction of Haven Green in Little Italy.



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**Testimony of Catherine Trapani, Executive Director, Homeless Services United  
The New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings  
January 14, 2019**

**Intro 1211: Requiring developers who receive city financial assistance for housing development projects to set aside a certain of created or preserved dwelling units for homeless individuals and families.**

Good morning, my name is Catherine Trapani and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United, an organization that represents approximately 50 mission-driven, nonprofit organizations providing a range of services to homeless New Yorkers including street outreach, prevention, shelter and aftercare services in all five boroughs. I want to thank the Committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to offer testimony on Council Member Salamanca's bill, Intro 1211.

The crisis of homelessness impacts approximately 62,000 New Yorkers using Department of Homeless Services shelters each night. Factoring in additional homeless people using the domestic violence and youth shelter systems along with persons living on the streets, the actual number of people experiencing homelessness is much higher. The Continuum of Care reported that 78,676 people were homeless at the annual 2018 Point in Time Count. Given the scope of this challenge facing our City, bold action is required to not only begin to change the trajectory and stem the growth of the homeless population but, to make real headway in reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness altogether.

The Mayor's plan to address homelessness dubbed "Turning the Tide" is an important first step. The plan includes a number of important initiatives that address the three essential components of ending the crisis of homelessness in our city (1) homeless prevention, (2) outreach and shelter services, and (3) permanent housing and many of the reforms have begun to take hold. For the first time in memory it appears as if the growth of the number of families experiencing homelessness has leveled off. This is welcome news and the de Blasio administration deserves credit for the progress that has been made; the tide is indeed starting to turn. Yet, given the scope and scale of the crisis of homelessness in New York City, turning the tide is simply not enough. We need to make sure that episodes of homelessness are rare, brief and never to be repeated. In order to do that, we need to make sure that access to truly affordable housing for homeless New Yorkers is robust and plentiful.

The Mayor has championed the largest "affordable housing" plan in New York's history promising to build or preserve 300,000 units of affordable housing. While the number of units pledged is certainly impressive, and in theory could be a boon for those hoping to address the homeless crisis, when you dig in to who the housing is being built for it becomes clear that there is a mismatch between the need and the number of units being produced. The New York Times published a story on housing lotteries on

1/11/19 noting that in many cases, landlord marketing “affordable units” to upper income households resort to listing them on Streeteasy and similar platforms to attract applicants looking for market rate homes given the prices are typically no lower than what is already available on the open market. While we appreciate that New Yorkers of all walks of life need housing, and some like one of the women profiled in the article would like to trade up to a more luxurious home<sup>1</sup>, surely it is clear that persons who have no housing at all should be the highest priority for any new housing efforts being funded by taxpayers. It therefore makes sense to set a minimum threshold for new projects to commit to setting aside at least 15% of new housing units to persons experiencing homelessness. Doing so could prevent “affordable housing” from becoming a gentrifying force that exacerbates homelessness by concentrating upper income individuals in so-called affordable projects with few if any resources for truly needy households. There would still be ample room in the plan to offer many middle and even upper income households access to housing they need but, it would better balance projects by ensuring that at least some of the neediest people can benefit.

By aligning the housing and homeless plans New York could finally do more than turn the tide on homelessness, we could begin to end it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and thank you for your support of Intro 1211.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/11/realestate/better-than-the-powerball.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Frealestate>

**Testimony of Shelia Martin, Chief Operating Officer, NYC Housing Partnership**

January 14, 2018

Good morning. My name is Shelia Martin and I am the Chief Operating Officer for the NYC Housing Partnership, New York City's primary nonprofit intermediary for the affordable housing. In our more than 36-year history, the Housing Partnership has served as the nonprofit sponsor in the development and preservation of more than seventy thousand affordable home ownership and rental units throughout the five boroughs and leveraged over seven billion dollars in private sector financing.

In addition we are certified by New York City to conduct lotteries and provide marketing services for affordable rental and homeownership units. Since 2016, the Housing Partnership has been responsible for the sale or leasing of almost 1,000 units in 25 developments, up from just 6 projects totaling just over 100 units for sale or lease since we began 5 years ago. With a staff of 40, we handle leasing and sales for units in 421a, Affordable New York, and Inclusionary Housing options and have in-depth familiarity with the wide panoply of programmatic choices available.

I am here to register concern about some of the details in the proposal of **Intro 1211**. While we appreciate the motivation behind the goal of increasing the mandatory set-aside of 15% of the units for formerly homeless households, we are concerned that this will be difficult to achieve in for-sale housing developments, which involve additional factors in the approval process such as requirements for minimum household income, down payment and closing costs, eligibility for financing, and acceptable credit. Who will hold title the unit? Will there be resale restrictions? Who will provide a mortgage? What resources are available to assist in paying the debt and the maintenance for the unit? We have these questions and many more.

Conversations with legislative staff have reassured us that Intro 1211 will be modified to apply to only rental housing, but even in this case, more clarity is needed. For example, as currently drafted, Intro 1211 does not require any additional funding to be attached to the units for formerly homeless households. While many households departing the shelter system are "move-in ready" and do not require a fully supportive housing living situation, the screening process is opaque and needs more transparency. Households departing the homeless shelter system are on a continuum of services, where some will require a variety of services and follow-up by professionals. Indeed, anecdotally, we can report that it is the formerly homeless households that have the highest turnover in affordable housing projects, which we believe is connected to the fact that there is little or no support once families have been placed into housing.

It is the goal of not only the families, but also the building owners as well, that placements required by this new set-aside have every chance to be successful and long-lasting. It must be addressed how formerly homeless individuals and families are screened to determine if they are in need of special services to be properly housed, and how additional services will be provided. A fiscal impact analysis to both property owners and agencies charged with housing homeless individuals and families must be conducted, which will conclude whether additional financial resources will be made available by the City of New York to ensure that these projects are economically feasible. If so, this will require a committed source of multi-year funding.

Next, we feel more clarity is needed in order to understand how a set-aside would function with respect to preservation, as required by the legislation. We have questions as to what preservation events would trigger the requirement, how it would work with respect to unit vacancy and many other logistical concerns for this complex and unique part of the affordable housing universe.

Finally, it is our understanding that HPD has raised concerns about changes to their program's term sheets being legislated by the Council in a way that removes the agency's flexibility, particularly in the event of a major market event like the Great Recession of 2008. We share in that concern and are willing to be stakeholders in any process that examines ways to meet this necessary 15% set-aside goal in a way that allows the City to maintain this flexibility.

We also have concerns about other bills being proposed in this council – which have to do with a number of subjects, including the application process, prevailing wage laws and marketing enhancements.

In **Intro 249**, the goal of increasing access, transparency and visibility around applications for affordable housing developments in a community is a good one, and one that our members and constituents strive to accomplish, often going above and beyond what is required by HPD's Marketing Handbook rules.

However, with respect to Intro 249 specifically, we are concerned that the new requirements may run afoul of Fair Housing laws and guidelines, particularly as it relates to pending legal questions over the issue of community preference. Federal law requires an emphasis on marketing to “least likely to apply” populations, and we are unclear how courts would view a requirement to advertise in media outlets prominent within a particular Community Board district.

It is our belief that at minimum, new requirements around marketing to communities should wait until the courts provide clarity and decide once and for all the fate on New York City’s community preference policy. New policies should be considered thereafter to ensure success and compliance with the settled law.

**Intro 564** was introduced in relation to reporting on housing lottery outcomes. The local law provides no overview of any identified problem which it seeks to address, nor does it justify why the agency charges with administering housing lotteries – HPD – is incapable of studying the efficacy of existing lotteries, and voluntarily providing reports on same, to the extent necessary for a compelling public purpose. If the concern is that not enough people are aware of the affordable housing units – I would point to the fact that we recently marketed fifty units for rent, and EIGHTY THOUSAND people applied for those fifty units. Clearly, it is not an issue of demand. We need more supply.

In **Intro 1323** requiring HPD to submit to the council compliance packages related to housing development projects receiving city financial assistance. HPD requires potential housing developers to submit a Compliance Package as part of HPD’s integrity review process. This process, which includes a series of review and background checks, is intended to verify the integrity and competence of individuals and entities seeking to do business with HPD.

The proposed legislation would require HPD, within 45 days of selecting a developer for a housing development project receiving City financial assistance, to submit to the Council copies of all Compliance Packages filed with HPD in connection with the housing development project. Perhaps the Council is unaware of the sensitive personal and financial information that is part of the Compliance Packages submittal, including for example, the social security numbers of me and my colleagues at the Housing Partnership. Mandating redaction might partially address this concern, but we remain alarmed at the potential for inadvertent disclosure of this and other sensitive personal information.

And lastly, while we know this is a sensitive subject, **Intro 1321** which expands the prevailing wage law for building service employees at city development projects, and **Intro 1322** which establishes a prevailing wage requirement for covered workers in financially assisted facilities.

Local Law 27 of 2012 requires payment of prevailing wages to building service employees in buildings where a private developer receives at least one million dollars in discretionary financial assistance from the City or a City economic development entity for a City development project. The proposed bill would expand the Prevailing Wage Law to cover additional developers and City development projects. Specifically, the proposed bill would amend the definition of “City development project” to remove the exemption for affordable housing projects and lower the minimum number of units from 100 to 30 for residential projects. The bill would also amend the definition of “covered developer” to remove the exemption for not-for-profit developers of residential projects.

The proposed legislation would require certain developers of economic development projects receiving one million dollars or more in financial assistance from the City or a City economic development entity to provide prevailing wages to workers performing construction work at such economic development projects.

Both of this rule changes will make the operating costs for affordable housing more expensive, which will require additional city subsidy to enable the projects to work economically, and since the money available for affordable housing is finite, this will inevitably lead to fewer units being constructed, no doubt the opposite of what this Council would prefer. Perhaps there is a way to resolve the goal of enabling workers to receive a living wage in an affordable housing development without greatly increasing operating costs.

**The Housing Partnership looks forward to a meaningful dialogue with the Council on these resolutions and others, and welcomes a chance to provide insight and expertise on legislation as we move forward into this legislative session.**

**Thank you.**

## **Written Testimony of Neighbors Together In support of Intro 1211**

**Delivered Before the Housing and Buildings Committee  
of the New York City Council**

**January 14, 2019**

### **About Neighbors Together**

Neighbors Together is a soup kitchen and community-based organization located in central Brooklyn. Our mission is to end hunger and poverty in the surrounding neighborhoods of Ocean Hill, Brownsville, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. We serve over 10,000 unique individuals per year, and assist people who are struggling with poverty, lack of affordable housing, homelessness, food insecurity, and histories of incarceration, addiction, and trauma.

Neighbors Together has three programs; our Community Café which serves over 80,000 hot meals per year to people in need; our Empowerment Program which offers individuals access to stabilizing services including referrals, benefits access and retention, and legal and health clinics; and our Community Action Program which engages our members in community organizing, policy and legislative advocacy, and leadership development. Neighbors Together's advocacy priorities are member directed- we focus on the issues that our members identify affect them the most. In the last 4 years, our members have overwhelmingly identified the affordable housing and homelessness crises as the most pressing issue they are facing. In our 2018 member survey, over 40% of our members responded that they are homeless, 75% responded that homelessness is an issue on which they want to act, and 64% responded that insufficient affordable housing is an issue on which they want to act.

**Neighbors Together strongly supports Intro 1211. Now more than ever the leadership of City Council is needed to create truly affordable housing for homeless New Yorkers.**

Our city is experiencing levels of homelessness not seen since the Great Depression, with over 63,000 people living in shelters, including 23,000 children during peak homelessness in 2018.<sup>1</sup> Despite New York City's reputation as a one of the wealthiest cities in the United States, significant income inequality and insufficient affordable housing have become increasingly critical issues; the number of people entering New York City shelters each year rose by 75% over the last decade, with over 130,000 individuals entering the shelter system last year alone.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *New York City Homelessness: The Basic Facts*, Coalition for the Homeless (2018), <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/basic-facts-about-homelessness-new-york-city/>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Need for Homeless Set-Aside Units**

Although the Mayor claims his affordable housing plan *Housing New York 2.0* must work for all New Yorkers,<sup>3</sup> in reality there are fewer units being built at the lowest Area Median Income (AMI) bands than at moderate income AMI bands<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, *Housing New York 2.0* sets aside a mere 5% or 15,000 units for homeless individuals and families, an amount that is woefully insufficient to meet the demand.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, of the units being set aside in the Mayor's housing plan, a significant portion of those units are preservation, which often means the tenants residing in that unit must vacate it before it becomes available to a person who is currently homeless. The move-in rate for these units is very slow, and therefore, relying so heavily on preservation is an approach that will not yield results fast enough to bring about a significant decrease in the shelter population.

Intro 1211 requires that every rental housing development with over fifteen units that receives City funding must include a 15% set aside for homeless families/individuals. This mandated homeless set aside would create a critically needed increase of units that are earmarked for people in the shelter system or on the streets to the housing market.

Particularly in neighborhoods that are being heavily developed, whether through rezoning or other means, rising rents and increasing cost of living are displacing longtime residents and pushing them into the shelter system or forcing them to double up with family or friends. Requiring this set aside would help ensure that all neighborhoods maintain some semblance of economic diversity and help prevent resident displacement.

Currently, New Yorkers who are attempting exit the shelter system with a rental assistance voucher are limited to a few neighborhoods in the five boroughs because market rate rents are so high in the majority of the city, compounding residential segregation. Vacancy rates for the most affordable apartments in New York City have seen an overall decrease; since 2014, the vacancy rate for apartments renting for under \$800 per month dropped from 1.87% in 2014 to 1.15% in 2017.<sup>6</sup>

## **Rental Assistance Vouchers**

Neighbors Together is running a campaign against Source of Income Discrimination, which is when landlords or brokers discriminate against renters based on their means of payment. This

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<sup>3</sup> Mayor's appearance on the Brian Lehrer Show (2018), <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/538-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

<sup>4</sup> *Housing Disconnect*, Coalition for the Homeless (2018), <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HousingDisconnectReport.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *Housing New York 2.0* (2017), <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/about/hny-2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Selected Initial Findings of the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey*, Department of Housing Preservation and Development (2018), <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/about/2017-hvs-initial-findings.pdf>

type of discrimination is rampant in New York City, with landlords and brokers flouting the New York City Human Rights Law that protects individuals from discrimination in housing, regardless of how they will pay their rent. Since beginning our campaign in 2017, Neighbors Together has worked with dozens of voucher holders facing this issue. Of the individuals we worked with from January 2018 to August 2018, over 50% were homeless and searching for housing with their voucher for a year or more. During Neighbors Together's weekly source of income discrimination housing search workshops, members looking for housing with vouchers are competing for the same small number of units available at their rent amount. The units set aside for individuals due to Intro 1211 would create a desperately needed increase in the housing available to homeless people who are trying to move to permanent stable housing.

### **Financial Toll of Homelessness**

Despite claims that a 15% set aside is financially unfeasible or would lose money for the city by making development unattractive to developers, the long-term investment in housing units at extremely low-income bands of the AMI would pay dividends in the future. Currently, the City is spending \$192 per night to shelter individuals,<sup>7</sup> at a cost of approximately \$5,760 per month or \$70,000 per year. In addition to the high cost of sheltering individuals, there is also a significant hidden cost to homelessness, as manifested by the myriad ways the instability and stress of living without a stable roof over one's head can take a toll: loss of employment and educational opportunities due to appointments with the Human Resources Administration and Department of Homeless Services workers and mandated programs, travel time and expense from shelter to children's schools, doctors, and other networks and supports, cost of storage or loss of belongings while homeless, theft in shelters, trauma and mental health stressors from being in crowded and understaffed shelters, including increased likelihood of substance use and overdose, recidivism, etc.

Over the course of Neighbors Together's 36-year history, time and again we have seen that safe, permanent housing is the key to stability. When members secure housing, they are able to focus time and energy that was once spent on searching for housing and running to and from appointments with their caseworkers and housing specialists on other areas such as education, employment, physical and mental health, and reestablishing or strengthening familial relationships, to name a few. Stable housing is the foundation from which all other things are possible, and every person who is homeless deserves the chance to flourish in the stability that housing provides.

### **House Our Future New York**

The City needs greater set asides for homeless New Yorkers, or the number of homeless people will grow faster than the number of units that become available each year. Because of this,

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<sup>7</sup> *Cost of Housing Homeless in Shelters Keeps Rising in New York City* (2018), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/cost-of-housing-homeless-in-shelters-keeps-rising-in-new-york-city-1537377091>

Neighbors Together is a lead participant in the House Our Future New York campaign, which calls on the mayor to set aside 30,000 units in his affordable housing plan for homeless new Yorkers, making sure that 24,000 of those units are new construction. Councilmember Salamanca's bill, Intro 1211, would help us get to this critically important goal.

### **Replicating a Successful Model**

Council Member Salamanca has had success with this model in his own district, and therefore the City should replicate in all districts across the five boroughs.

### **Closing**

New York City is in the midst of a homelessness crisis on a scale not seen since the Great Depression; now is the time for bold action. The City must value people and diversity above profits, understanding that any investment made in housing for our lowest-income and homeless neighbors will pay dividends in the future. Neighbors Together and our members call on the City Council to pass Intro 1211 immediately. The 61,000 people living in this city's shelter system depend on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

### **For more information or questions regarding the above testimony, please contact:**

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Testimony of

**Coalition for the Homeless**

and

**The Legal Aid Society**

on

Oversight: Housing Lotteries

Presented before  
New York City Council  
Committee on Housing and Buildings

Giselle Routhier  
Policy Director  
Coalition for the Homeless

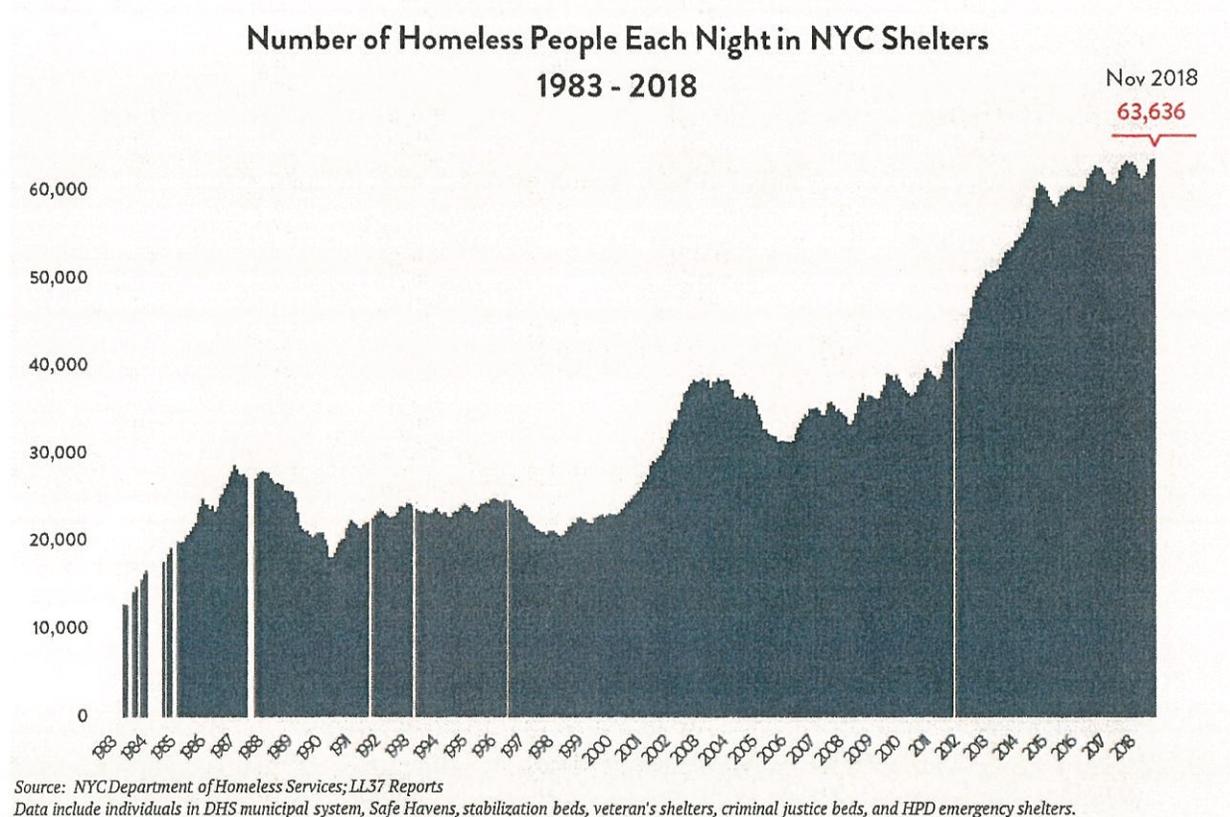
Joshua Goldfein  
Staff Attorney  
The Legal Aid Society

January 14, 2019

The Coalition for the Homeless and The Legal Aid Society welcome this opportunity to testify before the New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings regarding Intro. 1211.

### **Record Homelessness in NYC**

New York City remains in the midst of the worst homelessness crisis since the Great Depression, as the number of men, women, and children sleeping in shelters each night reached a new record high of 63,636 in November 2018, including more than 23,000 children and an all-time record 17,623 single adults.

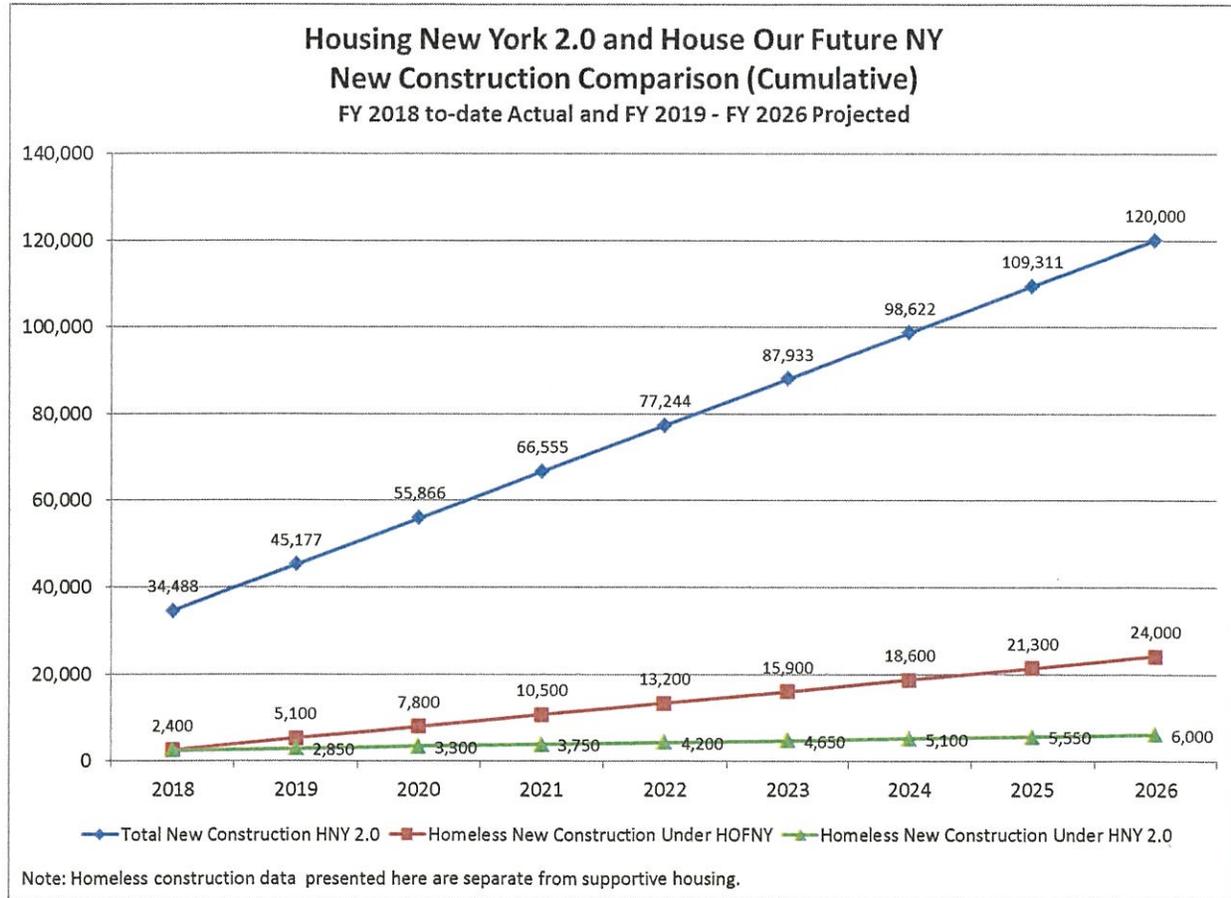


### **House Our Future NY and Intro 1211**

**House Our Future NY** is an advocacy campaign formed by the Coalition for the Homeless and over 60 partner organizations, homeless men, women, and children, and other caring New Yorkers. We are urging Mayor de Blasio to dedicate 10 percent of his overall *Housing New York 2.0* plan to provide housing for homeless New Yorkers, including 20 percent of all new construction. Specifically, we are asking the Mayor to provide 30,000 new units of affordable, permanent housing for homeless New Yorkers by 2026, with 24,000 of these units to be created through new construction. As of December 2018, 38 City elected officials have endorsed this campaign, including Comptroller Stringer, Borough Presidents Adams, Brewer, Diaz Jr., and Katz, and 32 members of the City Council.

Currently, Mayor de Blasio's affordable housing plan is slated to dedicate just 5 percent of all 300,000 units for homeless households. Shockingly, the Mayor's plan will have built just 6,000

new construction units for homeless households by the end of the plan, out of 120,000 new units scheduled to be built city-wide. Building a sufficient pipeline of new construction units for homeless households is the only way to begin to reduce the record number of individuals and families living in shelters. This is because the majority of housing units slated to be preserved by the City are already occupied, and thus will not be available when people need them to provide a route to help a homeless person or family move out of a shelter. A full analysis of the shortcomings of the Mayor’s current plan and the House Our Future NY ask is attached in the policy brief, entitled “Housing Disconnect.”



Intro 1211 provides one of the tools necessary for the City to increase the number of new construction units built for homeless households. It does so by requiring a minimum of 15 percent of all units created or preserved in projects that receive City funding to be set aside for homeless individuals and families. Currently, there is no across-the-board requirement for homeless set-aside units in projects that receive City funding. Some HPD term sheets require homeless set-aside units, but a full 40 percent of new units developed so far have not been in developments that utilized one of these term sheets.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in some cases HPD term sheets are not even reaching their currently inadequate homeless set-aside goals. For example, the Mix

<sup>1</sup> Source: Coalition for the Homeless calculation from HPD data, produced via FOIL: Total new construction units financed that are not part of the ELLA, Mix & Match, SARA, or SHLP programs divided by the total number of new construction units financed..

and Match Term Sheet requirement that 10 percent of units in each development be set aside for homeless families and individuals has largely been ignored. To date, of the 5,300 units created under Mix and Match, fewer than 5 percent have been set aside for homeless households.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons, we fully support Intro 1211. It will provide a critical minimum threshold that will help move us toward the *House Our Future NY* goal of 20 percent of all new construction being developed specifically for homeless individuals and families.

In addition to promoting more production of units for homeless people, we also believe transparent and regular reporting by HPD about housing preservation and production should be required and would urge Council Members to introduce such legislation. Specifically, we suggest requiring routine reporting on the number of units and projects financed, broken down by new construction and preservation, AMI brackets, homeless set-aside units (in addition to and separate from supportive housing), and supportive housing units. We also recommend requiring reporting on the number of units leased for occupancy by homeless individuals and families in HPD developments. We recently had to sue HPD in order to obtain these data, which show that just 1,660 homeless households moved out of shelters and into HPD-financed units over the past four years. In contrast, more than 23,000 households moved out of shelters with the assistance of DSS-funded vouchers, including LINC, CityFEPS, and SEPS during the same period.

In sum, the City's housing agencies can and must do far more to help stem the ongoing homelessness crisis – providing only a few hundred placements per year is a paltry effort unworthy of a mayor pledging to create the fairest city in the land.

### **Conclusion**

We thank the Committee on Housing and Buildings for holding this very important hearing, and applaud Council Member Salamanca for his inspiring leadership in the pursuit of housing for homeless New Yorkers.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: HPD, via FOIL.

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## About The Legal Aid Society and Coalition for the Homeless

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 more than 2,000 attorneys, social workers, paralegals, and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City, 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 more than 1.7 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 uniquely positioned to speak on issues of law and policy as they relate to homeless New Yorkers. 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. The Society, in collaboration with Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, LLC, filed *C.W. v. The City of New York*, a federal class action lawsuit on behalf of RHY in New York City. Our goal in litigation is to ensure that the City creates and maintains enough youth-specific beds to meet the needs of *all* youth seeking shelter. The Society, along with institutional plaintiffs Coalition for the Homeless and Center for Independence of the Disabled – NY, settled *Butler v. City of New York* on behalf of all disabled New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.

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 is now in its fourth decade. The Coalition also protects the rights of

homeless people through litigation involving the right to emergency shelter, the right to vote, the right to reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities, and life-saving housing and services for homeless people living with mental 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 hot meals each night to homeless and hungry New Yorkers on 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, and 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 in concert with landmark right to shelter litigation filed on behalf of homeless men and women (*Callahan v. Carey* and *Eldredge v. Koch*) and remains a plaintiff in these now consolidated cases. In 1981, the City and State entered into a consent decree in *Callahan* through which they agreed: "The City defendants shall provide shelter and board to each homeless man who applies for it provided that (a) the man meets the need standard to qualify for the home relief program established in New York State; or (b) the man by reason of physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter." The *Eldredge* case extended this legal requirement to homeless single women. The *Callahan* consent decree and the *Eldredge* case also guarantee basic standards for shelters for homeless men and women. Pursuant to the decree, the Coalition serves as court-appointed monitor of municipal shelters for homeless adults, and the City has also authorized the Coalition to monitor other facilities serving homeless families. In 2017, the Coalition, fellow institutional plaintiff Center for Independence of the Disabled – New York, and homeless New Yorkers with disabilities were represented by The Legal Aid Society and pro-bono counsel White & Case in the settlement of *Butler v. City of New York*, which is designed to ensure that the right to shelter includes accessible accommodations for those with disabilities, consistent with Federal, State, and local laws.



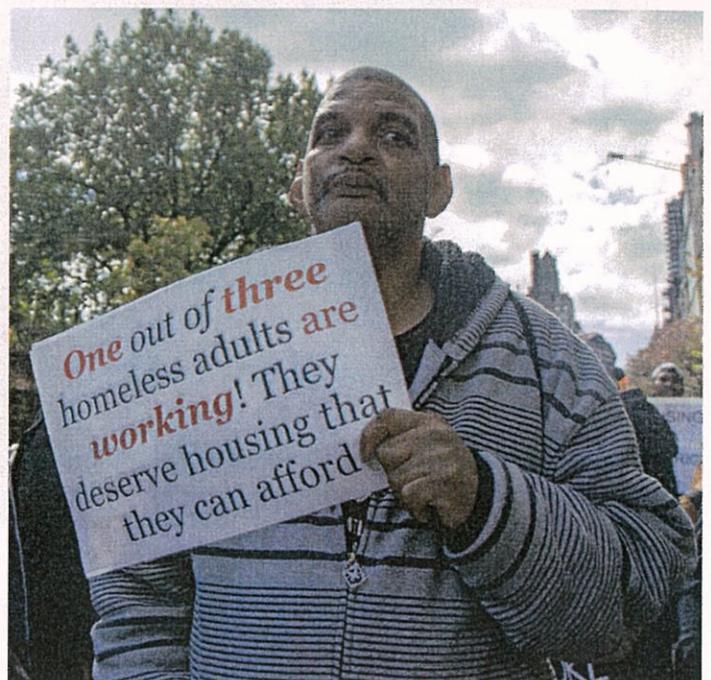
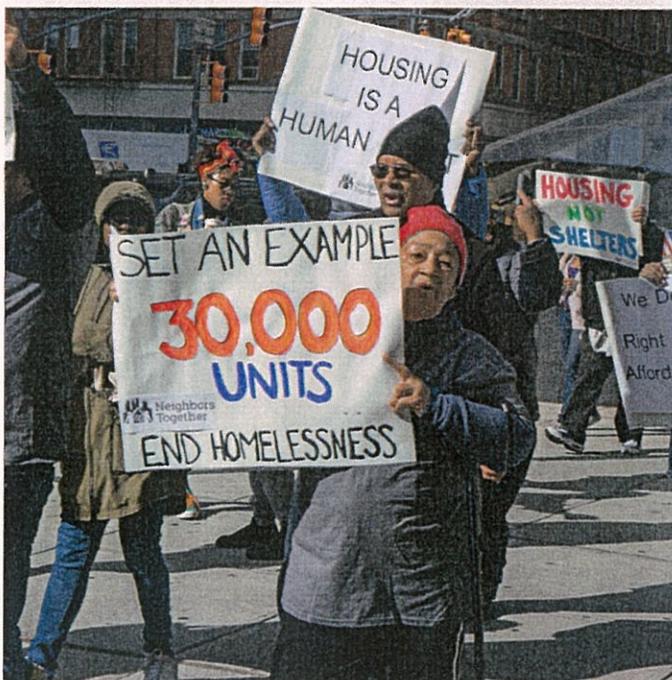
# HOUSING DISCONNECT

Fact-Checking Mayor de Blasio's Claims on Affordable Housing and Homelessness

By Giselle Routhier, Policy Director

**House Our Future NY** is an advocacy campaign formed by the Coalition for the Homeless and 60 partner organizations, homeless men, women, and children, and other caring New Yorkers. We are urging Mayor de Blasio to dedicate 10 percent of his overall *Housing New York 2.0* plan to provide housing for homeless New Yorkers, including 20 percent of all new construction. Specifically, we are asking the Mayor to provide 30,000 new units of affordable, permanent housing for homeless New Yorkers by 2026, with 24,000 of these units to be created through new construction. As of December 2018, 38 City elected officials have endorsed this campaign, including the Public Advocate, the Comptroller, four Borough Presidents, and the majority of City Council Members.

The **House Our Future NY** plan is carefully designed to address critical shortcomings in Mayor de Blasio's *Housing New York 2.0* plan, including the over-emphasis on preserving existing occupied housing without sufficient new construction for homeless households, inadequate homeless set-aside targets, and the need for much more robust affordable housing production beyond the Mayor's supportive housing commitment.



1. The **House Our Future NY** recommendation is purposefully heavy on new construction. In order to meaningfully reduce homelessness in New York City, new deeply subsidized affordable housing will need to be built from the ground up specifically for homeless families and individuals. The majority of housing units slated to be preserved by the City are already occupied, and thus will not provide a route to help a homeless person or family move out of a shelter. That is why we recommend that 24,000 housing units be created through new construction for homeless households: 20 percent of the Mayor's overall goal of 120,000 units of new construction.
2. The **House Our Future NY** recommendation is to set aside 10 percent of the apartments to be created or preserved through *Housing New York 2.0* for homeless men, women, and children. In contrast, Mayor de Blasio's current plan allocates a mere 5 percent of all 300,000 units created or preserved under *Housing New York 2.0* for homeless households, at a time when homelessness has reached new record levels. This meager commitment is neither in line with the amount of the housing allocated to serve homeless people in New York City's past affordable housing plans,<sup>1</sup> nor will it move the needle on our city's currently much larger – and still growing – homelessness crisis.
3. The **House Our Future NY** recommendation is separate and apart from prior campaigns to secure commitments from Mayor de Blasio and Governor Cuomo to build more permanent *supportive* housing for homeless New Yorkers living with a severe mental illness or other disability. The Mayor previously committed to producing 15,000 units of supportive housing over 15 years in New York City, and the Governor committed another 20,000 over 15 years statewide. However, with an all-time record 63,559 people sleeping in shelters each night – the vast majority of whom are members of homeless families – it is absolutely critical that the City create more affordable housing for the tens of thousands of homeless households who will not need or be eligible for supportive housing.

This paper addresses claims Mayor de Blasio has made regarding the **House Our Future NY** Campaign and elaborates on the current state of homelessness, the need for more housing, and the mechanisms for achieving our goals.



<sup>1</sup> Schwartz, A. (1999). New York City and Subsidized Housing: Impacts and Lessons of the City's \$5 Billion Capital Budget Housing Plan. *Housing Policy Debate*: 10, 4, pp 839-877.

# MAYOR DE BLASIO'S CLAIMS VS. THE FACTS

## THE MAYOR'S CLAIM

The *Housing New York 2.0* plan addresses the affordable housing crisis for everyone, and adding more units for homeless people would take access to housing away from others experiencing problems with affordability.<sup>2</sup>

## THE FACTS

New York City's affordability crisis disparately impacts those with the lowest incomes. There is no shortage of private market apartments affordable to higher-income households: The vacancy rate for units renting above \$2,500 per month is in fact 8.74 percent, far above the "emergency" threshold of 5 percent, while the vacancy rate for apartments renting for less than \$800 per month is only about 1 percent.<sup>3</sup> The New York City housing market is characterized by an abundance of high-rent units and a dearth of low-rent apartments.

Homelessness in New York, which has reached new all-time records on Mayor de Blasio's watch, is a direct result of the lack of low-income housing. Between 1996 and 2017, New York City lost more than 1.1 million apartments renting for less than \$800 per month,<sup>4</sup> and the city is currently facing a deficit of more than 500,000 apartments needed at that level, given the number of low-income New Yorkers.<sup>5</sup> Today, nearly 64,000 people sleep in shelters every single night, including more than 23,000 children, and last year nearly 130,000 different men, women, and children had to stay in New York City shelters.<sup>6</sup>

Our recommendation to provide 30,000 apartments (including 24,000 to be created through new construction) for homeless households as part of the Mayor's 300,000-unit plan will *not* take housing away from the poorest New Yorkers. It will simply – and sensibly – target resources where they are most needed. Mayor de Blasio's plan is to build fewer than 200 new apartments for homeless households per year between now and 2026. That is woefully inadequate given the unprecedented scale of the crisis. The **House Our Future NY** recommendation would require the City to build 2,500 newly constructed apartments per year between now and 2026 specifically for homeless New Yorkers, out of the estimated 10,500 new apartments that remain to be constructed each year through the life of the Mayor's plan.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Mayor's exchange with a questioner at 8/23/2018 Town Hall in Brooklyn: <https://twitter.com/NYHomeless/status/1034126687657705472> and Mayor's appearance on Brian Lehrer on 8/3/2018: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/395-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

<sup>3</sup> NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey (2017): <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/about/2017-hvs-initial-findings.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey (2017): <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CFHStateoftheHomeless2018.pdf> (see Chart 9)

<sup>5</sup> NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey (2017): <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CFHStateoftheHomeless2018.pdf> (see Chart 10)

<sup>6</sup> New York City Department of Homeless Services, via Local Law 37 Reports and FOIL

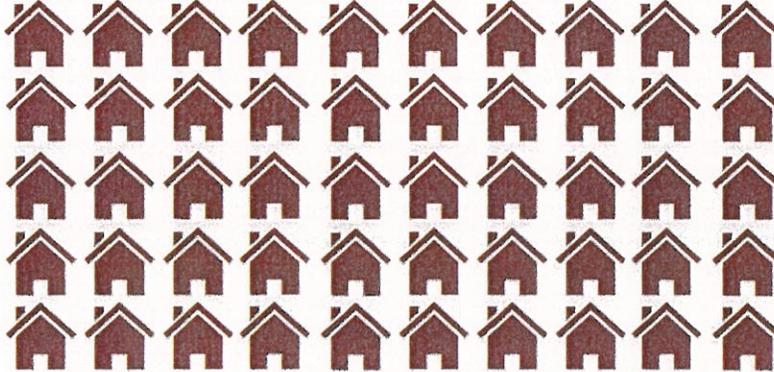
Figure 1

## PROSPECTIVE ANNUAL NEW CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING FOR HOMELESS NEW YORKERS

### MAYOR DE BLASIO'S PLAN



### HOUSE OUR FUTURE NY



Mayor de Blasio's current goal is to build only 200 new apartments for homeless households per year between now and 2026.  
The House Our Future NY recommendation would require the City to build 2,500 per year between now and 2026.

## THE MAYOR'S CLAIM

The *Housing New York 2.0* plan is not subsidizing luxury housing.<sup>7</sup>

## THE FACTS

Mayor de Blasio's housing plan dedicates nearly 20 percent of all units created or preserved to provide housing to households making between \$70,000 and \$142,000 annually, at rents ranging from \$1,700 to \$3,500 per month, while at the same time dedicating just 5 percent of the planned housing to help homeless New Yorkers. This skewed approach lays bare the Mayor's misguided priorities. Fully 10 percent of the apartments created through this plan will have rents set at or above \$2,500 per month – a level at which there is currently a glut of vacant apartments.

<sup>7</sup> See Mayor's appearance on Brian Lehrer on 11/2/2018: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/538-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

## THE MAYOR'S CLAIM

There is already a comprehensive plan to address homelessness called *Turning the Tide*.<sup>8</sup>

## THE FACTS

A truly comprehensive approach to reducing homelessness must include multiple components:

1. Robust production of new, deeply subsidized affordable housing targeted specifically to provide apartments for homeless New Yorkers;
2. Portable vouchers to help people pay rent in the private market; and
3. A sufficient and sustained pipeline of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals and families living with a serious mental illness or other disability.

Mayor de Blasio's plan fails with respect to the first – and most urgent – of these components, while making some meaningful progress on the second and third. The Mayor's own statements provide evidence of the inadequacy of his *Housing New York 2.0* plan. Mayor de Blasio said in 2017 that he plans to reduce the shelter census by a mere 2,500 people by 2022.<sup>9</sup> Unless the Mayor pursues a viable strategy for balancing the housing equation in favor of providing homes for those without them and makes a commitment to create enough deeply subsidized affordable housing for homeless New Yorkers to meet the magnitude of the need, the city will remain indefinitely mired in this crisis. This is why the **House Our Future NY** Campaign is urging the Mayor to immediately use this historic opportunity presented by a well-funded City housing plan to alleviate the suffering of tens of thousands of homeless men, women, and children in our city.

## THE MAYOR'S CLAIM

The Mayor says that he is “comfortable” with his current approach – saying “no” to repeated and direct appeals to increase homeless set-asides in publicly subsidized apartment buildings.<sup>10</sup>

## THE FACTS

Indeed, Mayor de Blasio has been asked about the **House Our Future NY** Campaign many times, including on WNYC, NY1, at town halls, at his gym, and through other forums.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the Mayor is not well-versed in what his current plan does and how our recommendation fits in, despite the repeated efforts of advocates, elected officials, and homeless people to explain to him the dire consequences of his insouciance.

Here's what the Mayor has done so far: Of the 109,000 housing units financed as either new construction or preservation through the end of Fiscal Year 2018, only 4,800 – or just 4 percent of

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<sup>8</sup> See Mayor's appearance on Brian Lehrer on 9/21/2018: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/482-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

<sup>9</sup> *Turning the Tide on Homelessness in NYC*: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/turning-the-tide-on-homelessness.pdf>

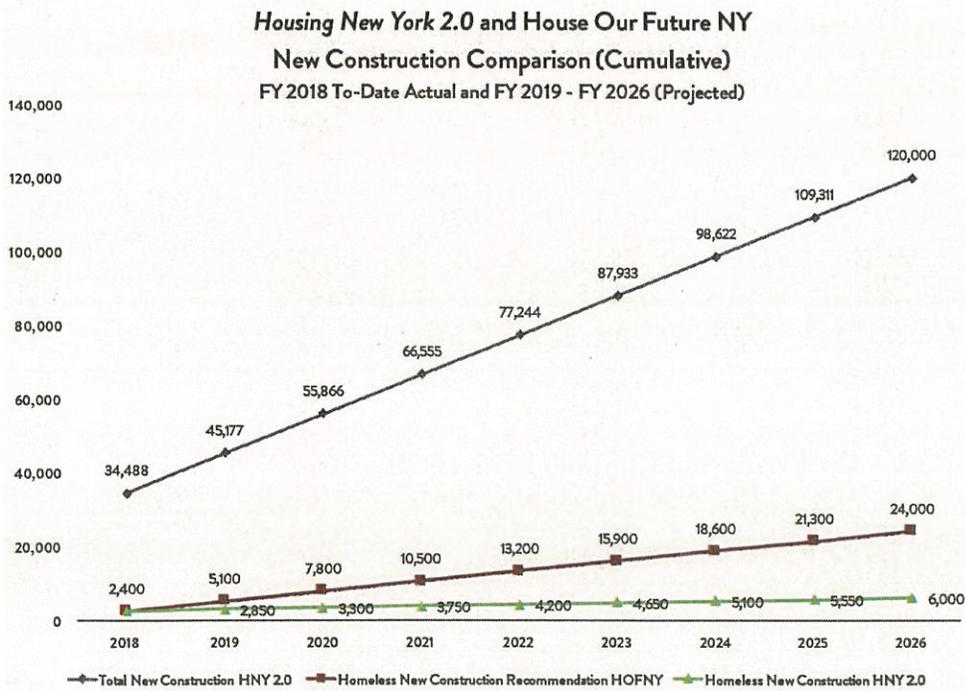
<sup>10</sup> See Mayor's appearance on Brian Lehrer on 8/3/2018: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/395-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show> and Mayor's appearance on Brian Lehrer on 11/2/2018: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/538-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

<sup>11</sup> See: <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/event/house-our-future-ny/#News>

all units financed to date – were set aside for homeless households.<sup>12</sup> These are distinct from the housing being developed under the supportive housing plan, which serves a different purpose and population. The Mayor’s 300,000-unit affordable housing plan has an explicit goal of providing no more than 5 percent of this housing for homeless households, despite the ongoing crisis that leaves nearly 64,000 people sleeping in shelters every night and thousands more bedding down on the streets.

Between now and the end of the *Housing New York 2.0* plan, Mayor de Blasio intends to finance over 23,000 units of housing each year, including more than 10,500 units per year to be created through new construction. The **House Our Future NY** Campaign is urging Mayor de Blasio to dedicate 2,500 units of that annual goal to provide newly constructed apartments for homeless New Yorkers. As noted above, this request is separate and apart from the Mayor’s commitment of 15,000 units of supportive housing over 15 years, which will serve another segment of the homeless population.

Chart 1



12 See Fiscal Year 2018 Mayor’s Management Report on *Housing New York 2.0*, which includes clarification about the total number of homeless set-aside units financed on p. 12: “HPD financed 2,264 affordable homes for the homeless last year, bringing the total to 8,894 under HNY. This includes 4,094 supportive housing apartments the City has financed since the start of the administration.” [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2018/2018\\_mmr.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2018/2018_mmr.pdf)

## THE MAYOR’S CLAIM

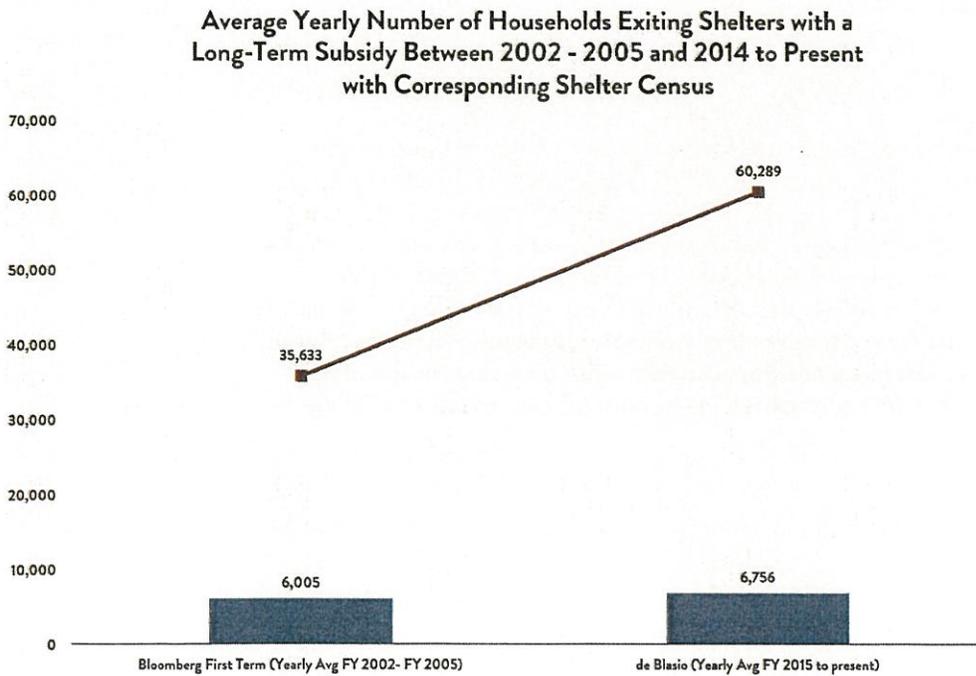
The City has done enough to address record homelessness and has helped 90,000 people move out of shelters in the past five years.<sup>13</sup>

## THE FACTS

In the past five years, the City has helped 100,000 individuals – or 38,000 households – exit or *avoid* shelters with the help of a subsidy. About 20 percent of the 38,000 households – roughly 7,600 – used City subsidies to avoid homelessness; the other 30,400 used subsidies to exit shelters.<sup>14</sup>

Since 2014, fewer than 6,800 households per year on average have exited shelters with some type of subsidy. This is only marginally higher than the average of 6,000 households per year exiting shelters with long-term subsidies under the first term of Mayor Bloomberg – even though the number of homeless people in shelters each night is now 70 percent higher than it was during Bloomberg’s first term. The depth of the current crisis demands much more drastic action from Mayor de Blasio’s affordable housing plan to help homeless New Yorkers move out of shelters and into permanent housing.

Chart 2



<sup>13</sup> See Mayor’s appearance on Brian Lehrer on 11/2/2018: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/538-18/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

<sup>14</sup> Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, via FOIL

## THE MAYOR'S CLAIM

The **House Our Future NY** recommendation is not financially feasible.<sup>15</sup>

## THE FACTS

The **House Our Future NY** Campaign is urging Mayor de Blasio to designate 10 percent of his overall housing plan, including 20 percent of the new construction target, for homeless New Yorkers: 30,000 units overall, with 24,000 to be created through new construction. Funds already committed to the plan, including over \$1.3 billion in City funds each year for the next eight years,<sup>16</sup> demonstrate that the Mayor has the resources needed to significantly reduce homelessness – he simply lacks the will.

To achieve the **House Our Future NY** goal, the City would need to raise the number of new apartments financed specifically for homeless New Yorkers to 2,500 units per year. This would be within the roughly 10,500 apartments the City will finance as new construction each year through 2026. Mayor de Blasio has shown a willingness to increase financing when it suits him, as he did when he revised his initial goal from 200,000 units of housing to 300,000 units, which included an additional \$150 million per year over four years and a commitment to similar levels of funding in future financial plans.<sup>17</sup>

The City has also created a unique City-funded project-based subsidy to buttress new supportive housing developments, and could easily do the same to ensure the financial viability of developments that include newly constructed apartments to house those of our homeless neighbors not in need of supportive housing.

## CONCLUSION

Mayor de Blasio's obstinacy in the face of the highest level of homelessness our city has ever seen and an ongoing housing crisis for low-income New Yorkers belies his professed values as a progressive leader. Without a swift course correction, this wrong-headed approach will lock the City of New York into a state of ever-expanding and extremely expensive record homelessness for the foreseeable future. The only way out is to fully embrace bold solutions. Mayor de Blasio must immediately dedicate 10 percent of his housing plan, including 20 percent of all new construction, to house homeless New Yorkers. The tens of thousands of New Yorkers languishing in shelters and on the streets, and all New Yorkers, deserve a housing plan that offers a responsive and robust answer to record homelessness, not more equivocation in the false promise of fairness for all.

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15 See Jeffery Mays, "More Housing for New York's Homeless? Council Will Weigh Question Mayor Ignored at His Gym," October 30, 2018. New York Times, via: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/30/nyregion/homeless-nyc-mayor-city-council.html>

16 *Housing New York 2.0: Mayor de Blasio Releases New Road Map to Build or Preserve 300,000 Affordable Homes* (2017) <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/press-releases/2017/11/11-15-17.page>

17 *Housing New York 2.0: Mayor de Blasio Releases New Road Map to Build or Preserve 300,000 Affordable Homes* (2017) <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/press-releases/2017/11/11-15-17.page> and *Increased Funding to Expand Housing Plan and Deepen Affordability* (2018) <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/increased-funding-to-expand-housing-plan-and-deepen-affordability-march-2018.pdf>



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**Community  
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Corporation**

**FOR THE RECORD**

**Testimony of Rafael E. Cestero  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
The Community Preservation Corporation**

**New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings  
Regarding INT 1211, Proposed Legislation to Mandate  
15% Homeless Set-Aside for all City Funded Projects**

**January 14, 2019**

Thank you Chairman Cornegy and other distinguished Committee members. My name is Rafael E. Cestero; I served as Commissioner of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development from 2009 to 2011, and am currently President and CEO of the Community Preservation Corporation (CPC), a nonprofit affordable housing and community revitalization company that was formed in the early 1970s to help New York City restore and rebuild communities that had been devastated by deterioration and abandonment. Today we help communities and local governments across the state meet their housing and revitalization challenges.

I appreciate the opportunity to deliver testimony in regards to legislation that would require housing developers of city-financed buildings to set-aside a minimum of 15 percent of units for homeless families. Homelessness is one of the most urgent housing and humanitarian crises we face today, with more than 60,000 individuals living in shelter. I applaud the City Council's efforts to increase opportunities for homeless families to access permanent affordable housing, and support the spirit of the proposed bill to proactively address this pressing issue in New York City through capitalizing on existing City subsidy programs. However, I do not believe this particular legislation is the appropriate solution at this time, given my significant concerns surrounding its implementation and unintended consequences in practice.

First, I have concerns that a 15 percent minimum set-aside for essentially all city-funded developments would severely limit the City's flexibility in creating and preserving affordable housing across a diverse array of neighborhood needs and market conditions. CPC works closely with our borrowers in partnership with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to ensure each affordable housing project we finance utilizes an appropriate program to address its own unique needs and challenges. HPD's wide slate of products and programs, in conjunction with its ability



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to negotiate term sheets, help us achieve this in a diverse set of neighborhoods across all five boroughs in New York City, at a diversity of income ranges for tenants. As an example, setting rents low enough to support a family with an income of \$25,000 per year also means that there isn't enough income generated to support the basic operating costs of a building without rental subsidies like those HPD provides. Our borrowers rely on these subsidies to continue to provide quality, affordable housing for these low-income individuals across New York City.

In certain circumstances, a 15 percent set-aside or higher may be an appropriate target for HPD to seek as a condition of its subsidy for a prospective affordable housing development.; but in other cases, the economics of a building simply will not support such a high set-aside level, although providing subsidy would create or preserve a meaningful number of affordable units for low-income New Yorkers. The strict mandate and the broad applicability in this proposed legislation would thus undermine the ability for HPD to subsidize such projects, and could ultimately lead to reduced affordable housing production across the City as developers could lack the rates of return needed to participate in HPD programs at all.

Furthermore, HPD needs flexibility to operate effectively in a dynamic and uncertain real estate market environment. As the Commissioner of the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development during the financial crisis, I was charged with managing our way through the worst economy since the Great Depression. As the real estate market imploded, credit markets dried up, new construction froze, and the city's New Housing Marketplace Plan was in serious jeopardy. In the face of all this turbulence, HPD was forced to think and act outside of the box to recast the entire housing plan and refocus its programs in order to adapt to the changes in the market. Ultimately, HPD managed to create and preserve over 75,000 affordable units from FY08 – FY12 in the face of severe economic distress. This required enormous flexibility. Had the City's hands been tied by restrictive legislation it would have been harder -- and far slower -- to adjust to a new financial landscape and make the changes that ensured affordable housing projects could still get built.



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Simply put, legislatively limiting HPD's flexibility to create and preserve affordable housing in the face of idiosyncratic development needs and changing market conditions would curtail the City's ability to create housing opportunities for both the homeless and thousands of New Yorkers who desperately need affordable housing across this City in the long-run.

I am also concerned that the limited carve-outs and broad applicability of the mandate would discourage developers from seeking smaller, "light-touch" HPD subsidies which nonetheless are critical to the preservation affordable housing. The City has effectively utilized these smaller subsidies in the past to encourage previously unregulated units to enter into a regulatory agreement. For example, many of our borrowers participate in Article XI for smaller rehabilitation projects, or utilize a subsidized HPD loan to replace a small boiler, in exchange for entering into or extending a regulatory agreement with the City.

But if entering into a regulatory agreement triggered a 15 percent set-aside requirement in all circumstances, many developers undertaking small projects would likely forgo the subsidy and simply allow their regulatory agreements to expire, due to the lost potential rental income along with logistical concerns for its non-vacant units. In fact, at CPC, we have already seen some building owners opt out of HPD programs, such as the Participation Loan Program, when the homeless set-aside required was too stringent to support the economics of the building. This is a losing outcome for both the developer, the City, and tenants who depend on those affordable apartments.

I believe we all share a similar goal: to produce more housing for those New Yorkers in greatest need. Mayor de Blasio has taken a balanced approach to creating and preserving mixed-income housing, while also prioritizing both deeper affordability and supportive and homeless housing. This model allows the rents from the higher-income units to help pay for the low-income units and homeless set asides—stretching City subsidy further to reach more New Yorkers, including the teachers, police officers, nurses and so many others who anchor our neighborhoods but also struggle to find an affordable place to live. In this model, more is more—so of the roughly 110,000 homes financed to date under the plan, 85 percent serve low-income New Yorkers, of which forty percent earn less than \$47,000 for a family of three. And



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9,000 homes have been set aside for homeless New Yorkers – a number that has grown year over year as the City has adjusted almost every program to require at least 10 percent of units be set aside for homeless with many programs requiring 20, 30, and 60 percent in supportive housing developments. Building on these achievements requires not just a host of different strategies and a wide array of partners, it demands the flexibility to adapt as new challenges arise, and as new solutions present themselves.

I greatly appreciate the Council's proactive approach to addressing the homelessness crisis, but I believe that implementing broad statutory requirements across all of HPD's programs could unintentionally hinder the City's ability to create and preserve affordable housing.

Over the course of decades and throughout different mayoral administrations, the city's success has been rooted in its ability to create programs that respond to the unique housing needs of our diverse neighborhoods, the ebbs and flows of market conditions, and to the budget whims of our other government partners. While this legislation comes from noble aims, it would make HPD less nimble and less able to craft affordable housing policy and programs to best deal with those aforementioned challenges. Additionally, the building-level economic hurdles of a 15 percent set-aside mandate could have the effect of driving some property owners away from the city's affordable programs, ultimately impacting the tenants who most need affordable housing. For these reasons, I unfortunately cannot support this legislation.

Thank you for your continued focus on this pressing issue, and for the opportunity to testify before the Committee.



January 14, 2019

**Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings  
RE: Intro 1211**

*Submitted by: Nathylin Flowers Adesegun, VOCAL-NY. Contact: [flowersnathylin@gmail.com](mailto:flowersnathylin@gmail.com) / 347-446-0629*

My name is Nathylin Flowers Adesegun. I am a member of VOCAL-NY. VOCAL-NY is a grassroots organization, working to end AIDS, mass incarceration, the drug war, and homelessness. On behalf of VOCAL-NY, I want to thank the Housing and Buildings Committee Chair Robert Cornegy and the other members of this committee for the opportunity to provide testimony. I also want to thank the Chair of the Land Use Committee, Councilmember Salamanca for introducing Intro 1211.

VOCAL-NY is a part of the House Our Future NY campaign. The campaign has been working tirelessly to win more housing for homeless New Yorkers. In October, I confronted Mayor de Blasio at the Park Slope YMCA to ask the Mayor to set aside 30,000 units of his housing plan for homeless New Yorkers, including 24,000 units to be created through new construction. Later, I joined hundreds of people as we marched to Gracie Mansion. Then, Council Member Salamanca introduced this critical bill, Intro 1211, that would get us closer to our goal. We've held rallies, marched, sent letters, had press conferences, met with the Administration, and have even risked arrest inside City Hall. What we believe is something simple: the Mayor's housing plan should help New Yorkers who need the most help.

My story of homelessness started in February 2015, when I was evicted from my apartment of 34 and a half years when I lost my rent stabilization status. Since then I've been living in a homeless shelter, along with more than 63,000 people across New York City--including 23,000 children. Many of the women in my shelter have become my closest friends. We share memories, experiences, and most of all, we share solidarity with each other as we search for housing, stability, and basic dignity.

My shelter is in Queens. I have to leave my room each morning by 9 a.m., and be back by curfew at 10 p.m. Our toilet paper is rationed, because the shelter has so many plumbing issues. There is one microwave for 200 women. I'm a vegetarian and I love to cook, but the options for food at my shelter are sparse, at best. When I'm not at the shelter, I cook every chance I get.

In the last few months, we have heard the Mayor respond to our calls for more housing. The Mayor says his affordable housing plan is for "every kind of New Yorker." Not every kind of New Yorker has a curfew, shares a room, can't cook dinner for herself, stores their few possessions in a locker, or is rationed toilet paper. He knows better than to compare my situation to "every kind of New Yorker."

The Mayor has also defended himself and says, "We've gotten 90,000 people who were homeless to affordable housing." Homeless New Yorkers know that most of those people are not living in any of the housing created under the Mayor's plan. In fact, many are not even living in affordable housing at all. Instead, they have found apartments in small walk-ups, and buildings with no rent protection. Many will end up back in the shelter system. All while we see shiny new towers full of high rent condos shooting up in the neighborhoods where we used to live.

So how many people have moved into City financed units in the Housing New York 2.0 plan? In December, I was shocked to hear that the city had moved out less than 1,700 homeless households into city-financed units since January of 2014. Also shocking is that the Mayor's housing plan is currently set to build fewer than 200 new apartments per year for those who are homeless between now and 2026. These numbers are appalling. And the reality is, the majority of the Mayor's housing plan is for people who already have homes and in most cases, much higher incomes than homeless New Yorkers.

The human cost of living in a shelter is higher than we'd like to admit. I worked for most of my life, I am retired, but I am still forced to live in a shelter. Children are growing up in shelters while their parents struggle to find housing, meet appointments, and keep jobs; students have to trek across the city to get to school, young people are losing out on critical growth opportunities because they live in constant instability, and people with mental and physical health needs are not getting the support they need. What kind of future are we building for New Yorkers, if we let these conditions persist in our city when we have the resources to change them?

Mayor de Blasio's Housing New York plan, is not currently being used as a critical tool to reduce the homeless crisis, even though it has the potential to be. In the next years, we need a housing plan that will drastically reduce the homeless crisis, not by the hundreds, but by the tens-of-thousands. The Mayor may choose to dig his heels in further and oppose our calls for more housing for homeless people, but that's where we need the City Council to step in to do what is right. Intro 1211 is a critical step forward. It would help put people back in homes, and it

would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards helping those that need the most support. I urge the Council to support and to swiftly pass Intro 1211. Thank you.



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**TESTIMONY OF STEPHANIE SOSA, BEFORE  
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL HOUSING AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE ON  
INTRO 1211 AND INTRO 550**

January 14th, 2019

Good Morning. Thank you Chair Cornegy and the members of the Housing & Buildings Committee for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Stephanie Sosa and I am the Senior Associate for Housing Development Policy at the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD). ANHD's mission is to advance equitable, flourishing neighborhoods for all New Yorkers. As a coalition of 100 community-based affordable housing and equitable economic development organizations in New York City, we work at the intersection of organizing, policy, advocacy, and capacity-building. Our extensive network has built over 120,000 units of affordable housing by advocating for policy and research, training community organizers, and supporting the expansion of necessary funding.

Low- and moderate-income communities and communities of color are disadvantaged by a multitude of housing and economic development policies. In response, our advocacy addresses a wide range of issues, including affordable housing, community development, land use, and equitable economic development. Our vision for an equitable city includes creating and fighting for just systems and policies that lead to economic opportunity and affordable homes for all New Yorkers.

ANHD supports the efforts of Council member Salamanca to address the homeless crisis by passing Intro 1211, which will create a 15% set-aside for homeless households in City-financed affordable housing. New York City must do all it can to address the growing severity of the homeless crisis. Our member groups believe that there are certain technical and operational issues that should be addressed, including underwriting issues, questions about marketing, how the approach would be applied to preservation deals and new-construction deals, and how to create term-sheet requirements in an uncertain funding environment. We encourage HPD and the City Council to jointly and quickly work through these issues, and we are happy to offer the expertise of our member groups if that could be helpful.

ANHD supports Council Member Levin's bill, Intro 550, which would allow a taskforce to study the issues in the housing lottery system and make recommendations for how to reform it. This group can analyze both the mechanics and the overall fairness of the housing lottery system, which ANHD and its membership has expressed concerns about in the past. ANHD recognizes that these issues are complex and require time to be addressed.



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An appointed group of housing lottery experts can study these issues, prioritize and make strategic recommendations for housing lottery reform.

ANHD believes that the housing lottery system is generally a good approach to giving equal opportunity to households in need of affordable housing. However, the current system is flawed and should be revisited and amended.

ANHD also recommends that the bill clearly states who should be appointed to this taskforce. We believe that professionals dealing with the housing lottery on the constant basis, such as housing developers and managers, and city agencies, should be appointed to the task force to better address and prioritize housing lottery issues.

ANHD and our member groups look forward to working with council member Levin and the Housing and Building Committee in order to improve the housing lottery system, and create more and fairer opportunities for New Yorkers to access to affordable housing that they so desperately need.

## TESTIMONY OF THE QUEENS & BRONX BUILDING ASSOCIATION

January 14, 2018

GOOD DAY. I AM ROBERT ALTMAN AND I AM THE LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT TO THE QUEENS AND BRONX BUILDING ASSOCIATION ("QBBA").

I AM HERE TODAY TO OPPOSE MOST OF THE BILLS THAT ARE INTRODUCED THAT IMPACT THE PRIVATE SECTOR. WHILE WELL-INTENTIONED, THEY SEEM TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS THAT DO NOT EXIST. OR THE BILLS ADD ANOTHER LAYER OF REGULATION ON ALREADY WELL-REGULATED AREAS. OR THEY CREATE INDIRECT AMENDMENTS TO OTHER PIECES OF LEGISLATION, MOST NOTABLY THE 421-a PROGRAM.

### INTRO. NOS. 249, 550, 564, AND 1211

FIRST, LET ME START WITH THE FACT THAT MARKETING IS ALREADY WELL-REGULATED BY HPD. IN FACT, THE EXTENSIVE HPD MANUAL IS LOCATED ON-LINE HERE:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/developers/marketing-handbook.pdf>

MOREOVER, I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT DUE TO FEDERAL REGULATIONS, THERE ARE ALREADY FEDERAL SET-ASIDES FOR THE DISABLED AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED THAT MUST BE MET. THIS BASICALLY MEANS THAT AT LEAST 7% OF A PROJECT ALREADY HAS A SET ASIDE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED (2%) AND DISABLED (5%). BUT THE 7% FIGURE IS DECEIVING. IF YOU HAVE BUT FIVE AFFORDABLE UNITS, ONE UNIT MUST BE FOR THE DISABLED AND ONE UNIT MUST BE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED FOR THE FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET, BASICALLY MEANING THAT 40% OF THE UNITS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SET ASIDE (ALTHOUGH THE PERCENTAGES CAN VARY BY PROJECT SIZE). ADD A 15% HOMELESS TO THE EQUATION AND NOW THAT IS 60% SET ASIDE, WHEN IN REALITY EVERYONE IS THINKING 22%. BASICALLY SET-ASIDES THAT ARE RIGID PERCENTAGES HARM SMALLER PROJECTS.

BUT THAT SET-ASIDE COUNT IS NOT ALL. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS ARE BASED UPON CERTAIN AMOUNTS OF UNITS PAYING CERTAIN AMOUNTS OF MONEY. BUT WITH A SET-ASIDE, SINCE THE UNITS MUST NOW BE RENTED TO THOSE THAT ARE PART OF THE SET ASIDE, OFTEN (AND THIS IS PROBABLY FOR A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE PROJECTS) THE RENTS MUST BE LOWERED TO FILL THE SET ASIDE, AND THAT MUST BE FACTORED IN TO DETERMINE THE VIABILITY OF A PROJECT. NOW THE COUNCIL IS CONTEMPLATING A 15% SET ASIDE FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES. CAN A HOMELESS FAMILY COME EVEN CLOSE TO AFFORDING 80% OF AMI? 60%? 50% 30%? WHAT IF THE FAMILIES HAVE NO INCOME. EVEN AS I LOWER THIS FIGURES, THE ANSWER REMAINS DOUBTFUL. AND IF THE RENT MUST GET LOWERED FOR THIS UNIT, THEN WHO SUBSIDIZES THE HOMELESS FAMILY? IF THE DEVELOPER

THAN THE VERY NATURE OF THE SUBSIDY IS CHANGED AND THE COUNCIL HAS AMENDED THE VARIOUS PROGRAM'S CAREFULLY CRAFTED ECONOMICS. IF THE CITY, THEN THERE MUST BE FUNDS BUDGETED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

WHILE THE SET-ASIDE IS A NOBLE IDEA, IT ULTIMATELY RUNS INTO THE CRAFTED ECONOMICS OF ANY PROGRAM. THE FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS ARE LONG-STANDING, SO THEY PRE-DATE THE LAW AND WERE KNOWN. BUT THE CITY'S NEW HOMELESS REQUIREMENT WOULD CHANGE THE ECONOMICS OF HPD PROGRAMS. AGAIN, THE ISSUE WILL BE HOW DO YOU SUBSIDIZE THE HOMELESS FAMILY'S RENT. IF THE LAW'S SPONSORS COULD PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS, THEN MAYBE OUR ASSOCIATION COULD SUPPORT THE GOOD INTENTIONS BEHIND THESE BILLS.

WHILE THE COUNCIL HAS CONCERNS ABOUT THE EXISTING LOTTERIES AND ACCESS, OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUILDERS ACTUALLY HAVE A DIFFERENT CONCERN. THERE ARE OFTEN TOO MANY APPLICATIONS THAT THEY NEED TO REVIEW TO FIND APPLICANTS WHO ARE ACTUALLY SERIOUS. BASED ON THE CURRENT LOTTERY, OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPERS ACTUALLY GO THROUGH THOUSANDS OF LOTTERY APPLICANTS TO FIND A FEW HUNDRED (AND IN SMALLER PROJECTS LESS THAN THAT) WHO QUALIFY FOR THEIR PROJECT AND ARE SERIOUS APPLICANTS WHO ACTUALLY WANT A PARTICULAR PROJECT. WE FIND FOR EXAMPLE THAT FOR HOUSING IN SOUTHEAST QUEENS, THERE ARE MANY APPLICANTS FROM THE BRONX OR MANHATTAN WHO REALLY HAVE NO INTENTION OF MOVING SO FAR AWAY FROM THEIR CURRENT HOME. YET, OUR DEVELOPERS STILL NEED TO WORK THROUGH THE SYSTEM, REACH OUT TO THESE PEOPLE, AND DOCUMENT THEIR NON-RESPONSIVENESS. THE COUNCIL HAS IDENTIFIED A GENERAL PROBLEM, BUT IS PROPOSING A SOLUTION THAT DOES NOT ACTUALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT ARE IN THE SYSTEM.

INTRO. NOS. 357 AND 716.

INTRO. 357 SOUNDS CURIOUS TO US. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT PRECIPITATED THE THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY. IT SOUNDS MORE LIKE A BILL TO APPEASE THE UNIONS. FRANKLY, IF THERE ARE ANY COMPLAINTS, THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS BASED UPON CURRENT BILLS TO COMPLAIN TO VARIOUS CITY AGENCIES, WHETHER DOB, HPD, THE COMPTROLLER, THE PUBLIC ADVOCIATE OR EVEN A LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBER. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF BILLS IN THE PAST FEW YEARS THAT PROVIDE WORKER PROTECTIONS. ANOTHER SEEMS OVERKILL.

WE HAVE NO COMMENT ON INTRO. 716.



**Testimony before City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings  
January 14, 2018 | 10:00am**

Good morning Chair Cornegy and members of the Committee. My name is Nicole McVinua, and I am the Policy Analyst at Urban Pathways. On behalf of the organization, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Intro. 1211 today.

Urban Pathways is a nonprofit that provides services to chronically homeless individuals through a unique combination of street outreach, safe havens, extended stay residences, permanent supportive housing, and employment programs. Our programs engage homeless adults to come inside, and to succeed and thrive as they move forward. We meet individuals where they are at in their lives, provide them with a range of services appropriate to their needs, and assist them in gaining permanent housing.

This last piece of our work- assisting individuals in gaining permanent housing- has proven increasingly difficult as the City's rents are rising, and as the City's stock of affordable housing accessible to low and very low-income households is shrinking. This is why we adamantly support Intro. 1211, which would require developers who receive city financial assistance to set aside 15% of created or preserved dwelling units for homeless individuals and families.

New York City is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. According to findings from the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, the vacancy rate for units with asking rents of less than \$800 per month was just 1.15%, and apartments ranging between \$800 and \$999 per month had a vacancy rate of only 2.1%. According to the Comptroller's "The Gap is Still Growing" report published this past September, there was a loss of over 425,000 apartments renting for \$900 or less since 2005. This incredibly low vacancy rate and shrinking stock of affordable housing makes it extremely difficult for people to exit homelessness.

At the same time, the shelter allowance for those on Public Assistance has not seen a rate change since 1975. A single adult receives just \$215 per month to pay their rent, and a family of three with children receives just \$400. Needless to say, apartment hunting for these community members is a near impossible task in the current state of our City.

Meanwhile, our shelter population is growing. 63,000 adults and children sleep in City shelters each night, and their stays are getting longer. The average stay of single adults and families in a DHS shelter extends beyond a year. This is a direct result of the lack of affordable housing that makes it so difficult for households to move into their own apartments. Shelters are not designed for long-term stay, and building more shelters is not the solution.

More deeply affordable housing, (that which is accessible to low and very low-income individuals and families trying to exit or avoid homelessness), is the solution needed to move towards permanently ending homelessness. And Intro. 1211 would be an impactful start to the creation of more affordable housing that will get people out of shelters and into a home.

Intro. 1211 is a much needed step in the right direction, but it cannot be the only one. As a lead organization of the House Our Future NY campaign, we are also calling on the Mayor to set aside 30,000 units of his committed 300,000 units of affordable housing to homeless households. Until the supply of affordable housing meets the demand, we will not be able to meet the needs of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. We sincerely hope the City Council will pass Intro. 1211 and contribute to the permanent affordable housing solutions we need to move towards ending homelessness for good.



# SAFETY NET ACTIVISTS

Supported by the Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center

## CITY OF NEW YORK CITY COUNSEL LEGISLATION

**Intro Bill 1211**

**JANUARY 14, 2019 9:30 AM**

My testimony is in Support of Intro 1211 to mandate all rental properties with in NYC developed or rehabbed with financial assistance from NYC will set aside 15% of its units for Homeless New Yorkers on street or in shelters.

Need: NYC has under prior administrations become too expensive for many low-income New Yorkers to rent apartments! An example would be the fact that I was born and lived half my life in a property that was purchased for \$2,000.00 in 1955 this would sell today for \$500K or more. The NYC vacancy rate is very low and people cannot find apartments which housing rental assistance can pay the rent. The prices even in outer boroughs are also become unaffordable. Developers develop properties in low-come neighborhoods where the current residents cannot afford thereby forcing them out of their Homes.

The costs associated with Community policing for quality of life violations such as public urination do not make sense when there are few public bathrooms.

NYC aggressive gentrification has Fire Department inspections of stable housing of small families requiring upgrades not affordable without taking out mortgages, while NYC has been placing families and singles in firetraps costing more than market rate apartments monthly!

There are roughly 73K+ New Yorkers in Shelters or on Street as per count 2018 in or around a system that budget costs of \$2 Billion and often required an usually an additional \$150 Million before the end of the fiscal year.

Reasoning: The cost for each individuals housing in NYC shelters averages \$28+K annually. It was proven in 1994 with introduction of HUD Housing First model that it is more cost effective to place persons who even have need of services in low-income independent housing apartments rather than in congregate housing.

For me I had an ordeal through outreach where six HRA 2010e applications were produced all of which were missing information on the **applicant preference page** indicating need for 4 rooms each with windows which constitute a bedroom, living room, bedroom, and bathroom. None of the applications sent into HRA for approval had this information on any of them verified by HRA PACT Unit. I was told by director of outreach at the time for period of over 24 months that there were no scatter-site or HUD TBRA apartments available and no Homeless set aside apartments available. After showing me substandard space rooms called efficiency apartments with one window opening less than 6 inches wide and 3-4 sources of running water (a recipe for mold) or the need for air conditioning and dehumidifiers running all year with me paying the cost. I was told to pack my belongings to await outreach team to take me to 30<sup>th</sup> street Assessment for placement. I took my belongings to storage and left. I was actually harassed by phone with only service which could be provided was escort to 30<sup>th</sup> Street men's shelter. This harassment was charged for under MOC contracts when anyone can take M15 bus to 30<sup>th</sup> street.

The greatest upside of Intro 1211 is that it creates low income housing for Homeless and families of one or more in housing they can afford perhaps with rental subsidies.

Currently, families of one or more are all placed in supportive housing most of which does not fit state standards of at least 300sq ft for efficiency families are placed in deathtraps where fire and heat standards are ignored costing lives in case of emergency.

Next Step in series of actions, which the City can applaud itself. Grass roots organizations have counted vacant and warehoused apartment properties, which could be more than enough to house our entire current Homeless population. The city has made some strides against the criminalization of Homeless and production of Homelessness by adhering to Federal policy which declared stop and frisk unconstitutional based upon it racial profiling. Mandated that police officers provide cards to citizens or visitors of our city who they engage or detain with their information and information on how to complain to Civilian Complaint review Board. The city has created law to count its abandoned and warehoused properties tax and seize them.

Intro 1211 is the first law that actually puts any emphasis to create housing which could put a dent in our Homeless populations' growth. Drawback: in reality, 1211 will produce enough low income housing units to partially house a growing Homeless population, which grows because of other city policies, which gentrify our neighborhoods economically and increase the number of Homeless annually. NYC grass roots and community based organizations have been fighting back but need legislation to help combat economic gentrification or our city is headed for what could turn it into 18<sup>th</sup> Century London or having issues that wiped out most of Europe's' population in dark and middle ages.

Intro 1211 is a start! Please enact it into law and keep legislating further solutions to end Homelessness in our most precious home.

Peter Malvan Safety Net Activist, NYC CCoC Consumer Co Chair, former member of Council of IAHH, and NYC Mayors Advisory Council.

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# SAFETY NET ACTIVISTS

Supported by the Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center

## CITY OF NEW YORK CITY COUNSEL LEGISLATION

Intro Bill 1211

JANUARY 14, 2019 9:30 AM

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)  
RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) HISTORY 2006 NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS**

<https://endhomelessness.org/looking-back-on-the-history-of-rapid-re-housing/>

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

**RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) BRIEF 2014**

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Rapid-Re-Housing-Brief.pdf>

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

**RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) HOUSING FIRST CHECKLIST FINAL 2016**

**UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS**

[https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Housing\\_First\\_Checklist\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing_First_Checklist_FINAL.pdf)

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

**RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) HOUSING FIRST FACT SHEET 2016**

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS**

<http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/housing-first-fact-sheet.pdf>

My name is Wendy O'Shields I am a Safety Net Activist Founding Member and a Housing Advocate.

Please integrate the HUD Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing models into Intro 1211 opt for less shelter residents and shorter shelter residencies. The City of New York's Department of Homeless Services Single Adults that are Literally Homeless, Truly Homeless, or Chronically Homeless languish in shelters for 5, 7, or more years. During the multitude of years, a resident's health degrades, family and friend relationships become estranged, and their community network becomes no longer viable.

*UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)  
RAPID RE-HOUSING (RRH) HISTORY 2006 NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS*

<https://endhomelessness.org/looking-back-on-the-history-of-rapid-re-housing/>

Monday, January 14, 2019

Page 1 of 2

HUD Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing removes barriers to independent or supportive housing for Homeless and averts long shelter stays.

HUD Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing rapidly connects Homeless in shelter or NYC Streets to independent or supportive permanent housing as eligible.

HUD Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing understands that prolonged Homelessness has a significant negative effect on Human Beings!

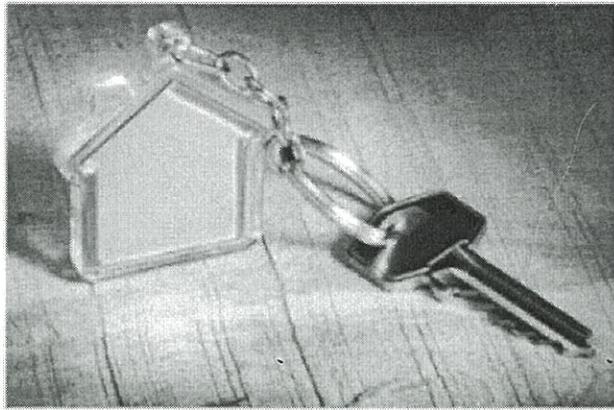
Intro 1211 Homeless assessment should include the length of stay in the DHS shelters or NYC streets when prioritizing Homeless for Homeless set aside apartments. Currently no housing time metric is enforced for Department of Homeless Services Single Adult residents eligible for independent housing. The length of residency in shelters is not applied to an immediacy to quickly house Single Adults independently.

DHS shelter lengths of stay beyond 24 months becomes a concern to continue the HUD McKinney-Vento payments for the Homeless resident, this usually triggers a DHS Administrative Transfer to their next Home shelter.

Many Single Adult residents are routinely ignored by DHS Housing Specialists or staff and reside in shelters approaching decades.

Thank you for your thoughtful review of my suggestions and my enclosed documents.

Wendy O'Shields  
Urban Justice Center  
Safety Net Activist Founding Member  
Housing Advocate



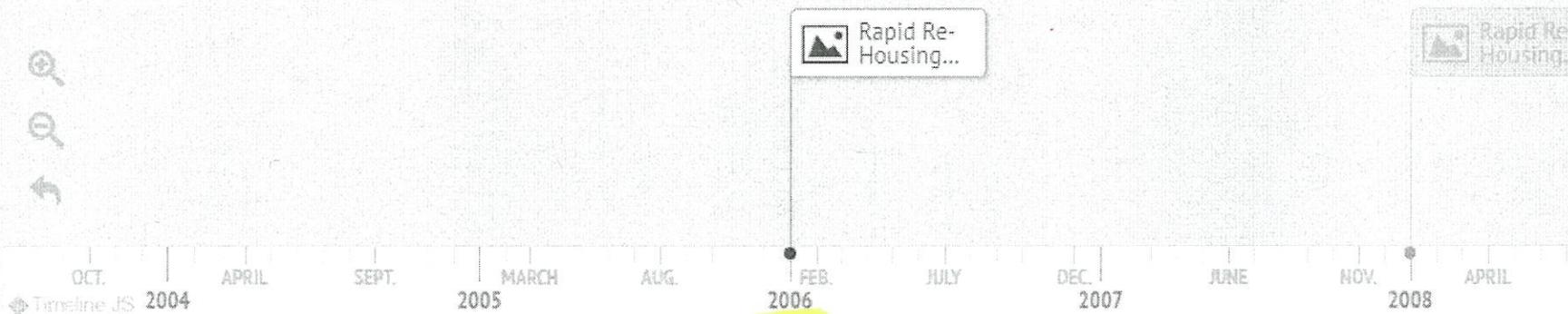
2006

## RAPID RE-HOUSING ONE OF TEN ESSENTIALS FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS

The National Alliance to End Homelessness releases the Ten Essentials to End Homelessness and includes rapid re-housing as a solution. The toolkit highlights successful rapid re-housing programs by Beyond Shelter in LA, Philadelphia Housing Support Center, HomeStart in Boston and Rapid Exit in Hennepin County, MN.



RAPID RE-HOUSING  
DEMONSTRATION  
PROJECT BEGINS



Home / Blog / Rapid Re-Housing / Looking back on the history of rapid re-housing

# Looking back on the history of rapid re-housing

Written by NAEH | September 29, 2016

At the end of September, we convened nearly 100 homeless systems leaders, providers, funders and federal agency representatives to develop a common vision about how to advance rapid re-housing as a primary intervention in the homeless system.

Next week, we will begin a campaign to raise awareness of rapid re-housing as a solution, and we'll need your help. We want to increase the number of people served across the country, and decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness. But before we get started working toward the future, let's take a look at the past.

## History of Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid re-housing first emerged as a promising model when a number of programs organically began the practice. Programs began experimenting with short-term financial assistance and "rapid exit" concepts for people experiencing homelessness, and realized it worked. On the heels of their success, other communities followed suit and rapid re-housing has increasingly become a staple of a successful response to homelessness. It eventually became a bipartisan priority in the federal response to homelessness. Take a look at the history of rapid re-housing below, and [sign up for our Rapid Re-Housing Newsletter](#) to stay informed about our upcoming campaign and help us spread the word: rapid re-housing works!

## CATEGORIES

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## ARCHIVE

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# RAPID RE-HOUSING

## What is Rapid Re-Housing?

Rapid re-housing is an intervention, informed by a Housing First approach that is a critical part of a community's effective homeless crisis response system. Rapid re-housing rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. Rapid re-housing programs help families and individuals living on the streets or in emergency shelters solve the practical and immediate challenges to obtaining permanent housing while reducing the amount of time they experience homelessness, avoiding a near-term return to homelessness, and linking to community resources that enable them to achieve housing stability in the long-term. Rapid re-housing is an important component of a community's response to homelessness. A fundamental goal of rapid re-housing is to reduce the amount of time a person is homeless.

Rapid re-housing models were implemented across the country through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), included as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) of 2009. Through this national implementation experience, rapid re-housing programs were found to be a highly successful and cost-effective way to end homelessness for a wide range of households experiencing homelessness. The intervention model is premised on the following ideas:

- Although they may have many additional challenges and service needs, the majority of families and individuals experiencing homelessness become homeless due to a financial crisis or other crisis that leads to the loss of housing. Addressing homelessness for these households primarily entails addressing their housing barriers to help them return to permanent housing.
- Most families experiencing homelessness are not significantly different in characteristics from other poor families. Most have had recent experience living in permanent housing, and can return and remain housed without long-term supportive services. This intervention focuses on identifying and building upon the strengths of families to maintain their own housing.
- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative effect on adults and children—the longer a household experiences homelessness, the poorer the outcomes will likely be in a variety of areas. Therefore, the length of time a household experiences homelessness should be minimized by helping them return to permanent housing as quickly as possible upon becoming homeless. Households should be assisted to exit homelessness and obtain permanent housing as soon as possible rather than remain homeless while awaiting a vacancy in another program.

Although access to affordable housing is an effective way to ensure long-term housing stability among households experiencing homelessness, affordable housing resources currently fall far short of the need. Short-term assistance - including financial assistance, housing search assistance, and targeted services - has shown tremendous promise in resolving the immediate crisis of homelessness for many families and preventing their future returns to homelessness.

- Resources are limited and should be used most efficiently to ensure that assistance can be provided to the greatest number of people experiencing homelessness. An operating principle is that households should receive "just enough" assistance to successfully exit homelessness and avoid returning to the streets, other places not meant for human habitation, and emergency

shelters. Longer-term and more costly programs like permanent supportive housing should be reserved for those individuals and families who need this level of assistance to exit homelessness and remain housed.

## **Target Populations**

Rapid re-housing is an effective intervention for many different types of households experiencing homelessness, including those with no income, with disabilities, and with poor rental history. The majority of households experiencing homelessness are good candidates for rapid re-housing. The only exceptions are households that can exit homelessness with little or no assistance, those who experience chronic homelessness and who need permanent supportive housing, and households who are seeking a therapeutic residential environment, including those recovering from addiction.

## **Rapid Re-Housing's Effectiveness**

Research suggests that rapid re-housing is more cost-effective than transitional housing. The long-term impacts of rapid re-housing are still being studied, but initial research indicates that people assisted by rapid re-housing experience higher rates of permanent housing placement and similar or lower rates of return to homelessness after the assistance ends compared to those assisted by transitional housing or who only receive emergency shelter. In and of itself, rapid re-housing is not designed to comprehensively address all of a recipient's service needs or their poverty. Instead, rapid re-housing solves the immediate crisis of homelessness, while connecting families or individuals with appropriate community resources to address other service needs.

## **Core Program Components and Practice Considerations**

Rapid re-housing interventions assist households experiencing homelessness by helping them move directly into permanent housing in the community using whichever combination of financial assistance and housing-focused services are needed and desired by the household. Rapid re-housing has core programmatic components and practice considerations which are described below. While a rapid re-housing program must have all three core components available, it is not required that a single entity provide all three services nor that a household utilize them all.

### Core Program Components

***A Tailored Package of Assistance*** – To help households obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, rapid re-housing can draw from a variety of types of assistance and tailor this to households based on their specific strengths and barriers. Some households may only need limited financial assistance to cover rent and move-in costs, some may only need housing search assistance, while others may need a combination of assistance or assistance for a longer duration. These different types financial and non-financial assistance should be thought of as tools in a rapid re-housing program's "toolkit" that can be flexibly deployed to achieve individual client goals:

- ***Housing Identification***: The primary focus of services in rapid re-housing is to provide help with finding housing and to troubleshoot barriers that prevent access to that housing. Housing identification services encompass helping households find appropriate rental housing in the community, contacting and recruiting landlords to provide housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, addressing potential

barriers to landlord participation such as concern about short-term nature of rental assistance and tenant qualifications, assisting households to complete applications and prepare for interviews with landlords, helping households to determine if a housing option meets their needs and preferences, and help with moving. It could also include identifying co-housing with a friend or family member if that is the most appropriate option for permanent housing.

- **Rent and Move-In Assistance**—The primary barrier to permanent housing for many families experiencing homelessness is their limited finances. To address this barrier, rapid re-housing programs offer financial assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance (typically for six months or less) necessary to allow individuals and families to move immediately out of homelessness and stabilize in permanent housing. In some instances, households may need and qualify for longer term rental assistance, such as through a Housing Choice Voucher (i.e., “Section 8”), to permanently escape homelessness and achieve housing stability. In this case the time-limited financial assistance may serve as a bridge until the voucher is secured.
- **Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services** - At a minimum, a rapid re-housing program must include case management, but it may also include other services, such as tenancy supports. Case management and services may be provided to households to help overcome and troubleshoot barriers to (re)acquiring and maintaining permanent housing. Case management services in rapid re-housing programs can help individuals and families select among various permanent housing options based on their unique needs, preferences, and financial resources, address issues that may impede access to housing (such as credit history, arrears, and legal issues), negotiate manageable and appropriate lease agreements with landlords, and make appropriate and time-limited services and supports available to families and individuals—and to the landlords who are partnering with the rapid re-housing program. Case management services can also monitor participants’ housing stability after securing housing and during program participation, ideally through home visits and communication with the landlord, and be available to resolve housing-related crises should they occur.

Case management will also, as appropriate, assist households with connecting to resources that help them improve their safety and well-being and achieve their long-term goals. This includes providing or ensuring that households have access to resources related to income and health care benefits, employment and community-based services (if needed/appropriate) so that they can sustain rent payments independently when rental assistance ends. **Case management services should be client-directed, respectful of individuals’ right to self-determination, and voluntary.** Unless basic, program-related case management is required by statute or regulation, participation in non-financial services should not be required to obtain or maintain rapid re-housing assistance. Since rapid re-housing is a short-term, crisis response program, case managers typically do not attempt to directly address all of the service needs they may identify. When households are willing and able, case managers help them connect to community-based services that already exist. Rapid re-housing providers should have knowledge of where to find and how to access these community-based services. Moreover, rather than simply providing referrals to community-based services *on behalf of* a household, rapid re-housing providers can enlist

household members to participate in this process, to help households gain the knowledge and skills necessary to find and access community-based services in the future on their own.

### Practice Considerations

- **Primary focus on helping households obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible** – Consistent with a Housing First approach, rapid re-housing programs focus on the goal of helping households obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible and without first requiring household members to meet behavioral prerequisites like sobriety and treatment adherence. From the moment households experiencing homelessness are encountered, rapid re-housing programs engage them around where and how to obtain permanent housing and flexibly provide “just enough” financial assistance to help the household become stable. Possible permanent housing may be in private market apartments, affordable or subsidized housing, or living with friends or family members.
- **Accessible to households experiencing homelessness** – Rapid re-housing must be highly accessible to households experiencing homelessness. Programs should have a means of quickly reaching households that become homeless in a wide variety of settings where they are likely to seek help, including emergency shelters, food pantries, and social services programs. Communities that have coordinated entry and assessment systems and information lines (e.g., 2-1-1) in place should integrate rapid re-housing screening and triage into these systems to identify households in need of rapid re-housing assistance and engage them in the re-housing process as soon as possible.
- **Assistance is guided by assessment of housing barriers, strengths, and preferences** – All assistance provided in rapid re-housing should be guided by a housing plan, which is developed based on an assessment of *housing* barriers and in partnership with households. Upon first contact, an initial assessment is conducted to identify households housing needs and preferences, strengths, and barriers to housing, and to identify possible alternatives and resources. This assessment should be primarily focused on assessing housing needs rather than service needs, and can be used to determine if rapid re-housing alone is the most appropriate intervention or if longer-term assistance is needed and desired. For instance, if households are found to have extraordinary financial challenges and/or longer-term, housing-related needs for assistance, the program should connect them to longer-term rental assistance or permanent supportive housing. The initial assessment also provides the basis for the initial level of financial assistance and/or supportive services to be provided by the rapid re-housing intervention. Regular reassessments, provided through follow-up, should be built into the housing plan to determine if the level of assistance should be increased, decreased or discontinued once households enter permanent housing.
- **Flexibility and adaptability of assistance** – Periodically reassessing the preferences, needs, and abilities of households assisted by rapid re-housing is critical, as this allows for the determination of whether the levels of both financial assistance and services need to be either increased or decreased. One method of implementing a rapid re-housing program is using a ‘progressive engagement’ approach, wherein households experiencing homelessness are given a basic level of financial and services supports. Ongoing monitoring and periodic reassessment determines if and when the basic level of assistance should be changed or increased. This allows rapid re-housing programs to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances.

## Important Questions to Consider when Implementing Rapid Re-Housing

Communities implementing new rapid-re-housing programs as part of their homelessness system should consider the following questions:

- ***What resources can we draw on to fund rapid re-housing interventions?*** A number of Federal, state, local, and philanthropic sources can be used to support and finance rapid re-housing programs. The costs of rapid re-housing include the direct financial assistance as well costs related to housing search and case management services, including personnel. Among the Federal funding sources that can finance rapid re-housing include HUD's Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Programs, HHS's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Title IV E Foster Care and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and the VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program.
- ***What is the focus of the services/case management component and how might it be different than in other programs?*** The focus of services in rapid re-housing is primarily oriented toward helping families resolve their **immediate crises**, find and secure housing, and connect to services if/when appropriate. Case managers should monitor and provide ancillary services in the short run to promote obtaining and maintaining housing. This may be a contrast to many programs in which the focus is providing comprehensive support to each household and remaining engaged for a longer period of time. This crisis-related, lighter-touch (typically six months or less) approach allows financial and staff resources to be directed to as many individuals/households experiencing a housing crisis as possible. At the same time, depending upon funder flexibility, programs should be designed to allow households to return for more assistance if they need it at a later time.
- ***How will we ensure that there is a clear and efficient process for ensuring access to rapid-re-housing for those households who need it?*** Providers can identify and map the steps in the "program flow" in their community, beginning at the point at which households are identified as experiencing homelessness until they have secured permanent housing. The basic steps in this process include direct outreach (or coordination with other outreach providers), screening for rapid re-housing assistance, program intake, housing barrier assessment, provision of assistance, housing search and placement, links to other supports, reassessment and adjustment, and case closure. If the local program flow is not efficient based on the analysis, they should consider changes that would improve efficiency. It is important to also identify how the rapid re-housing program can refer and link to other types of housing assistance like rental assistance programs and permanent supportive housing for households who need and desire such assistance.
- ***How can providers measure the efficiency of a rapid re-housing program?*** The primary measure of the efficiency of a rapid re-housing program is the amount of time it takes to re-house households. Efficient programs typically re-house households in a couple weeks and in most cases in less than 30 days. If it is taking longer, it is possible that the program's policies and procedures need to be streamlined. For example, if it takes several weeks to begin showing apartments to eligible households because of the documentation requirements of the program, the provider should identify ways to reduce or streamline those documentation requirements.

- **How can providers ensure adequate access to housing and community-based services for rapid re-housing participants?** Rapid re-housing providers can increase the pool of possible housing and supportive service options for their clients by proactively building relationships, particularly with landlords and community-based housing and service providers. Rapid re-housing providers can and should educate landlords about the types of financial assistance they offer, as well as the role that their services can play in mitigating the risk to landlords of providing housing to households with no or poor housing and credit histories. By being responsive to landlord concerns, rapid re-housing can create a positive experience and perception among them about providing housing to formerly homeless households. Such partnerships help ensure that landlords do not screen out rental applications from persons with extremely low or no income, poverty-related housing and credit histories, etc. Landlords become dedicated, long-term partners when programs provide support to landlords by intervening to resolve concerns about lease, late payments, conflict with tenants, when they provide rental assistance payments promptly, and when they help landlords quickly fill vacant units.

Similarly, rapid re-housing providers can conduct outreach and education to providers of other services households generally need and want (such as subsidized daycare, employment, etc.) by attending community events, leaving brochures at service settings, and meeting with leadership of services organizations. In some instances, memoranda of agreement can be executed between rapid re-housing programs and other services, to outline mutual expectations and responsibilities around how referrals can be provided from rapid re-housing programs to community-based services and vice versa.

## Useful Resources on Rapid Re-Housing

### U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

Solutions Database – This database contains short profiles of important practices and programs, including tips for replicating and information about results, as well as links to help you find more information or resources you can use.

### National Alliance to End Homelessness

- ✓ Rapid Re-Housing – Creating Programs that Work – A guide to assist communities in rapid re-housing implementation.
- ✓ Rapid Re-Housing Training – Five short modules developed by the Center for Capacity Building that break down the basic elements of the intervention.
- ✓ Rapid Re-Housing: A History and Core Components – A brief paper describing background, research, and three core components of rapid re-housing.

### VA

- ✓ SSVF Program: Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Best Practice Standards – Practice standards developed by Abt Associates and the Technical Assistance Collaboration under contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that reflect a growing consensus about what works in homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing programs.
- ✓ SSVF Rapid Re-Housing Webinar – This power point provides an overview of SSVF, as well as components of high-performing rapid re-housing programs.

## Research

The following research articles and related publications provide supporting evidence for why communities should increase the availability of Rapid Re-housing assistance and the efficacy of the Rapid Re-housing model.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2012). Research on Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing.

*This document provides an annotated list of select research on homelessness prevention and Rapid Re-housing. It includes research from the State of Michigan; Hennepin County, MN; and New York, NY.*

Culhane, D. P. & Metraux, S. (2008). Rearranging the Deck Chairs or Reallocating the Lifeboats? Homelessness Assistance and Its Alternatives. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74(1): 111-121.

*This article uses research on homelessness to devise alternative forms of emergency assistance that could reduce the prevalence and/or duration of episodes of homelessness and much of the need for emergency shelter.*

National Alliance to End Homelessness. Rapid Re-Housing Successes.

*This interactive mapping tool highlights areas in which communities were able to successfully place families in permanent housing at encouraging levels. The map describes the number of families affected, the average cost of assistance, and the positive results stemming from that assistance.*

Rodriguez, J. (2013). Homelessness Recurrence in Georgia: Descriptive Statistics, Risk Factors, and Contextualized Outcome Measurement.

*This report analyzes risk factors for a later recurrence of homelessness among persons served over a year by programs reporting data into Georgia's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The study found that of 21 variables the top risk factors of returning to homelessness were an absence of Rapid Re-housing enrollment and having a history of homelessness in HMIS.*



# Housing First Checklist: Assessing Projects and Systems for a Housing First Orientation

Housing First is a proven approach, applicable across all elements of systems for ending homelessness, in which people experiencing homelessness are connected to permanent housing swiftly and with few to no treatment preconditions, behavioral contingencies, or other barriers. It is based on overwhelming evidence that people experiencing homelessness can achieve stability in permanent housing if provided with the appropriate level of services. Study after study has shown that Housing First yields higher housing retention rates, drives significant reductions in the use of costly crisis services and institutions, and helps people achieve better health and social outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

This checklist was designed to help you make a quick assessment of whether and to what degree housing programs — and entire systems — are employing a Housing First approach. Robust tools and instruments are available elsewhere to quantitatively measure program quality and fidelity to Housing First. This tool is not meant to take the place of those more rigorous assessments, but is intended to help Continuums of Care, individual housing and services providers, funders, and other stakeholders to communicate about, and quickly assess, alignment with key Housing First approaches.

## Core Elements of Housing First at the Program/Project Level

For your homelessness service system to work the most efficiently and effectively, individual programs must embrace a Housing First approach. This portion of the checklist can help you assess the extent to which your local programs are implementing Housing First. You can use this tool for trainings or planning sessions, during a site visit or program audit, as a guide when reviewing funding applications, or for many other uses.

- Access to programs is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
- Programs or projects do everything possible not to reject an individual or family on the basis of poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, minor criminal convictions, or behaviors that are interpreted as indicating a lack of “housing readiness.”
- People with disabilities are offered clear opportunities to request reasonable accommodations within applications and screening processes and during tenancy, and building and apartment units include special physical features that accommodate disabilities.

### Quick Screen: Does Your Project Use Housing First Principles?

- 1) Are applicants allowed to enter the program without income?
- 2) Are applicants allowed to enter the program even if they aren't “clean and sober” or “treatment compliant”?
- 3) Are applicants allowed to enter the program even if they have criminal justice system involvement?
- 4) Are service and treatment plans voluntary, such that tenants cannot be evicted for not following through?

- Programs or projects that cannot serve someone work through the coordinated entry process to ensure that those individuals or families have access to housing and services elsewhere.
- Housing and service goals and plans are highly tenant-driven.
- Supportive services emphasize engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals.
- Participation in services or compliance with service plans are not conditions of tenancy, but are reviewed with tenants and regularly offered as a resource to tenants.
- Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use and addiction are a part of some tenants' lives. Tenants are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.
- Substance use in and of itself, without other lease violations, is not considered a reason for eviction.
- Tenants in supportive housing are given reasonable flexibility in paying their share of rent on time and offered special payment arrangements for rent arrears and/or assistance with financial management, including representative payee arrangements.
- Every effort is made to provide a tenant the opportunity to transfer from one housing situation, program, or project to another if a tenancy is in jeopardy. Whenever possible, eviction back into homelessness is avoided.

### **Core Elements of Housing First at the Community Level**

Housing First should be adopted across your community's entire homelessness response system, including outreach and emergency shelter, short-term interventions like rapid re-housing, and longer-term interventions like supportive housing. You can use this part of the checklist to assess the extent to which your community has adopted a system-wide Housing First orientation, as well as guide further dialogue and progress.

- Your community has a coordinated system that offers a unified, streamlined, and user-friendly community-wide coordinated entry process to quickly assess and match people experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate housing and services, including rapid re-housing, supportive housing, and/or other housing interventions.
- Emergency shelter, street outreach, and other parts of your crisis response system implement and promote low barriers to entry or service and quickly identify people experiencing homelessness, provide access to safety, make service connections, and partner directly with housing providers to rapidly connect individuals and families to permanent housing.
- Outreach and other crisis response teams are coordinated, trained, and have the ability to engage and quickly connect people experiencing homelessness to the local coordinated entry process in order to apply for and obtain permanent housing.
- Your community has a data-driven approach to prioritizing housing assistance, whether through analysis of the shared community assessment and vulnerability indices, system performance measures from the Homeless Management Information System, data on utilization of crisis services, and/or data from other

systems that work with people experiencing homelessness or housing instability, such as hospitals and the criminal justice system.

- Housing providers and owners accept referrals directly from the coordinated entry processes and work to house people as quickly as possible, using standardized application and screening processes and removing restrictive criteria as much as possible.
- Policymakers, funders, and providers conduct joint planning to develop and align resources to increase the availability of affordable and supportive housing and to ensure that a range of options and mainstream services are available to maximize housing choice among people experiencing homelessness.
- Mainstream systems, including social, health, and behavioral health services, benefit and entitlement programs, and other essential services have policies in place that do not inhibit implementation of a Housing First approach. For instance, eligibility and screening policies for benefit and entitlement programs or housing do not require treatment completion or sobriety.
- Staff in positions across the entire housing and services system are trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for client/tenant engagement, such as motivational interviewing, client-centered counseling, critical time interventions, and trauma-informed care.

## Additional Resources

- [Implementing Housing First in Supportive Housing](#) (USICH, 2014) – discusses supportive housing and Housing First as tools for ending chronic homelessness and helping people with disabilities live independently in the community.
- [Webinar: Core Principles of Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing](#) (USICH, 2014) – describes the core components of the Housing First approach and the rapid re-housing model and how both work together to help end homelessness.
- [Four Clarifications about Housing First](#) (USICH, 2014) – clarifies some common misperceptions about Housing First.
- [It's Time We Talked the Walk on Housing First](#) (USICH, 2015) – advances our thinking on Housing First.
- [Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing](#) (HUD, 2014) – provides an overview of the principles and core components of the Housing First model.
- [Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence-Based Practices KIT](#) (SAMHSA, 2010) – outlines the essential components of supportive housing, along with fidelity scales and scoresheets.

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<sup>1</sup> Lipton, F.R. et. al. (2000). "Tenure in supportive housing for homeless persons with severe mental illness," *Psychiatric Services* 51(4): 479-486. M. Larimer, D. Malone, M. Garner, et al. "Health Care and Public Service Use and Costs Before and After Provision of Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons with Severe Alcohol Problems." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, April 1, 2009, pp. 1349-1357. Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance. (2007). "Home and Healthy for Good: A Statewide Pilot Housing First Program." Boston.

# FACT SHEET: HOUSING FIRST



## WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.<sup>i</sup>

## HOW IS HOUSING FIRST DIFFERENT FROM OTHER APPROACHES?

Housing First does not require people experiencing homelessness to address all of their problems including behavioral health problems, or to graduate through a series of services programs before they can access housing. Housing First does not mandate participation in services either before obtaining housing or in order to retain housing. The Housing First approach views housing as the foundation for life improvement and enables access to permanent housing without prerequisites or conditions beyond those of a typical renter. Supportive services are offered to support people with housing stability and individual well-being, but participation is not required as services have been found to be more effective when a person chooses to engage.<sup>ii</sup> Other approaches do make such requirements in order for a person to obtain and retain housing.

## WHO CAN BE HELPED BY HOUSING FIRST?

A Housing First approach can benefit both homeless families and individuals with any degree of service needs. The flexible and responsive nature of a Housing First approach allows it to be tailored to help anyone. As such, a Housing First approach can be applied to help end homelessness for a household who became homeless due to a temporary personal or financial crisis and has limited service needs, only needing help accessing and securing permanent housing. At the same time, Housing First has been found to be particularly effective approach to end homelessness for high need populations, such as chronically homeless individuals.<sup>iii</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM?

Housing First programs often provide rental assistance that varies in duration depending on the household's needs. Consumers sign a standard lease and are able to access supports as necessary to help them do so. A variety of voluntary services may be used to promote housing stability and well-being during and following housing placement.

Two common program models follow the Housing First approach but differ in implementation. Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is targeted to individuals and families with chronic illnesses, disabilities, mental health issues, or substance use disorders who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. It provides long-term rental assistance and supportive services.

A second program model, rapid re-housing, is employed for a wide variety of individuals and

families. It provides short-term rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and remain housed. The Core Components of rapid re-housing—housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management and services—operationalize Housing First principals.

## I DOES HOUSING FIRST WORK?

There is a large and growing evidence base demonstrating that Housing First is an effective solution to homelessness. Consumers in a Housing First model access housing faster<sup>iv</sup> and are more likely to remain stably housed.<sup>v</sup> This is true for both PSH and rapid re-housing programs. PSH has a long-term housing retention rate of up to 98 percent.<sup>vi</sup> Studies have shown that rapid re-housing helps people exit homelessness quickly—in one study, an average of two months<sup>vii</sup>—and remain housed. A variety of studies have shown that between 75 percent and 91 percent of households remain housed a year after being rapidly re-housed.<sup>viii</sup>

More extensive studies have been completed on PSH finding that clients report an increase in perceived levels of autonomy, choice, and control in Housing First programs. A majority of clients are found to participate in the optional supportive services provided,<sup>ix</sup> often resulting in greater housing stability. Clients using supportive services are more likely to

participate in job training programs, attend school, discontinue substance use, have fewer instances of domestic violence,<sup>x</sup> and spend fewer days hospitalized than those not participating.<sup>xi</sup>

Finally, permanent supportive housing has been found to be cost efficient. Providing access to housing generally results in cost savings for communities because housed people are less likely to use emergency services, including hospitals, jails, and emergency shelter, than those who are homeless. One study found an average cost savings on emergency services of \$31,545 per person housed in a Housing First program over the course of two years.<sup>xii</sup> Another study showed that a Housing First program could cost up to \$23,000 less per consumer per year than a shelter program.<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup>Tsemberis, S. & Eisenberg, R. Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. 2000.

<sup>ii</sup>Einbinder, S. & Tull, T. The Housing First Program for Homeless Families: Empirical Evidence of Long-term Efficacy to End and Prevent Family Homelessness. 2007.

<sup>iii</sup>Gulcur, L., Stefancic, A., Shinn, M., Tsemberis, S., & Fishcer, S. Housing, Hospitalization, and Cost Outcomes for Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Participating in Continuum of Care and Housing First Programmes. 2003.

<sup>iv</sup>Gulcur, L., Stefancic, A., Shinn, M., Tsemberis, S., & Fishcer, S. Housing, Hospitalization, and Cost Outcomes for Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Participating in Continuum of Care and Housing First programs. 2003.

<sup>v</sup>Tsemberis, S. & Eisenberg, R. Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. 2000.

<sup>vi</sup>Montgomery, A.E., Hill, L., Kane, V., & Culhane, D. Housing Chronically Homeless Veterans: Evaluating the Efficacy of a Housing First Approach to HUD-VASH. 2013.

<sup>vii</sup>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Family Options Study: Short-Term Impacts. 2015.

<sup>viii</sup>Byrne, T., Treglia, D., Culhane, D., Kuhn, J., & Kane, V. Predictors of Homelessness Among Families and Single Adults After Exit from Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs: Evidence from the Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veterans Program. 2015.

<sup>ix</sup>Tsemberis, S., Gulcur, L., & Nakae, M. Housing First, Consumer Choice, and Harm Reduction for Homeless Individuals with a Dual Diagnosis. 2004.

<sup>x</sup>Einbinder, S. & Tull, T. The Housing First Program for Homeless Families: Empirical Evidence of Long-term Efficacy to End and Prevent Family Homelessness. 2007.

<sup>xi</sup>Gulcur, L., Stefancic, A., Shinn, M., Tsemberis, S., & Fishcer, S. Housing, Hospitalization, and Cost Outcomes for Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Participating in Continuum of Care and Housing First programs. 2003.

<sup>xii</sup>Perlman, J. & Parvensky, J. Denver Housing First Collaborative: Cost Benefit Analysis and Program Outcomes Report. 2006.

<sup>xiii</sup>Tsemberis, S. & Stefancic, A. Housing First for Long-Term Shelter Dwellers with Psychiatric Disabilities in a Suburban County: A Four-Year Study of Housing Access and Retention. 2007.

*The New York City Council Committee on Housing and Buildings*

*Re: Int. No. 0564/Int. No. 0550*

*Oksana Mironova, Housing Policy Analyst, Community Service Society of New York*

*Alison Wilkey, Director of Public Policy, Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College*

*January 14, 2019*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit joint written testimony from The Community Service Society (CSS) and The Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (PRI) on the need for a review of the housing lottery system and for public reporting of housing lottery outcomes.

The Community Service Society (CSS) is an independent nonprofit organization that addresses some of the most urgent problems facing low-income New Yorkers and their communities, including the effects of the city's housing affordability crisis.

The Prisoner Reentry Institute (PRI) is a center of research and action at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. PRI is committed to providing opportunities for people to live successfully in the community after involvement with the justice system.

New York City has always been known as a chronically tight, high-cost rental market. In recent decades, housing that is affordable to low-income New Yorkers has become more elusive and homelessness has skyrocketed. The city's low-income population has remained fairly stable since 2000, with about a million households living below twice the federal poverty level. Yet the number of homeless families in shelters has tripled.

Housing is a primary concern for New Yorkers across all income levels. However, low-income renters are most vulnerable to a range of housing insecurities, including increasingly unaffordable rents; inadequate, unsafe housing conditions; and, increasing instances of landlord harassment. CSS research shows that 35 percent of low-income households experienced housing insecurity (such as doubling up with family or friends, falling behind on rent, or threats of eviction) in 2018, as compared to 14 percent among higher income New Yorkers.

Access to housing is particularly difficult for people with past involvement in the justice system. Many people experience homelessness prior to justice system involvement and many people end up in shelter in the year after release from jail. Research shows that incarcerated people in all gender, race, and ethnicity groups earned substantially less *prior* to their incarceration than their non-incarcerated counterparts of similar ages. Thus, people with justice system involvement face the unending barriers and stigma of having a criminal record, as well as the instability of poverty.

Given that housing insecurity impacts low-income and vulnerable New Yorkers the most, it is important that tenant screening does not act as an extra barrier to affordable housing access. Tenant selection guidelines outlined in the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) Marketing Handbook for city-subsidized housing may create such a barrier by allowing housing providers to screen out applicants based on housing court history, criminal history, and credit history.

There is no evidence that the screening categories authorized by HPD's policy are predictive of problematic tenancy. Housing court histories, criminal histories, and poor credit scores are not strong predictors of whether or not a person will be able to make rent payments or create unsafe conditions. Access to stable housing actually improves public safety because there is a strong

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*Re: Int. No. 0564/Int. No. 0550*

*Oksana Mironova, Housing Policy Analyst, Community Service Society of New York*

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*January 14, 2019*

association between housing insecurity and recidivism. While HPD has updated its Marketing Handbook to ensure that affordable housing applicants are not disqualified based solely on their credit or housing court history, applicants may still be rejected if they have been evicted in the past. Further, the HPD Marketing Handbook requires a criminal background check as a prerequisite for tenant occupancy. Yet HPD does not offer clear guidance about how a city-subsidized landlord should use the resulting information, beyond disclosing to HPD how “such a check will or will not adversely impact an applicant’s eligibility.”

We have anecdotal evidence of New Yorkers experiencing exclusion under HPD’s current tenant screening guidelines, but there is a dire need for more transparency around the tenant screening process. We support Intro. No. 564, which would require HPD to report on the number of applications received, applicants selected, applicants selected and subsequently rejected, applicants offered a position on a waiting list for affordable housing, and applicants offered affordable housing. We recommend the inclusion of additional information in the annual reporting requirements outlined in Intro. No. 564: reasons for applicant rejection, aggregate number of applicants rejected in each category, and number of appeals filed by rejected applicants.

There is also a need for an external review of the affordable housing tenant screening process. We support Intro. No. 550, which would mandate the establishment of a housing lottery task force. We recommend that the taskforce review and shore up current housing court, criminal history, and credit history tenant screening guidelines to ensure that New York City’s most vulnerable residents are not unfairly excluded from newly-created or preserved, city-subsidized housing.

Further, the affordable housing lottery task force should represent the views of both affordable housing developers and affordable housing tenants. In addition to including two members with background knowledge of affordable housing development and one member of an organization engaged in housing advocacy, the task force should include two tenants of a city-subsidized property.

Everyone should have a safe, stable place to live—not just access to shelter, but a place to call home. Housing is a fundamental human need that lays the foundation for success in every aspect of our lives. As New Yorkers, we all share a desire for a just society with opportunity for all. We believe in redemption, the idea that people should be given the chance for a new start after they falter, and merit patience and compassion as they do so. And we believe that individuals can change. Increasing access to safe, affordable, and quality housing for vulnerable New Yorkers further our shared values.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer our recommendations. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Oksana Mironova, CSS Housing Policy Analyst at 212-614-5412 or [omironova@cssny.org](mailto:omironova@cssny.org), or Alison Wilkey, PRI Director of Public Policy at 212-887-6203 or [awilkey@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:awilkey@jjay.cuny.edu).

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ALC Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert S. Altman

Address: 27 Whitehall St., 4th Floor NY, NY 10004

I represent: Access & Bronx Building Association

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1211  
550 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephanie Sosa

Address: 50 Broad Street Ste 1402 NY, NY 10004

I represent: Association for Neighborhood + Housing Development

Address: 50 Broad Street Ste 1402 NY, NY 10004

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raafibah J. Basir

Address: 902 Amsterdam Ave NYC 10025

I represent: Advocate Resident of Supportive Housing

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1211 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: Jan, 14, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carolyn Brown

Address: PO Box 22633 Bklyn NY 11210

I represent: Self + Shelter Housing

Address: 10-03 29th Queens NY 11101

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: January 14 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MAURICIO HERNANDEZ-TAPIERO

Address: Sleeping on the Street -

I represent: Myself

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dhnette Tomlin

Address: 106-01 Glenwood Rd

I represent: VOCAL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 12-11 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paula Fields

Address: 1244 Westchester Ave #3A

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. lottery Res. No. marker

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Queen mother Lucy Woody

Address: 1360 Sedgwick ave Bx

I represent: Self (Justice for Abused 5%)

Address: 2890 W 125<sup>a</sup> (Pillars)

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole McVinea

Address: 575 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, New York, NY 10018

I represent: Urban Pathways

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Catherine Trapani

Address: 307 W 38th St

I represent: Homeless Services United

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: Jan 14, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Scott Hutchins

Address: 452 W 59th St

I represent: Partners for the Homeless

Address: 109 B E 126th St

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Giselle Routhier & Joshua Goldfern

Address: 129 Fulton St, NY NY 10013 199 Water St, NY NY

I represent: Coalition for the Homeless Legal Aid

Address: Homeless Society

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shelia Martin

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Housing Partnership

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: Jan 14, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nathyn Flowers Adefegun

Address: Homeless

I represent: VOCAL-NY

Address: 20 A 44th Ave Brooklyn 11217

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lytic Thompson

Address: 1355 DOALER # 3

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Annie Carfora

Address: 2094 Fulton St. Brooklyn NY 11233

I represent: Neighbors Together

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

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Name: Victoria Wolf

Address: 1424 Herkimer St BK NY 11207

I represent: Neighbors Together

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leroy Alexander

Address: 130 Glen St Apt. 75 BK NY 11208

I represent: Neighbors Together

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MATTHEW DUNBAR

Address: 111 John St., NY, NY

I represent: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY NYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 1-14-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy O'Shields

Address: 123 William Street

I represent: Safety Net Activists

Address: 123 William Street NY, NY 10038

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1-14-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Peter Malvan

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Safety Net Activists & NYC CoC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 1/14/19

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Julie Walpert

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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 in favor     in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Molly Park

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Margaret (Margy) Brown

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Halim

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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