

Testimony of Molly Park, First Deputy Commissioner Department of Homeless Services

Before the New York City Council Finance and General Welfare Committees
Oversight Hearing: DHS Homeless Service Provider Contracts
December 16, 2019

Good morning Chairpersons Levin and Kallos and members of the General Welfare and Contracts Committees. My name is Molly Park and I am the First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS).

Thank you for inviting me today to discuss our homeless service provider contracts and the work we have done to ensure shelter providers are true partners in making reforms to improve programs and services for New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Following our comprehensive 90-day review in 2016, DHS undertook a number of reforms to not only create and enforce new processes but also to support our provider partners.

To begin, I would like to provide some historical context of the shelter system that built up haphazardly over the past four decades. From 1994 to 2014, the shelter population in NYC increased 115%. Between 2011 and 2014, following the abrupt end to the Advantage rental assistance program, the DHS census increased by 38%. During this same time, New York City faced increasing economic inequality because of stagnant wages, a lack of affordable housing, and an increased cost of living – rents increased by nearly 19% while wages increased by less than 5%. There was also a loss of 150,000 rent regulated apartments. The resulting dramatic increase in the shelter population, coupled with underinvestment, created real challenges as DHS and the agency's not-for-profit partners worked to adequately ensure safe, clean, and secure conditions.

Within that context, DHS has taken steps to improve shelter conditions and to support providers by updating our contracts and approach to funding. One of the critical reforms adopted following our 90-day review was rate rationalization for homeless shelter services to ensure shelter providers are adequately resourced to provide high-quality homeless services. Additionally, updating our contracts provided a mechanism for DHS to address issues with shelter conditions. With improved contracts and new approaches to quickly make repairs, providers are now better equipped to maintain high quality shelters and deliver services to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.

Contracts

DHS holds contacts with over 75 human service providers for the range of services that DHS provides to serve families and individuals experiencing homelessness. For new shelters, DHS has an open-ended RFP process, which means proposals from not-for-profit providers are accepted on a rolling basis.

When a proposal is submitted, the quality of the proposal is evaluated and scored by agency program experts working with the Department of Social Services (DSS) Contracts Office in accordance with New York City Procurement Policy Board Rules. This evaluation includes an assessment of the need for the proposed shelter population capacity (Families with Children, Adult Families, Single Adults), the location, the viability of the building, the scope of client services, the experience of the provider, pricing and other operational matters. The proposal is also reviewed by Agency leadership for consistency with *Turning the Tide's* borough-based approach, as well as the the capacity and equitable siting goals the plan will achieve once fully implemented.

Model Budget

DHS has invested more than a quarter of a billion dollars annually in additional funding in our not-for-profit shelter providers to address decades of disinvestment and to modernize the outdated rates they had been paid for too long. This includes funding for social workers in contracted families with children shelters, housing specialists in all shelters and standardized rates for services such as maintenance and supplies. This was done to ensure providers can deliver the high-quality services families and individuals experiencing homelessness deserve as they get back on their feet. As we developed the funding parameters for the specific components of the services our partners provide, a model evolved: hence the term "Model Budget."

The model budget exercise uses a set of templates to assist in evaluating all aspects of the provision of shelter (maintenance, staffing, and client services), specific to a particular shelter capacity and type to determine a facility's appropriate annual budget. Moving away from the previous one size-fits all approach, the model accounts for different populations: Families with Children, Adult Families, and Single Adult Shelters including Mental Health, Substance Use, Employment, Assessment, and General Population. The models reflect the ongoing priority placed by both DHS and the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) on shelter repairs and are reflective of State requirements contained within the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Part 900 and Part 491, as well as City regulations and statutes, as appropriate.

The per-diem is built from various components of the model, which standardizes rates to provide consistent and sustained support for quality services. These rates are calibrated for shelter size recognizing, for example, that a small site may be more expensive to operate on a per person basis, because there are fewer economies of scale. The model also includes maintenance, client supplies, food, transportation, and shelter administration. Another component of the model is the establishment of staff-to-client ratios for direct service staff (e.g. caseworkers, supervisors, housing specialists, social workers, peer specialists, recreation staff and residential aides) across all contracted shelter providers along with the funding, so that providers can meet and maintain these ratios for their individual shelter

capacity. Through the model budget, DHS provides staffing and funding for services based on each of these elements, crosschecked with the site's specific capacity and line item costs, which produces this overall per diem and annual budget.

Once providers submit a budget proposal using the standard template, the DHS Shelter Program Budget Office compares the proposed budgets to the model and negotiates with DHS program staff to arrive at a near-final budget. This process is then completed in close consultation and partnership with the individual provider. After budget proposals are reviewed, the Department of Social Services (DSS) Finance Office shares budget recommendations with the NYC Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval. Following approval, the contract moves into the amendment phase, which includes legal and procedural checks, culminating in registration with the Comptroller's office.

Another component of the model budget is a new, unprecedented way of addressing approved one-time new needs. An example of this would be a one-time cost to replace a boiler that could not be accommodated within the regular maintenance and repair budget. All new contracts provide for an "allowance for repairs" up to 10% of the total annual contract value. Upon approval of a new need, such as the boiler example, a central DHS allocation funds the cost without requiring an additional contract amendment. In the current exercise with providers, in order to make the contract adjustments for the model, funding for rent, utilities, insurance, and security is included in individual providers' contract amendments to the extent funding is required to bring them to the standard or required levels. The models are flexible enough that, with proper justification, providers are able to adjust specific line items to simultaneously ensure the budget meets all necessary requirements and also appropriately reflects the unique operation of that particular shelter location. That said, a site's budget typically cannot go above the total model per diem and generally may not exceed the bottom line within a category.

While components of a provider's budget are defined through the model, there are some costs that are unique to each site. This includes rent, utilities, insurance, and security. Appropriate rent values are determined by analyzing a number of factors including, but not limited to: the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) small-area Fair Market Rent (FMR), comparable sales in the neighborhood, comparable price per square foot in the neighborhood, current published unit rental rates in the neighborhood, current use of the building, rehabilitation costs, average per-diem for comparable shelter (capacity and population), and capacity needs. Rates for utilities and insurance are based on documented actual costs. Security levels are determined in consultation with the NYPD and consider factors such as access control, vertical shifts, and lines of sight.

Financing

Along with our model budget exercise, we have also invested millions of dollars to reduce our footprint while meeting capacity needs and improve physical conditions at family and adult shelters. As part of the *Turning the Tide* plan, in FY20 \$600 million in capital funding was allocated over 10 years to address physical needs, upgrades and improvements in City-owned shelters. This builds on over \$52 million over four years in FY16 for 30 new capital projects at shelter facilities to address DHS shelter conditions and

\$90 million added over 5 years in FY17 for building upgrades at facilities, including 61 new capital projects.

Overall, the September Capital Plan includes over \$600 million for construction and rehabilitation projects, with the bulk of the funding projected to be committed over the next several years. DHS manages some of our projects in-house, and other, generally larger, projects are managed in partnership with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC). Today, we have 61 projects actively being designed and 24 projects in construction. DHS and DDC have forty-five (45) projects in the planning stage preparing for design, all of which are planned to begin during this Fiscal Year.

Finally, in the November Plan, funds were added to the DHS budget, as well as the other human services agencies, to support adjustments to indirect cost rates for not-for-profit providers. In February 2019, the City of New York adopted the Health and Human Services Cost Manual to standardize cost allocation practices for health and human service providers contracting with the City. The FY20 Adopted Budget established an Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Funding Initiative based on the Cost Manual. OMB and Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) formed a City Implementation Team (CIT) to manage the implementation and roll-out and included a Provider advisory work group. The November Plan funding fulfills the commitment the Mayor and the Speaker made for the Adopted FY20 budget.

Shelter Conditions

By rationalizing pay rates for our providers, we have improved the conditions of our shelters. At DHS, we conduct bi-annual Routine Site Review Inspections (RSRIs) to identify both current violations as well as conditions that may become problematic over time. RSRIs play an integral role in the contract process. Before a is contract is registered, the provider must provide a well-documented plan to address any outstanding physical issues. Without such a plan, DHS will not submit a shelter contract for registration.

RSRIs assist us in identifying and mitigating the most immediate safety hazards, while also providing an opportunity to conduct preventive maintenance and minimize the number of units placed off-line at a given time. During the RSRI, a DHS inspector is accompanied by the landlord, building manager, shelter director, head of maintenance, security, owner representative, caseworker, and/or other managerial staff. If any conditions are deemed hazardous or dangerous, the inspector immediately notifies those who are part of the walkthrough. Upon receiving an email of the RSRI results, the provider has 24 hours to address severe deficiencies in the building. The RSRI report provides detail necessary for the provider to develop and implement a remediation plan for identified building conditions requiring attention.

The Shelter Director also submits a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to DHS, which informs next steps to address the conditions identified in the RSRI at the shelter. Multiple re-inspections are conducted throughout the process of completing a CAP, which occur prior to the next scheduled RSRI inspection. This inspection system allows us to work with shelter providers to identify building issues, immediately address dangerous or hazardous conditions, prevent deeper infrastructure issues, and follow through to improve the conditions of each shelter.

The Mayor also established the Shelter Repair Squad as a multi-agency task force to inspect shelter buildings and identify code violations requiring repair. The task force is comprised of the Fire Department (FDNY), the Department of Buildings (DOB), the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Each agency has assigned teams to the Shelter Repair Squad and repairs are done by DHS and landlords.

At least two times per year, each agency will inspect facilities for code violations and inform providers of the results. Efforts are coordinated between agencies to maximize the efficiency of inspections, minimize duplication of efforts across teams and agencies, and reduce the burden of frequent inspections.

A critical component of the Shelter Repair Squad is the ability for the City to track all shelter building violations, along with measuring the progress made towards ameliorating the identified issues. To drive this task, the City developed a system to report on all city shelters and every violation attributed to each building. Essentially, this acts as a real time tracker for shelter building violations, allowing the City to appropriately allocate Shelter Repair Squad staff to work with providers to inspect buildings and develop and implement remediation plans. As a testament to the utility of this system, the framework has since been adopted by the State to develop their statewide Shelter Management System (SMS), which allows our oversight agency to more efficiently monitor building systems by tracking the status, remediation, and lifecycle of deficiencies and their responses by providers and users.

Information is aggregated from various sources available to DHS to provide a central clearinghouse where users retrieve information about shelters or evaluate and track the status of repairs at shelters. This approach facilitates interagency collaboration in improving conditions in shelters and makes it possible to formulate the monthly *Shelter Repair Scorecard*, which publicly reports on the conditions of homeless shelter facilities. The scorecard helps define the scope of any problems by publicly listing conditions at all homeless shelters in New York City.

The Shelter Repair Squad is a prime example of interagency collaboration to address longstanding issues across the shelter system. In the first year of this program, more than 12,000 building violations were closed or corrected. As we have reported previously, the Shelter Repair Squad conducted more than 63,644 shelter inspections from 2016-2019, reducing violations that went unaddressed for many years by 90 percent. Today, many of the remaining repairs involve normal wear and tear, and capital projects which we are funding as just discussed.

In conclusion, we've worked closely with our not-for-profit partners so that, together, we can raise the bar for the supports that we provide to homeless New Yorkers at all of our shelter locations citywide.



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Testimony before the New York City Council Committees on Contracts and General Welfare Oversight: DHS Homeless Service Provider Contracts December 16, 2019

My name is Catherine Trapani, and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United (HSU). HSU is a coalition of approximately 50 non-profit agencies serving homeless and at-risk adults and families in New York City. HSU provides advocacy, information, and training to member agencies to expand their capacity to deliver high-quality services. HSU advocates for expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers.

Homeless Service United's member agencies operate hundreds of programs including shelters, drop-in centers, food pantries, HomeBase, and outreach and prevention services. Each day, HSU member programs work with thousands of homeless families and individuals, preventing shelter entry whenever possible, providing quality shelter when prevention isn't an option and, working to end homelessness through counseling, social services, health care, legal services, and public benefits assistance, among many other supports. We are here testifying today about how DHS came to rely on contracting with the nonprofit community to uphold the right to shelter, how those contracts function and what can be done to strengthen the shelter system.

HISTORY: CONTRACTING WITH NONPROFITS TO UPHOLD THE RIGHT TO SHELTER

The right to shelter was codified in NYC 40 years ago and ever since then, the City has grappled with the challenge on how to fulfill the mandate. The courts affirmed that it is our legal and moral obligation to provide shelter services to everyone who needs it yet, it has always been a struggle to get government to invest in the kinds of shelter and housing facilities homeless people need and harder still to convince the public that these facilities should be in their communities. Because of this, the safety net for homeless people that exists today is a result of the work of tenacious advocates and social service organizations who fought for and won the establishment and improvement of the shelter system. Through decades of litigation, ongoing advocacy and pushing for oversight, we have collectively ensured that the right to shelter is not only upheld, but that the quality of our shelter programs is high. As a result of those efforts, shelter is one of the most highly regulated program types in the state.

Politically, it has never been a winning issue to build or invest in shelter even if we should all be able to agree that no one should ever be left out in the cold. "There is enormous community opposition to the placement of these men, now we have a court order telling us we have to do something" Robert Trobe, Deputy Administrator of Family and Adult Services for the City's Department of Social Services said following the Court's order to provide shelter to all homeless men in need in 1979. To help the City meet its burden, the City rented rooms at low cost hotels on the Bowery and, the State allowed the City

to use the Keener building on Ward's Island to "temporarily" house homeless men. Forty years later, Keener is still in use and, we are still forced to rely on hotels to house homeless people when stand alone facilities lack the capacity to meet the need.

Given that much of the shelter capacity we have was never intended to be in use for as long as it has, and, the fact that the City has historically not been keen on investing in preserving or strengthening the shelter system, it has been plagued by maintenance issues that were allowed to get progressively worse as the system aged. While some new shelters were able to open to cope with ever increasing number of families and individuals in need of shelter and were funded at rates in keeping with modern costs, most of the original capacity was still funded at the same levels as when it first opened until just this past year. Meanwhile, New York City's real estate market saw dramatic increases in prices and occupancy costs for shelter climbed with it. As costs were rising without new investments, more and more people found themselves in need of shelter services due to higher real estate prices, loss of benefits associated with welfare reform of 1996, federal disinvestment in housing programs and, the weakening of rent regulations during the Pataki years. All of these factors combined caused the crisis of homelessness to deepen. With a rising shelter census, the City turned to nonprofits to help them meet the demand and the modern shelter system was born.

As the shelter system started to age with no sign of the need for shelter going away, HSU advocated for funding to repair and improve shelters and strengthen services. Sadly, our pleas for resources fell on deaf ears for years. During the great recession of 2008 we saw PEGS erode services like employment specialists in family shelters, recreation staff, aftercare and more. We also saw so called "new needs requests" for repairs languish for months or even years. Overall, spending on homeless shelters climbed higher to meet the demand for new capacity even as the actual rates for shelter services remained stagnant or were cut.

Given the lack of appetite to commit to a robust pipeline of new shelters or invest in shelter infrastructure, the City has been forced to rely on emergency procurement to uphold the right to shelter over the years. During times of increased demand, it is not unusual for a nonprofit leader to get a last minute call from a DHS official asking them to open a planned facility early, procure a few hotel rooms or otherwise make space available for new families and individuals. It is the largest nonprofits in our membership that the City relies upon to expand capacity on a dime – these types of organizations are most able to rise to these challenges and absorb the risk of taking on new sites with little lead time and it is the large organizations that best poised to scale operations quickly. This trend of relying on large "go-to" providers persists with the current administration even as they have worked to cultivate new partners.

Providers do the best they can to accommodate these requests even in circumstances that are less than ideal because we believe it is the right thing to do. Our member agencies organized our Coalition in the early 90s because we believe that homeless people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. We have shared best practices and innovated to develop programs to meet their needs throughout our history and protested when families were made to sleep overnight in the EAU. Nonprofits have long been partners in the fight for quality services.

Early in the de Blasio administration, a decision was made not to build new shelters to address the rise in homelessness upon the belief that the introduction of a rental assistance program would result in a significant reduction of the shelter census. That reduction did not come to fruition and, because no new shelters were planned for, the City was in a situation where it did not have enough shelter capacity to



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meet the demand nor did they have time to develop traditional congregate shelters to address the need that had become impossible to ignore. Therefore, the City released a large RFP for commercial hotels, a model with high occupancy costs and limited services. Few providers were well positioned to take on such an enormous challenge but a few did come forward to step in and help the City meet the need for significant new capacity. It is thanks to these nonprofits that no family has been forced to sleep overnight in the EAU in decades.

At the same time as the hotel capacity expansion, the City introduced the Turning the Tide plan to address the homeless crisis finally calling for new housing and prevention initiatives, much needed investment in existing shelter stock, the closing of cluster sites and poorly run hotels and, for the first time in years, planning a pipeline of purpose built shelters.

PRESENT DAY CHALLENGES: IMPROVING EXISTING CAPACITY

By 2015 many facilities were at a breaking point due to the long history of disinvestment in shelter and audits at the State and City level as well as the de Blasio administration's own 90-day review of shelter services revealed that serious investment was needed to address decades of stagnant per diems and reduced social services. What followed was an exercise known as "rate rationalization" where DHS partnered with shelter providers to ensure that rates for shelter services were in line with costs regardless of the year the shelter program came into existence. For the first time in decades, shelter was seeing investment and, through what came to be known as the "model budget", rates were made more consistent and, budget authority for repairs was granted as part of the DHS contract for the first time in the agency's history.

While model budget negotiations took two years to conclude, these investments are finally beginning to take hold and we've seen a dramatic reduction in the number of violations in our City's shelters. HSU is grateful for the significant investments that were made to improve shelters but, much more work needs to be done to ensure that these investments are implemented across the portfolio and we remain concerned that serious gaps remain.

Because of the robust oversight system that governs DHS contracts, in order for a contract or an amendment to be registered such that funds are available to nonprofit service providers, the shelter must be in good repair and the provider must be in good standing with the City. Shelters with significant capital needs often struggle to get funding to address those needs because, the City cannot register contracts for those sites because of the violations. Before funding can be released, providers must navigate a byzantine system of often conflicting codes, face multiple inspections and re-inspections, ensure oversight agencies actually clear violations in their systems one repairs are made and, ensure any repairs nonprofits lack the funding to make on their own have a current corrective action plan (known as a CAP) in place. Then and only then can the contract or amendment be registered such that resources

are made available to correct the conditions. This process is complex on its own but can be even more challenging when the property is owned by the City or a private landlord and the nonprofit lacks the legal standing to actually cure the violations on their own. Given these kinds of challenges, there is still a significant number of amendments for model budget dollars still winding their way through the pipeline and some nonprofits have yet to receive the resources they need to address problems in their facilities.

HSU certainly understands the need to hold bad actors accountable by withholding funds from those who refuse to address deficiencies in their programs but, we urge the City to come up with a way to make sure that funding is available to providers who do the right thing and make every effort to ensure their programs are in compliance with regulations. We recommend that, in cases where there are building violations nonprofit vendors are not legally responsible or able to address because of the ownership of the facility, that funding for social services and items other than rent be allowed to flow so programs can continue to operate while landlords, including DHS, are held accountable by withholding occupancy funding alone. We further recommend that the City reimburse nonprofits for fines and other fees associated with clearing regulations that occur as a result of the City's own failure to act on properties that they own and manage. In addition, we urge DHS and DSS to continue to partner with nonprofit providers by giving clear direction and information regarding where their contracts and amendments are in the registration process, what if any information is needed to move things along and, ensure timely registration. We are hopeful that the new Passport system will achieve some of that transparency and look forward to its full implementation.

Setting aside registration issues, it is important to note that despite critical investments (that ultimately will make their way into nonprofit budgets), the model budget focused so much on maintenance that it left many other needs unaddressed. For example, nonprofit employees remain woefully underpaid which impacts the quality of service our clients receive. Nonprofits were told over and over throughout negotiations that this was "not an exercise in salary parity" and that increases to staff wages would not be contemplated except for cases where providers could demonstrate that it was literally impossible to attract or retain staff to fill a line that was vacant. This meant that wage ladders in programs that were compressed due to minimum wage increases were without a mechanism to ensure that employees with progressively responsible duties in programs are compensated for taking on more challenging roles. Providers were also not allowed to increase fringe spending for employee benefits such that any gains employees may have experienced due to modest COLAs are often blunted or eliminated by higher healthcare costs or decreased benefits. In addition to these unmet salary and benefits needs, nonprofits were also not allowed to budget for enhanced clinical supervision or client services to make up for decades of cuts leaving service levels to clients largely unchanged despite demonstrated need. As a result, turnover remains high and recruitment a challenge; staff often leave for better paying positions as soon as they gain enough experience to be competitive in the labor market; clients are the ones who suffer when such disruptions in staffing are routine.

Even those providers who were lucky enough to win modest investments over the years were told that they were already "over the model" when they entered negotiations and would have to forgo new investment in their facilities or find savings elsewhere. One provider who had new spending approved by DHS for enhanced security and engagement specialists following agreements with their local community board to address safety issues was later told that OMB denied the new spending and are now struggling to recover nearly \$2 million in unreimbursed expenses while grappling with how to cope with the deficit left by the broken promise and, how to explain the service cuts to their neighbors who were assured that steps were being taken to enhance community safety. If the City truly wants to invest in high quality shelter services these deficiencies must be addressed, particularly those that risk the



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safety of our clients and our neighbors. We cannot afford to squander good will in communities nor can we afford to lose the good shelter capacity that we have.

CONTINUED RELIANCE ON HOTELS: THE NEED FOR INVESTMENT IN SERVICES AND CAPACITY PLANNING

Given these challenges, coupled with continued opposition by communities to siting new shelters, the capacity crunch continues to persist. We therefore continue to rely on commercial hotels to house homeless families and individuals. The hotel contracts are up for renewal in 2021 but, we still do not have enough purpose built shelter capacity to meet the need. Attempts to create new, purpose built capacity have been thwarted by lawsuits, land use negotiations with the Council and other obstacles. It is therefore likely that these contracts will need to be renewed while the City continues to work on both reducing the need for shelter by linking people to permanent housing and by continuing to try and site new shelters better suited to meet client needs.

As long as families will continue to rely on hotels for shelter, HSU recommends enhancing those contracts to improve services and quality of life for those living in such facilities. We recommend enhancing service budgets to get staff ratios consistent with traditional congregate shelters – for example, while there are the same ratios for case managers and housing specialists, homeless hotels lack MSW Client Care Coordinators and recreation staff; these lines should be added to ensure that regardless of where a family is placed, a high level of social services is available to support them. Spatial constraints also limit programming at hotels given they were never designed to act as shelters— we therefore recommend enhancements to transportation budgets to allow nonprofits to help clients access community supports away from these hotel facilities and also provide allowances for providers to lease nearby commercial space to house programming nearby the hotels.

Finally, HSU recommends that the City redouble its efforts to reduce reliance on shelter overall by improving access to permanent housing for persons experiencing homelessness. That includes enhancing the value of rent subsidies, ensuring a robust pipeline of HPD homeless set aside units, priority access to NYCHA and Section 8 housing as well as an accelerated production of supportive housing.

Still, even with these kinds of efforts, the reality is that shelter is a necessary and important part of our safety net. We cannot turn our back on the immediate needs of homeless people just because we wish we could provide housing to everyone instead. Therefore, we need the partnership of every member of this Council in every neighborhood in the City in ensure that we can site enough shelter capacity to meet the need. We must achieve a vacancy rate high enough to move away from a reliance on emergency procurement which often results in relying on models like hotels and subjects the City to price gouging on occupancy costs. It should never be the case that any Council Member actively blocks a shelter project in their district because of the belief that shelter ought not be necessary. The fact is that the we

do not have a system where we can compel landlords to house everyone without regard to their ability to pay or other qualifications; the only "housing" with that kind of admissions policy is shelter. It is magical thinking to assume that any new housing built in lieu of shelter would actually house persons who would otherwise turn to DHS and an insult to the thousands of New Yorkers with no place to go to say that they should try their luck with the housing lottery instead because a City Council member thinks their district is doing enough even if there are still over 60,000 people without homes.

Shelter is and remains a critical service and I am proud our members are there to help provide it. We thank you for your partnership in addressing the urgent needs of our community and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.



My name is Caroline Contiguglia. I am a member of New Yorkers for Safer Streets, which is a grassroots group of over 1,000 concerned and proactive New York City residents.

On behalf of New Yorkers for Safer Streets, I have been conducting research on the safety and security of New York City's facilities for the homeless. I stand before you today to share our findings that are relevant to DHS's homeless service provider contracts.

Dangerous and deplorable conditions persist in many New York City homeless shelter facilities. We believe that the number of open violations at homeless shelters can serve as a proxy for the overall quality of shelter management; therefore, non-profit organizations that are managing numerous shelters with high levels of open violations are providing sub-standard service. We have analyzed the most recent NYC Shelter Repair Scorecard data and found that three non-profit organizations manage 23 of the top 25 worst performing buildings as measured by total open violations. These organizations are: Children's Rescue Fund, Bronx Family Housing, and Acacia. When we focused on just the "high priority" open violations, we found that these same three organizations manage 19 of the 25 worst performing buildings. The building with the most open violations is managed by Aguila, and this building has a total of 196 open violations, 38 of which are classified as high priority.

As New Yorkers, we all have a moral obligation to provide safe shelter to the homeless residents of our city. As our elected officials, you have the duty to require that DHS utilize quality shelter service providers.

Attachments:

Table 1: Providers of Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters As Measured by Total Open Violations

Table 2: Providers of Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters As Measured by Total Open "High Priority" Violations

Table 3: Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters Based on Number of Total Open Violations

Table 4: Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters Based on Number of Total Open "High Priority" Violations

Table 5: Market Share of Largest Providers of Homeless Shelter Services as Measured by "Units"

Data Source: Shelter Repair Scorecard, October 31, 2019 https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/about/shelter-repair-scorecard.page



Table 1
Providers of Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters
As Measured by Total Open Violations*

Children's Rescue Fund	10	of	Top 25	
Bronx Family Housing	8	of	Top 25	
ACACIA	5	of	Top 25	
Aguila	1	of	Тор 25	
CORE	1	of	Top 25	

Analysis Conducted by New Yorkers for Safer Streets

Source of Data: NYC Shelter Repair Scorecard, October 31, 2019

Table 2
Providers of Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters
As Measured by Total Open "High Priority" Violations*

	 		JAIO	
Children's Rescue Fund	8	of	Top 25	
Bronx Family Housing	6	of	Top 25	
ACACIA	5	of	Top 25	
Aguila	3	of	Top 25	
CORE	1	of	Top 25	
Volunteers of America	1	of	Top 25	
Women In Need	1	of	Top 25	

Analysis Conducted by New Yorkers for Safer Streets

Source of Data: NYC Shelter Repair Scorecard, October 31, 2019

^{*}All Inspecting Agency Violations (DOB, HPD, FDNY, DOHMH)

^{*}All Inspecting Agency Violations (DOB, HPD, FDNY, DOHMH)

Table 3

Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters Based on Greatest Number of Open Violations*

				Previous Month	Currer	nt Reporting	Month
	DHS			Open	New	Closed	Ttl Open
Shelter Name, Provider	Building	Facility Type	Borough	Violations	Violations	Violations	_
1 BRONX NEIGHBORHOOD AGUILA, AGUILA	1054	Family Cluster	Bronx	197	0	1	196
2 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1420	Family Cluster	Bronx	155	0	0	155
3 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1406	Family Cluster	Bronx	144	1	2	143
4 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC	1120	Family Cluster	Bronx	132	1	0	133
5 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC	1128	Family Cluster	Bronx	133	0	0	133
6 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1398	Family Cluster	Bronx	131	2	4	129
7 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC	1118	Family Cluster	Bronx	120	2	1	121
8 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX/CHLDN RESCUE	1130	Family Cluster	Bronx	114	0	0	114
FUND CL MODEL PRG, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC						-	
9 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC	1115	Family Cluster	Bronx	114	0	0	114
10 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX, Children's Rescue	1374	Family Cluster	Bronx	113	0	1	112
Fund, LLC							
11 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1427	Family Cluster	Bronx	104	0	3	101
12 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1416	Family Cluster	Bronx	95	0	1	94
13 CORE CLUSTER, CORE SERVICES GROUP INC	172298	Family Cluster	Brooklyn	94	0	0	94
14 BRONX ACACIA CLUSTER II, ACACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	1080	Family Cluster	Bronx	86	5	0	91
15 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX, Children's Rescue	19355	Family Cluster	Bronx	90	1	0	91
Fund, LLC							
16 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1424	Family Cluster	Bronx	89	0	1	88
17 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1403	Family Cluster	Bronx	84	1	1	84
18 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG/CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL	1126	Family Cluster	Bronx	83	0	1	82
MODEL PRG ANNEX, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC	- ***** ===						
19 BRONX ACACIA CLUSTER II, ACACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	1089	Family Cluster	Bronx	80	1	0	81
20 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER, ACACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	1328	Family Cluster	Manhattan	79	1	0	80
21 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG, Children's Rescue Fund, LLC	1129	Family Cluster	Bronx	75	0	0	75
22 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER, ACACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	1325	Family Cluster	Manhattan	73	2	0	75
23 ACACIA HUNTS POINT, ACACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	1430	Family Cluster	Bronx	74	1	1	74
24 BEDCO CLUSTER - BX, BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	1402	Family Cluster	Bronx	73	1	1	73
25 CHLDN RESC FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX, Children's Rescue Fund	1377	Family Cluster	Bronx	76	2	5	73

^{*}All Inspecting Agency Violations (DOB, HPD, FDNY, DOHMH)

Prepared by New Yorkers for Safer Streets; Source: NYC Shelter Repair Scorecard, October 31, 2019



Table 4

Top Twenty-Five Worst Performing NYC Shelters Based on Open "High Priority" Violations*

					The reserve to the second	Оре	en Violatio	ns	
Building Name/Borough	Bldg ID	Provider	Shelter Type	Units	Low	Medium	High	Commissions	Total
1 BEDCO CLUSTER - Bronx		BRONX FAMILY HOUSING	Family Cluster	19	34	67	43	11	155
2 BEDCO CLUSTER - Bronx		RONX FAMILY HOUSING	Family Cluster	20	29	70	43	1	143
3 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG - Bronx	1120 C	children's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	30	16	72	39	6	133
4 BRONX NEIGHBORHOOD AGUILA - Bronx	1054 A	GUILA	Family Cluster	72	22	135	38	1	196
5 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER - Manhattan	1326 A	CACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	Family Cluster	20	13	17	34	3	67
6 BEDCO CLUSTER - Bronx	1398 B	RONX FAMILY HOUSING	Family Cluster	5	37	56	32		129
7 BEDCO CLUSTER - Bronx	1416 B	RONX FAMILY HOUSING	Family Cluster	33	9	49	31		94
8 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG - Bronx	1115 C	hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	26	14	71	29		114
9 BRONX NEIGHBORHOOD AGUILA - Bronx	1055 A	GUILA	Family Cluster	55	4	30	28		65
10 BRONX NEIGHBORHOOD AGUILA - Bronx	1059 A	GUILA	Family Cluster	62	10	23	27		61
11 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG - Bronx	1128 C	hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	30	27	79	26		133
12 REGENT FAMILY RESID - Manhattan		olunteers Of America	Family Shelter	99	5	3	23	7	38
13 CORE CLUSTER - Brooklyn	172296 C	ORE SERVICES GROUP INC	Family Cluster	16	3	3	22	2	30
14 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX - Bronx	1377 C	hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	42	5	39	20		73
15 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX - Bronx		hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	17	9	32	19	5	65
16 CHILDNS RESCUE FUND HOUSE EAST - Manhattan		hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Shelter	193	1	0	19	5	25
17 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG ANNEX - Bronx		hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	60	12	56	18	5	91
18 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER II - Manhattan	1333 A	CACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC	Family Cluster	12	6	23	16	1	46
19 BEDCO CLUSTER - Bronx		RONX FAMILY HOUSING	Family Cluster	26	26	49	16	10	101
20 BEDCO CLUSTER - Bronx	1399 B	RONX FAMILY HOUSING	Family Cluster	29	6	29	16	1	52
21 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER - Manhattan	1327 A	CACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC		10	8	40	15	1	64
22 CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG - Bronx		hildren's Rescue Fund, LLC	Family Cluster	13	14	75	15	17	121
23 EAST RIVER - WIN - Manhattan		OMEN IN NEED, INC	Family Shelter	146	0	0	15	0	15
24 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER - Manhattan		CACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC		20	20	41	14	0	75
25 MANHATTAN ACACIA CLUSTER II - Manhattan		CACIA NETWORK HOUSING INC		12	13	35	14	1	63
			· ······· · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			- 33	14	1	0.5

^{*}All Inspecting Agency Violations (DOB, HPD, FDNY, DOHMH)

Prepared By New Yorkers for Safer Streets

Source: NYC Shelter Repair Scorecard, October 31, 2019



Table 5
Market Share of Largest Providers of Homeless Shelter Services as Measured by "Units"

Provider	Units	Market Share
ACACIA	4,236	12.0%
Samaritan Village	2,274	6.4%
Help U.S.A.	2,196	6.2%
NY Dept. of Homeless Services	2,027	5.7%
Children's Community Services	1,950	5.5%
CORE Services Group	1,619	4.6%
Women In Need	1,283	3.6%
CAMBA	1,252	3.5%
Bowery Residents Committee	1,140	3.2%
All Other Providers	17,382	49.2%
Total	35,359	100.0%

Analysis Conducted by New Yorkers for Safer Streets Source of Data: NYC Shelter Repair Scorecard, October 31, 2019



December 16, 2019

Oversight hearing for the Department of Homeless Service DHS Homeless Service Provider Contracts

My name is Wendy O'Shields I am an Advocate in the City of New York and the Co-Founder of the Urban Justice Center Safety Net Activists.

City Council please include in the DHS Homeless Service Provider contracts the following for the single adult shelter residents:

- 1. DHS implement HUD "Housing First" and HUD "Rapid Re-Housing" as the first line of defense to house single adult shelter Homeless residents!
 - a. Both components should be utilized for either independent or supportive housing.
 - b. Supportive housing should not remain the 99.9% path for most single adult shelter residents as the main path to permanent housing.
 - c. Independent housing should be developed and made a clear path for single adult residents.
- 2. DHS Homeless Service Provider Housing Specialists intake should be completed within 48 hours of residency at the Assessment shelter or a newly assigned shelter.
 - a. Each shelter resident shall have a Housing Specialist assigned to their case.
 - b. The resident should have a bi-weekly appointment with their Housing Specialist to develop a housing plan with the goal of securing independent or supportive housing.
- 3. DHS single adult "Long Term Shelter Stayers" are residents that have received zero to very little contact with a Housing Specialist.
 - a. Most "Long Term Shelter Stayers" are blocked from having an appointment with the Housing Specialist because DHS says they are not "Housing Ready!"
 - b. Most "Long Term Shelter Stayers" have resided in shelter for 5, 7, 10 or more years without having **1 appointment** with a Housing Specialist.
- 4. DHS Homeless Service Providers contracts shall include a clause to not retaliate against the single adult shelter resident with a DHS Administrative Transfer or a Sanction to the Streets for:
 - a. For asking for an appointment with the "Housing Specialist."
 - b. For asking to spend their employment money to buy food, toiletries, essential clothing's, pay their cell phone bill, child support, alimony, court mandated bankruptcy payments, or creditors."
- 5. DHS Homeless Service Providers contracts shall include the terms and definitions for "Formally Homeless" or "Currently Homeless."

- 6. DHS Homeless Service Providers contracts shall require safe, clean, to up to building code shelters and independent or high quality well run supportive housing to be offered to single adult shelter residents.
- 7. The New York State new shelter regulations take effect January 1, 2020 DHS and their DHS Homeless Service Providers will abide by the new regulations for single adult shelter residents.
- 8. DHS Homeless Service Providers contracts define the process for a single adult shelter resident and securing a DHS Homeless Set Aside apartment.

Including my suggestions in the DHS Homeless Service Provider contracts will hold the providers accountable for the single adult residents 5, 7, 10, or more years of detention as a billables in shelters unnoticed and not uncounted!

Thank for including my suggestions in a new City contract with the DHS Homeless Service Providers.

Wendy O'Shields Independent Advocate Safety Net Activists Co-Founder

General Welfare Committee Hearings December 16,2019

Good afternoon committee members. My Name is Jerry Frohnhoefer. I am the founder of the Fiorello Homes for the Homeless Campaign Association, and a CUNY faculty member in urban sociology. I am here today to challenge you, our mayor, our comptroller as well as our city advocate.

Tonight, as you well know, over 114,000 children and more than 30,000 families in our city have no bed of their own to sleep on tonight. We see our shelter population growing to over 60,000 men women and children. Seventy percent of our homeless are families with children. Ms. Christine Quinn, a former speaker of this body, recently said in an interview on NY One and on Christine Amanpour's program that more than 43% of our homeless adults go to work everyday.

They are caught in the crossfire of low wages and high rents.

Ladies and gentlemen how many of you, of us, want to live in a shelter tonight? How many of us want to double and triple up with kin, friends,

neighbors for an indeterminate period of time? Let's not raise our hands all at once.

Let's get real. We are facing a moral crisis, an ethical crisis, a spiritual crisis. We are condemning a future generation to a life of misery and dependency on a faltering shelter system and a non- working so called "affordable housing" plan of our mayor and his commissioner, Mr. Banks. They're talking about 1,000 permanent housing units per year. This has to be a joke.

We are the richest city in the world We definitely can do much better than that. We have the land, over 1100 city owned vacant lots, we have the money by sun setting tax abatements and more efficiently using the 2.5 billion that we are spending each year on homeless services, we have the technology to build new public, green, low density modular housing for our homeless and offer to many of them over the years an option to buy. Check the handout I left on the table or just ask Councilman Holden. He knows our plan as well as state senator Addabbo and assemblyman Hevesi.

In short what the homeless need are homes-not shelters. If Houston Texas under the leadership of its mayors Eric Samuels and Sylvester Turner can bring down its homeless problem by 54% in less than six years why can't we? Where's the leadership? Let's not just say homelessness in NYC is "unacceptable"; let's work and do something about it. Let's gain back our morality and solve this horror and not dump it on others like New Jersey.

Pass a resolution in favor of assemblyman Hevesi's Home Stability program.

Pass a resolution to stop building shelters and start building homes.

Pass a resolution to make our mayor accountable to our elected representatives, our community planning boards and to our public will.

<u>Let's build Villages of Hope</u> <u>not shelters of despair.</u>IT IS SIMPLE AND THREE FOLD.....

- 1.- IDENTIFY PUBLIC LANDS IN EACH BOROUGH THAT ARE VACANT AND NOT UTILIZED WHETHER THEY ARE FEDERAL, STATE OR CITY USE THESE LANDS FOR NEW PUBLIC HOUSING BENEFITS: NO COST FOR ACQUISITION, NO DISPLACE MENT OF CURRENT RESIDENTS AND THE LAND IS PUBLIC AND THEREFORE FREE (NOT TO BE PUBLIC PARK LANDS)=Over 1000 sites.
- 2.- A -OVERTURN 421A AND J51 TAX ABATEMENTS OF THE DEVELOPERS AND REAL ESTATE MOGULS = IT'S WELL OVER 1.2 BILLION ANNUALLY. FUNDING WILL COME FROM THESE NEW TAXES FOR VILLAGES OF HOPE
- B- REDUCE THE COST OF MAINTAINING SHELTERS BY TWO THIRDS RESULTING IN \$1,200,000,000 ADDITIONAL REVENUE AT NO TAX INCREASE We have the power to do this locally with the Comptroller of NYC
- 3.- DESIGN AND BUILD FOUNDATIONS FOR MODULAR HOUSING AND BUILD NEW HOUSING INTO SMALL COMMUNITIES OF 550-600 PEOPLE IN STUDIOS, ONE BEDROOM, TWO BEDROOM AND THREE BEDROOM APARTMENTS THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF SLIDING SCALE RENTALS BASED ON LOW TO MODERARTE INCOME AND STABLIZE THE COMMUNITY BY USING THE FIRST FLOORS AS COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR THE TENANTS. OVER TIME OFFER RESIDENTS RENT/WITH OPTION TO BUY AS THEIR INCOME IMPROVES.

BUILD A COMMUNITY CENTER THAT CAN HAVE DIVERSIFIED USAGE FOR NOT ONLY RESIDENTS BUT WITH ACCESS TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES AS WELL.

BUILD TENANT ASSOCIATIONS, FOOD COOPS, GARDEN CLUBS, SENIOR CLUBS, TEAM PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH ETC. THE MORE ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL WOULD NOT HAVE TO MOVE BUT WOULD HAVE HOME OWNERSHIP



PERMANENT HOUSING LIKE THIS...NOT SHLETERS BLOCK THE BUILDING OF 90 NEW SHELTERS

Fiorello Homes for the Homeless Campaign Association Plan:

Projected Estimates for Rent with Option to buy based on construction costs of low density, green, modular, public housing in city owned and vacant land.

Estimated cost of construction per unit: \$131,939

Resident Formula Family of three (one wage earner)

Stages: Income/Net / - 30% Rent/yr. – Cost of Living = Option \$ x Yrs = \$\$ for Option (*Lower income still can rent=option opens at 33K*)

Step 1 \$33,000(\$26,924)- \$11,000 -\$13,200 = \$2,724/yr. x 3years = \$7,420

Step 2 \$36,000 (\$29,065) - \$12,000 - \$13,590= \$3,475 /yr. x 5 years = \$17,375

Step 3 \$42,000(\$33,346) - \$14,400 - \$13,998= \$4,948 / yr. x 4 years = \$19,792

Step 4 \$50,000 (\$45,844) - \$16,666 - \$18,259 = \$10,919/ yr. x 8 years = \$87,352

Grand Total: \$131,939

NB- The current estimates were developed on average cost of construction of modular housing apartments not including the cost of foundations. The foundations are shared by all the apartments built above them. This cost is estimated at \$50,000 per foundation which will continually be the property of NYCHA and be maintained by NYCHA as city owned land.

Rental cost is estimated at the 30% going rate established by HUD. Cost of living estimates are based upon the Bureau of Labor Statistics analysis and Consumer Expenditure Surveys (CES). Net yearly earnings are based upon IRS deductions (see attached).

This is a twenty year program. Your views are important to us

Contact information: Fiorello Homes for the Homeless Campaign
Association, PO Box 4476, Sunnyside Station, LIC, NY 11104-4476 Or (718
570-2536 Or GFrohnhoefer@lagcc.cuny.edu

Construction Cost estimates:

 $28' \times 30' = 840 \, \text{Sq. ft.} \times \$185 = \$155,400/\text{unit}$

 $28' \times 30' = 840 \text{ Sq.Ft } \times \$150 = \$126,000/\text{unit}$

 $28' \times 50' = 1400 \text{ Sq.Ft } \times \$150 = \$210,000/\text{unit}$

 $28' \times 50' = 1400 \text{ Sq.Ft. } \times \$185 = \$259,000/\text{unit}$

Tax collected from defeat of 421A

\$1,200,000.000 = 8,095 units x 2.5 = 20,237 people \$155,400 at \$185/sq.ft.

 $$1,200,000,000 = 9,523 \text{ units } \times 2.5 = 23,807 \text{ people}$ \$126,000 at \$150/sq.ft.

\$\$\$ once used for shelters now for housing

\$ 1,700,000,000 = 13,555 units x 2.5 = 33,888 \$ 126,000 at \$150/sq.ft.

 $$1,700,000,000 = 6,562 \text{ units } \times 2.5 = 16,405$ \$ 259,000 at \$185/sq/ft

Combination of resources at highest cost

\$1,200,000,000 = 7,777 units x 2.5 = 19443\$ 155,400 at \$185/sq.ft.

\$1,700,000,000 = 6,540 units x 2.5 = 16350\$259,000 at \$185/sq/ft. Worst scenario 35,793 people

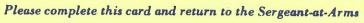
*new estimated cost on <u>average of 2.5</u> persons per unit. Each floor of each building unit will have one studio, one bedroom and another 2 bedroom apartment-hence the average of 2.5 persons. 421a (44, 044) + Shelter \$\$\$ (50,293) = <u>94.337</u> **HOUSED (ESTIMATES BASED ON MODULAR HOUSING)**

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