

coalition  
for the  
homeless

March 5, 2013

# State of the Homeless 2013

## 50,000



# State of the Homeless 2013

## 50,000: The Bloomberg Legacy of Record Homelessness

*By Patrick Markee, Senior Policy Analyst, Coalition for the Homeless*

**T**his year the number of homeless people sleeping each night in the New York City shelter system surpassed 50,000 people for the first time since modern homelessness emerged three decades ago. That grim milestone includes more than 21,000 homeless children. More children and adults are homeless now in New York City than at any time since the Great Depression.

New York City's record homeless shelter population continues to grow at an alarming rate – up 19 percent in the past year alone. And this does not even include the thousands of New Yorkers displaced by Hurricane Sandy, many of whom comprise extremely low-income households.

In total the homeless shelter population under Mayor Bloomberg has risen by a staggering 61 percent and the number of homeless families has increased 73 percent. During Mayor Bloomberg's tenure, New York City homelessness has increased both in absolute numbers and at a higher rate than under Mayors Koch, Dinkins, or Giuliani. And recent Federal data show that New York City homelessness has increasingly become a driving force in the wider national homelessness crisis, particularly among children and families.

Perhaps the single biggest contributor to unprecedented homelessness in New York City is that, for the first time since modern homelessness began, the City now provides no housing assistance to help homeless children and families move from shelters to permanent housing.

New York City's next mayor will confront a historic homelessness crisis. But the next mayor has the opportunity to embrace proven solutions that will not only reduce the number of homeless children and adults languishing in shelters, but save millions of taxpayer dollars spent on a costly and growing municipal shelter system.

Coalition for the Homeless' "State of the Homeless 2013" report analyzes current and historic trends in NYC homelessness, and outlines an action plan for the next New York City mayor. Here are the key findings:

- In January 2013, an average of 50,135 homeless people slept each night in New York City's municipal shelter system – the first time NYC has recorded more than 50,000 people sleeping each night in municipal shelters.
- In January a record 21,034 homeless children slept each night in the municipal shelter system, a 22 percent increase from the previous year.
- Homeless families make up nearly four out of five (78 percent) of all homeless people residing each night in the NYC municipal shelter system. And homeless children comprise 41 percent of the total shelter population.
- The average shelter stay for homeless families with children is now over one year (375 days), up 10 percent from the previous year.

- Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of homeless people sleeping each night in municipal shelters has increased by 61 percent and the number of homeless families has risen by 73 percent.
- According to Federal homelessness estimates, New York City saw the largest increase in homelessness of any city nationwide between 2011 and 2012.
- According to Federal estimates, homeless families in NYC represented one in six (16 percent) of all homeless families in shelters nationwide.
- Mayor Bloomberg’s elimination of all affordable housing assistance for homeless families is a major factor behind the historic homelessness crisis.
- Under previous NYC mayors, when the City used Federal housing programs to help homeless families leave the shelter system, only one-quarter of all families entering the shelter system was formerly homeless. Now, according to City data, nearly two out of three (63 percent) families entering the shelter system are formerly homeless.
- Budget analysts, policy experts, advocates, and other City elected officials have shown that the City could both reduce the number of homeless children and families and save millions of dollars spent on the costly shelter system – but to date Mayor Bloomberg has steadfastly refused to adopt this common-sense policy change.

Coalition for the Homeless’ proposed action plan for the next mayor of New York City would build on proven solutions to the problem of homelessness, many of them pioneered in New York City. Following are highlights of the action plan:

### **1. Target Permanent Housing Resources to Homeless New Yorkers**

- Utilize existing Federal and City housing resources to move homeless families and individuals from the shelter system into permanent housing.
- Work with the State to create an effective State-City rental assistance program.
- Negotiate with the State a renewed “New York/New York Agreement” to create permanent supportive housing for homeless New Yorkers living with mental illness and other special needs.

### **2. Remove Barriers to Shelter for Homeless Families and Individuals**

- Reform the current shelter eligibility process for homeless families, which currently results in many homeless children and families being wrongfully denied emergency shelter.
- Withdraw proposed shelter eligibility rules for homeless single adults which would, according to City officials, result in as many as 10,000 homeless women and men being denied shelter each year.
- Guarantee that all homeless children, families, and individuals can access emergency shelter during weather emergencies, including when temperatures fall below freezing.

### **3. Ensure That Affordable Housing for the Poorest NYC Households Is a Key Part of the Recovery from Hurricane Sandy**

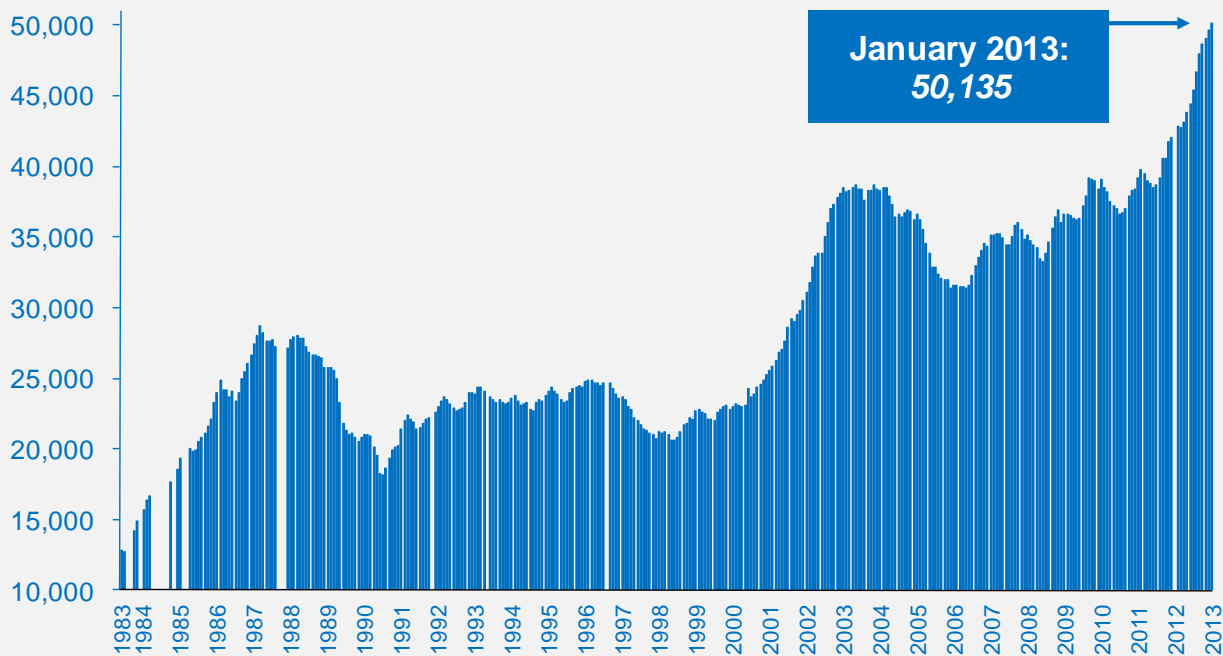
- Work with the Federal government to secure at least 10,000 Federal Section 8 housing vouchers to help displaced individuals and families secure permanent housing.
- Ensure that displaced households who receive temporary rental assistance are guaranteed a transition to long-term housing stability, such as a Section 8 voucher.
- Make immediate and long-term repairs to subsidized and supportive housing damaged during the storm.

- Any new housing construction must expand stock of housing affordable to extremely low-income households.

#### 4. Reform and Improve the Shelter System for Homeless Families and Adults

- End the use of the so-called “cluster-site”/”scatter-site” shelter program (i.e., apartment buildings used as temporary shelter at enormous cost).
- Phase out the use of commercial hotels and motels as temporary shelter, primarily for families.
- Revise punitive administrative rules which threaten termination of shelter for many homeless adults and families, the majority of whom are people living with mental illness.
- Eliminate so-called “Next Step” shelters, which have punitive rules and conditions and inadequate social services for homeless families and adults.

### Number of Homeless People Each Night in the NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013



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

## Part I

# 50,000: NYC Homeless Shelter Population Soars to Historic High

In January, the number of homeless people sleeping each night in the New York City shelter system exceeded 50,000 for the first time since modern homelessness emerged three decades ago. That number includes more than 21,000 homeless children. More children and adults are homeless now in New York City than at any time since the Great Depression.

New York City's record homeless shelter population continues to grow at an alarming rate – 19 percent in the past year alone. And this does not even include the thousands of New Yorkers displaced by Hurricane Sandy, many of whom comprise extremely low-income households.

In total the homeless shelter population under Mayor Bloomberg has risen by a staggering 61 percent and the number of homeless families has increased 73 percent – the highest increases under any mayor since modern homelessness began. And recent Federal data show that New York City homelessness has increasingly become a driving force in the wider national homelessness crisis, particularly among children and families.

### Current Trends in NYC Homelessness

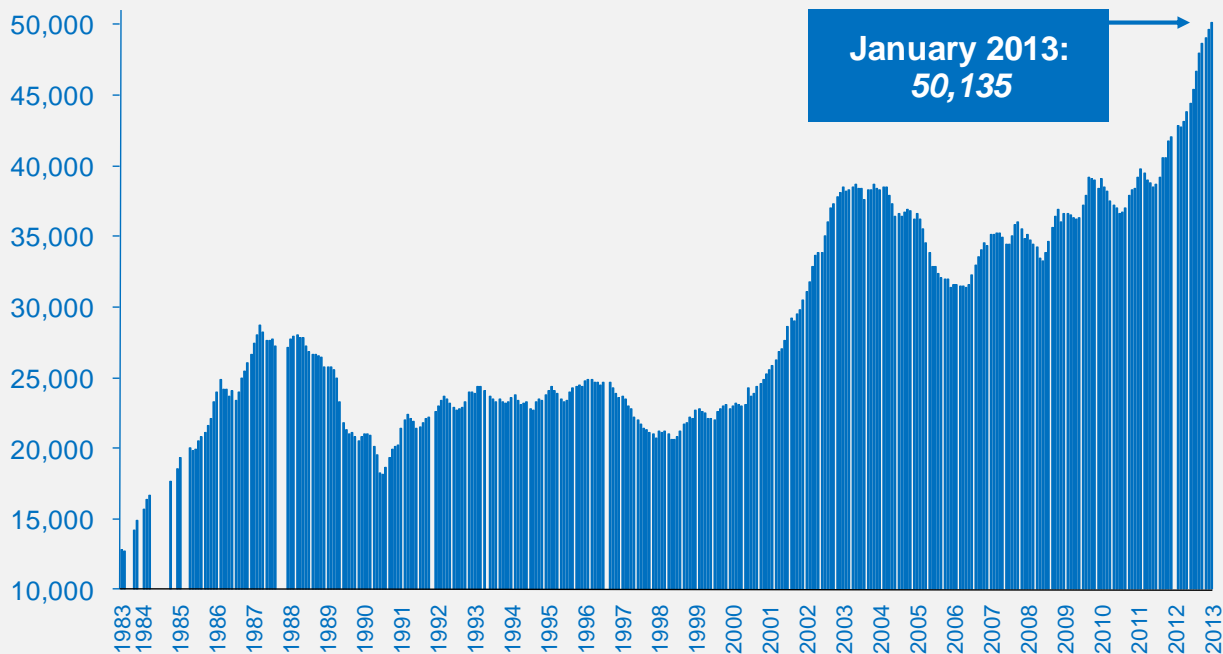
According to City data, New York City's municipal shelter population surpassed 50,000 people per night in January for the first time since the City began keeping records three decades ago.

- In January 2013, the most recent month for which complete data is available, an average of 50,135 homeless people slept each night in New York City's municipal shelter system – the first time NYC has recorded more than 50,000 people sleeping each night in municipal shelters.
- The record-high January 2013 shelter population represents a 19 percent increase from the previous year. (Note that the City did not produce complete data for January 2012, so all references to previous year data refer to December 2011.)
- New York City's municipal shelter population grew at a faster rate over the past year than the previous year.
- Homeless families make up nearly four out of five (78 percent) of all homeless people residing each night in the NYC municipal shelter system.
- Homeless children comprise 41 percent of the total NYC municipal shelter population.
- In January 2013 a record average of 21,034 homeless children slept each night in the municipal shelter system, a 22 percent increase from the previous year.
- In January 2013 an average of 11,984 homeless families slept in municipal shelters each night, up 18 percent from the previous year.
- The average shelter stay for homeless families with children is now over one year (375 days), an increase of 10 percent from the previous year.
- This year is the first time since 1987 that average shelter stays for homeless families have exceeded a year.



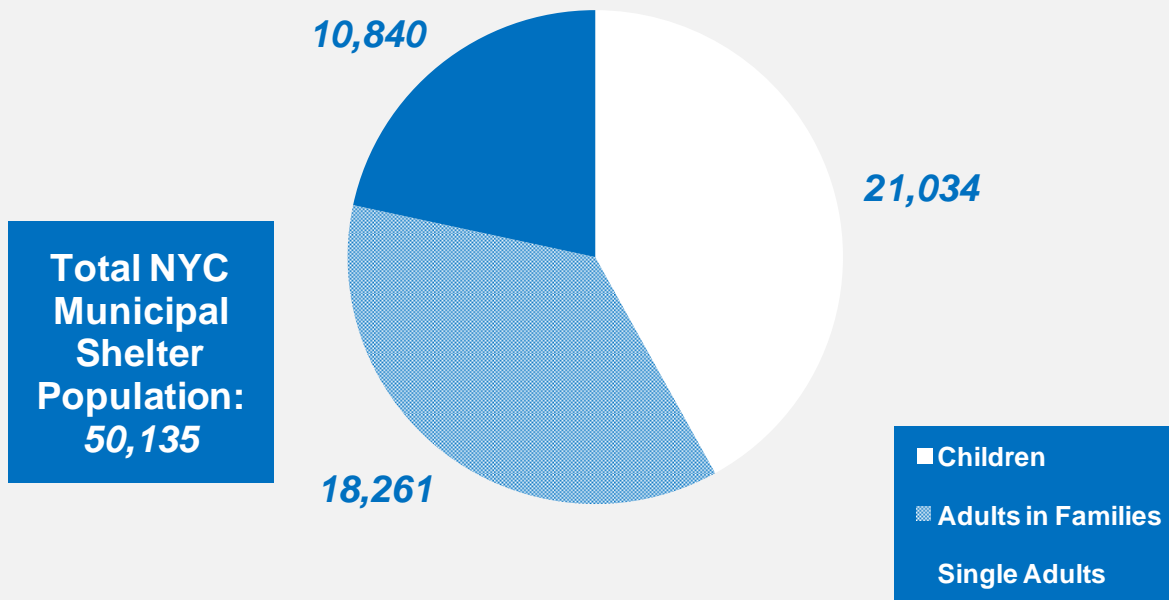
- The average shelter stay for homeless families without children is even higher – nearly 16 months (484 days), an increase of 14 percent from the previous year.
- In January 2013, an average of 10,840 homeless single adults slept each night in municipal shelters, an increase of 11 percent from the previous year.
- This winter NYC will set a new record for the number of homeless single adults in shelters, exceeding the previous all-time high (March 1987).
- January’s all-time record-high 50,135 homeless men, women, and children does not include the thousands of New Yorkers made homeless by Hurricane Sandy, who are sheltered in a separate network of hotels, YMCAs, and other temporary facilities.
- In addition, the January municipal shelter census of 50,135 homeless people does not include nearly 5,000 other people who reside each night in separate systems, including shelters for domestic violence survivors and runaway and homeless youth.

## Number of Homeless People Each Night in the NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013



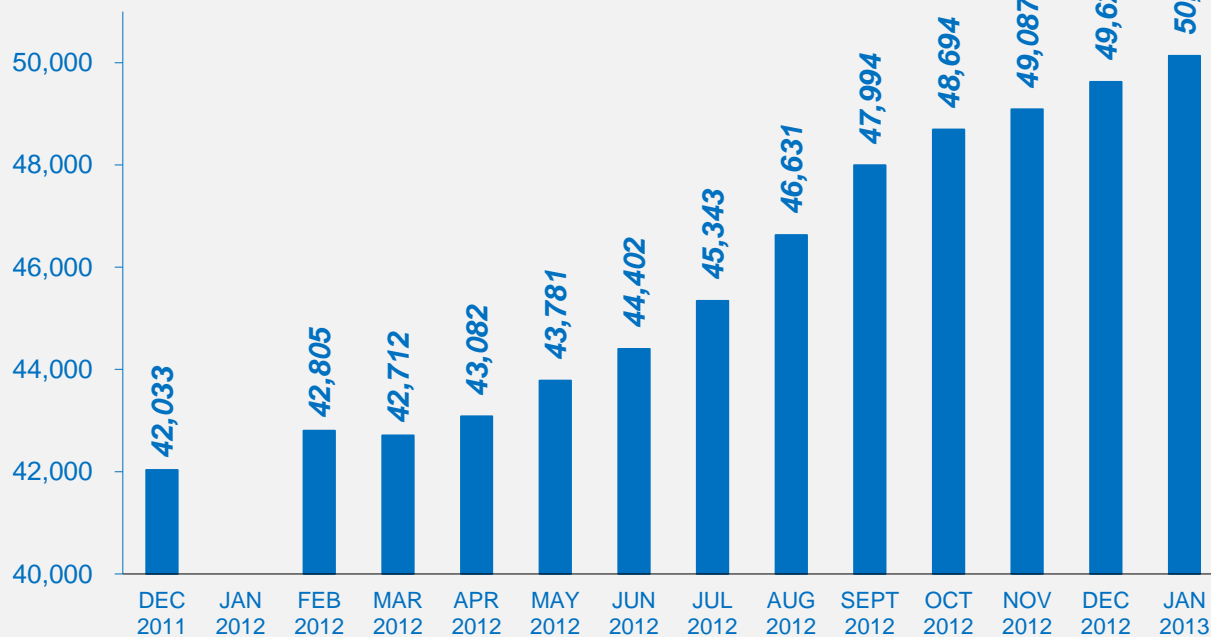
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYCSStat, shelter census reports

## Number of Homeless People Each Night in the NYC Shelter System, January 2013



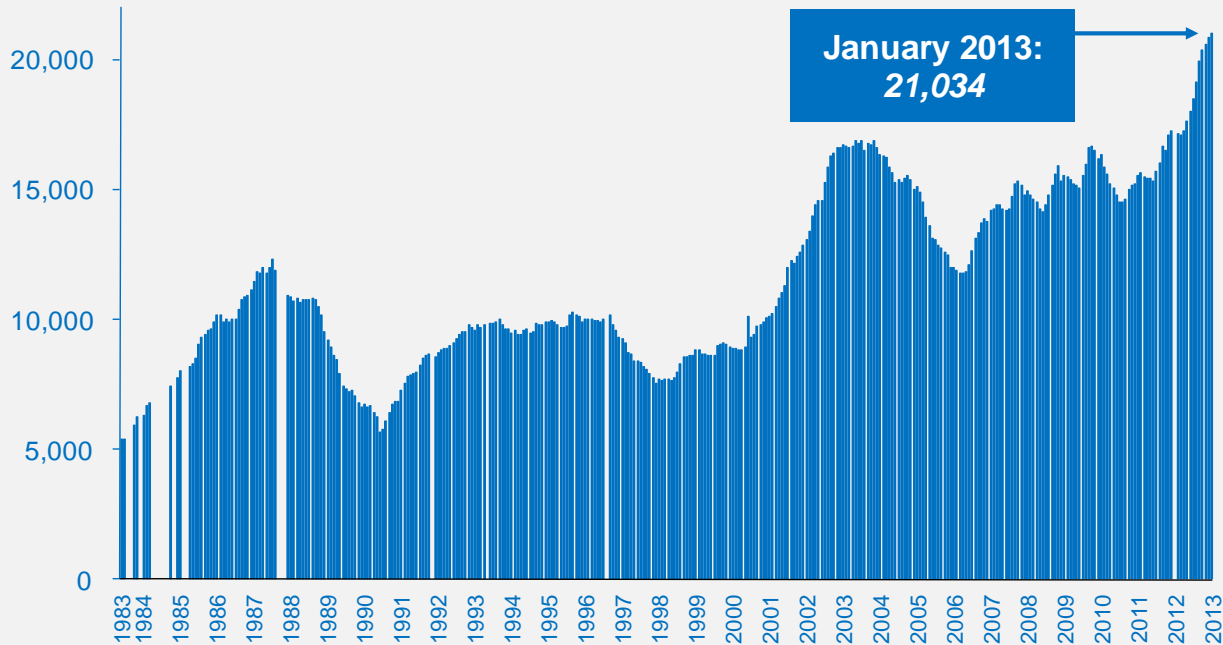
Source: City of New York, NYCStat

## Number of Homeless People in NYC Shelters Rose by 19% Over Past Year



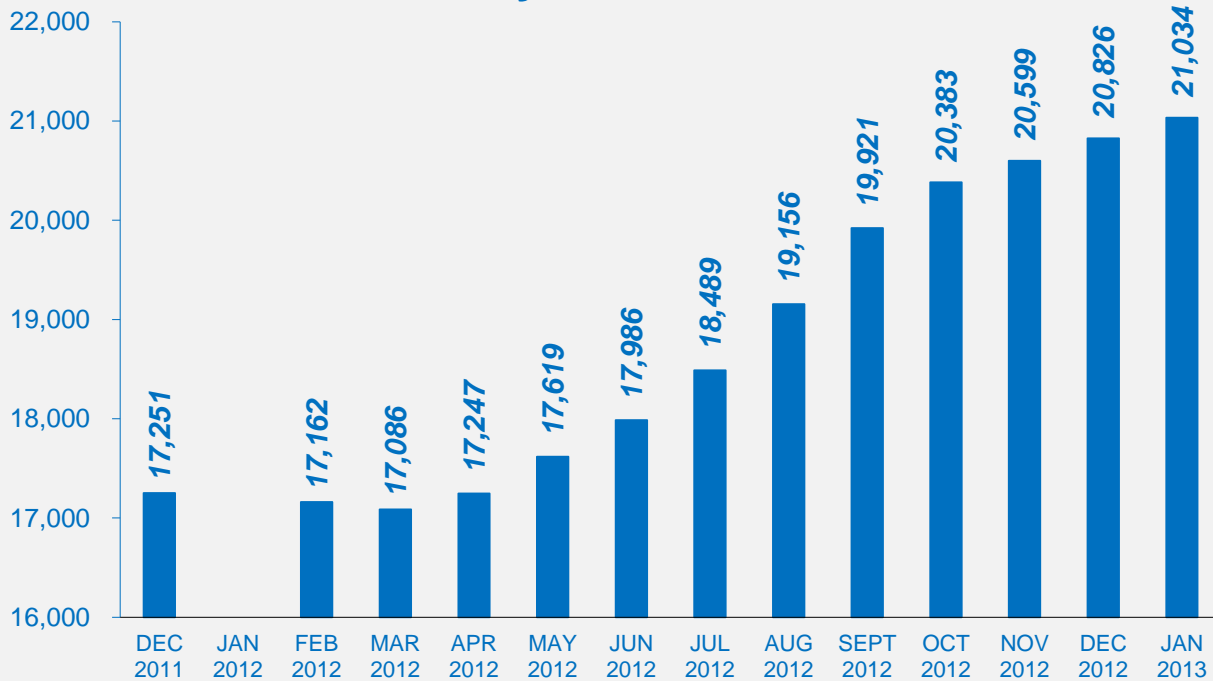
Source: NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Number of Homeless Children Each Night in NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013



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

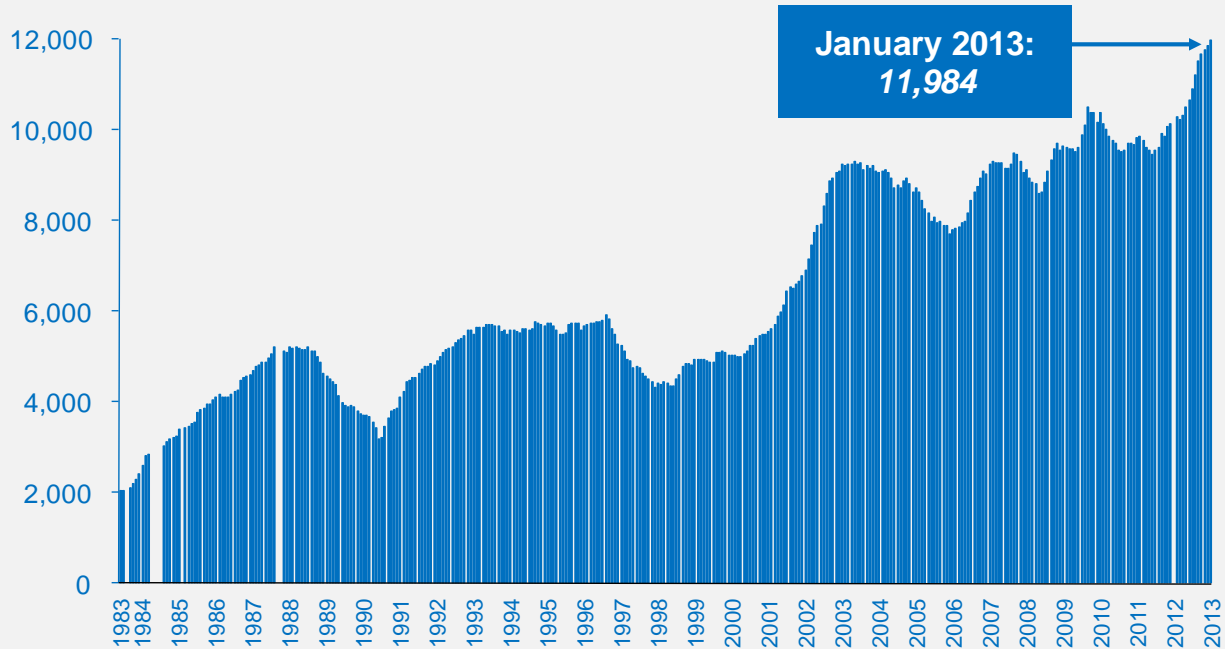
## Number of Homeless Children in NYC Shelters Rose by 22% Over Past Year



Source: NYCStat, shelter census reports

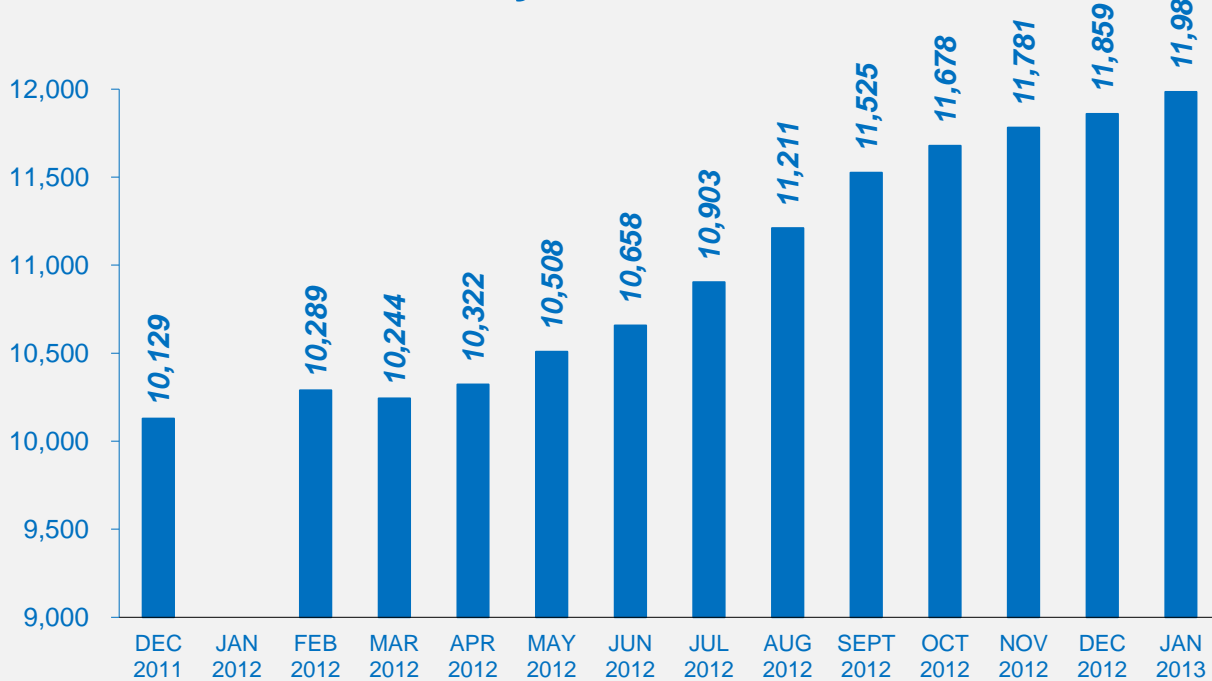


## Number of Homeless Families Each Night in NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013



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

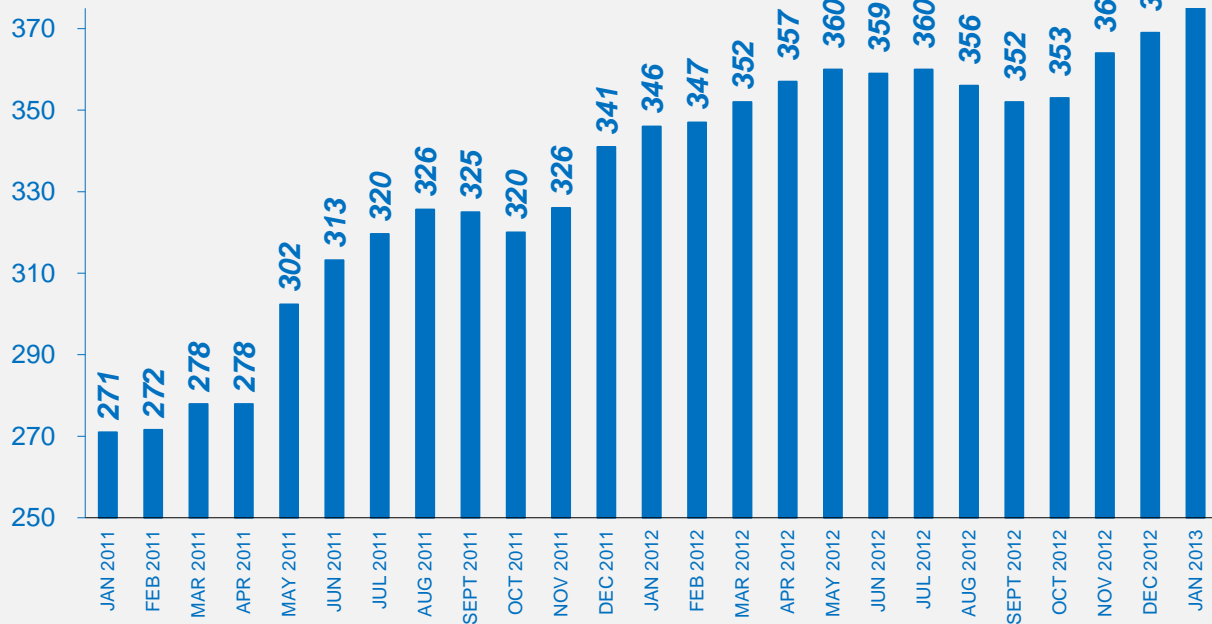
## Number of Homeless Families in NYC Shelters Rose by 18% Over Past Year



Source: NYCStat, shelter census reports

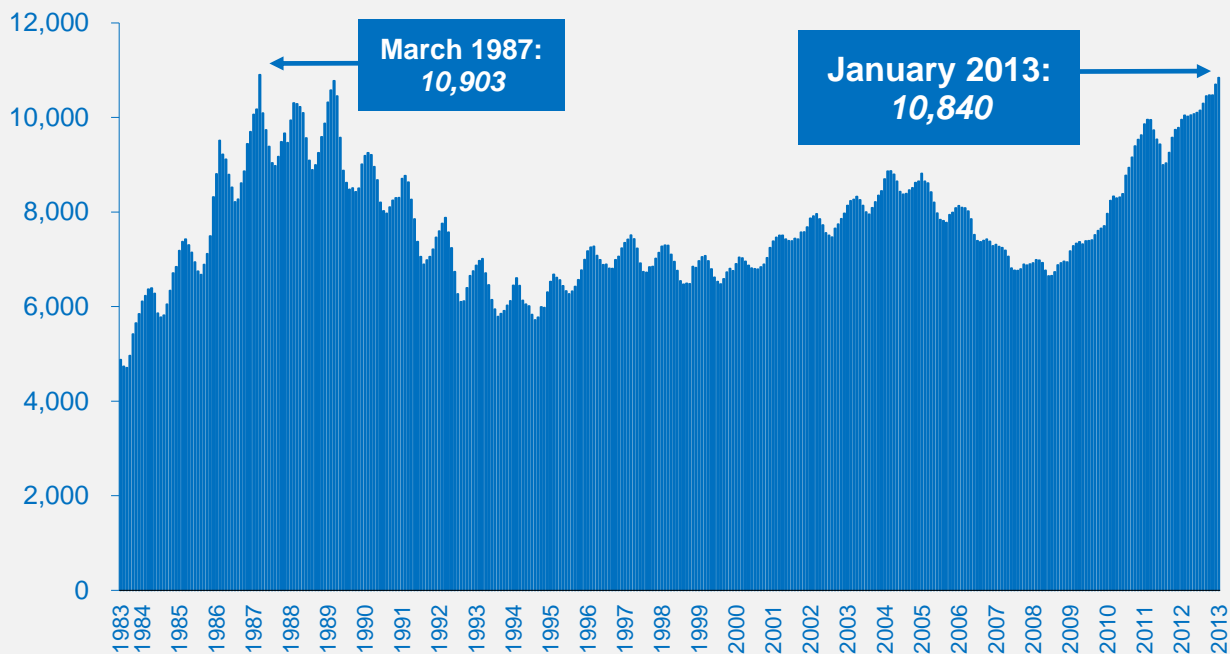
## NYC Homeless Families Now Stay in Shelters for More than a Year

(Average Shelter Stays for Homeless Families in Days)



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Number of Homeless Single Adults Each Night in NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013



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

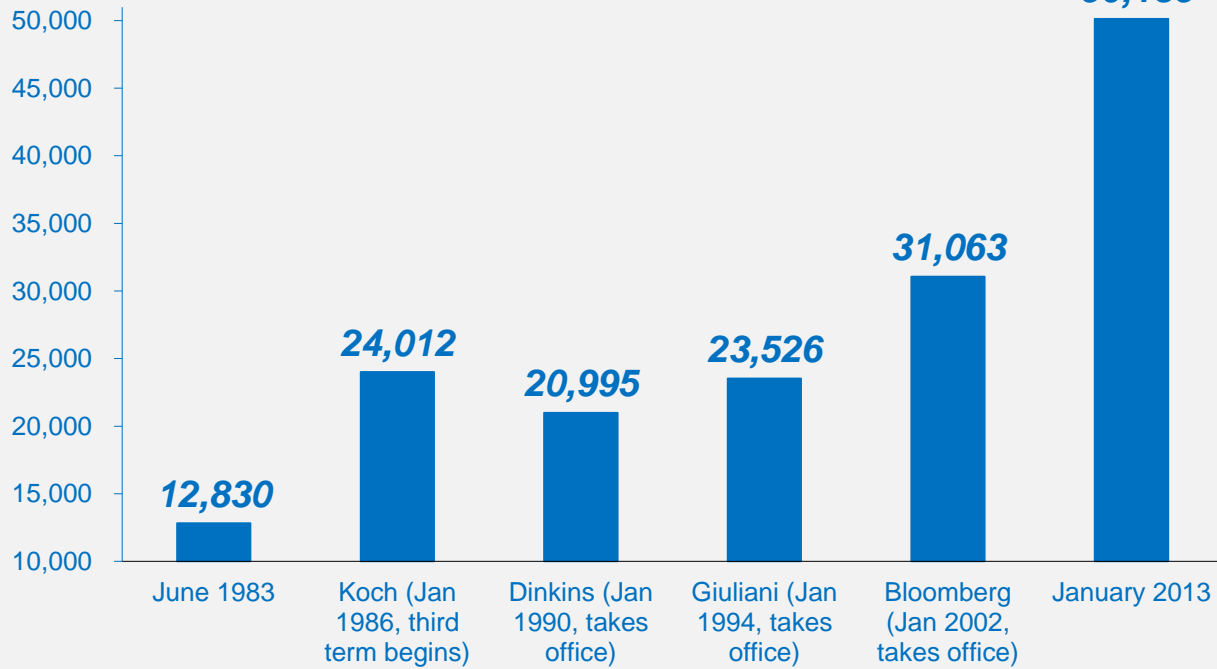
## NYC Homelessness: The Bloomberg Legacy

Under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City's homeless population has grown to the highest levels since modern homelessness began three decades ago. Indeed, during Mayor Bloomberg's tenure, New York City homelessness has increased both in absolute numbers and at a higher rate than under Mayors Koch, Dinkins, or Giuliani.

Moreover, under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership the fastest growing segment of the homeless population has been homeless families, whose numbers have grown at nearly twice the rate of homeless single adults.

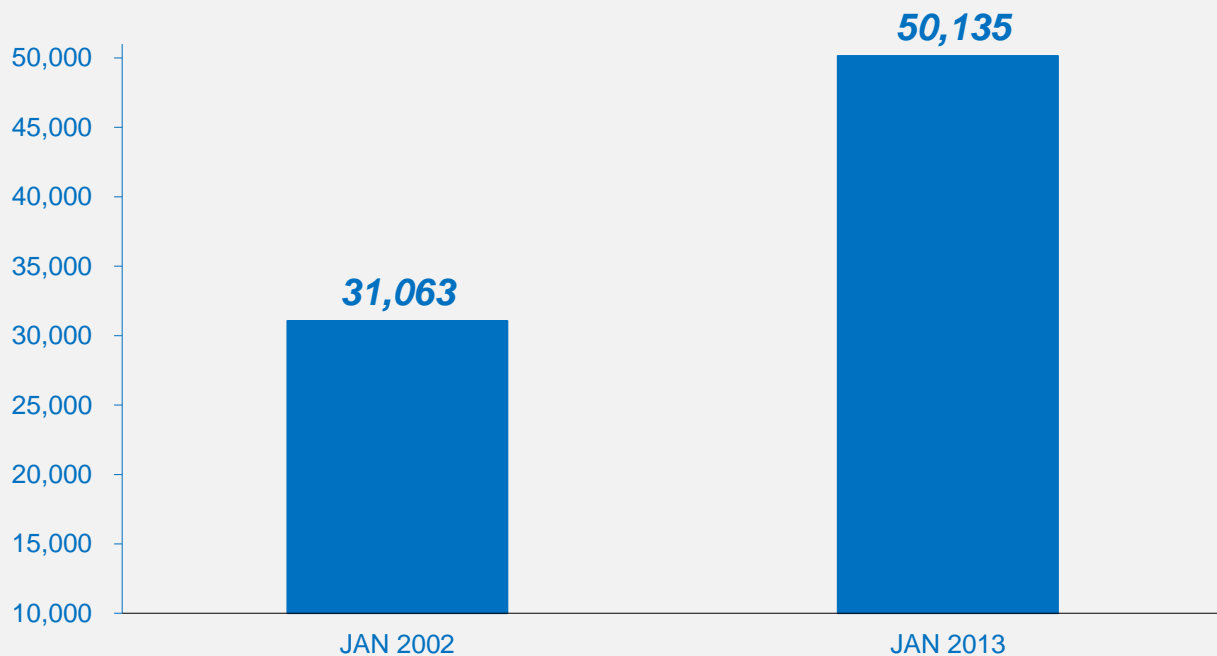
- Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of homeless people sleeping each night in municipal shelters has increased by 61 percent – from 31,063 people (January 2002) to 50,135 people (January 2013).
- Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of homeless families sleeping each night in municipal shelters has increased by nearly three-quarters (73 percent) – from 6,921 families to 11,984 families.
- Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of homeless children sleeping each night in municipal shelters has increased by 61 percent – from 13,088 children to 21,034 children.
- Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of homeless single adults sleeping each night in municipal shelters has increased by 38 percent – from 7,867 single adults to 10,840 single adults.
- Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of homeless single women sleeping each night in municipal shelters has increased by 56 percent – from 1,773 women to 2,758 women.
- Under Mayor Bloomberg, the number of homeless families in municipal shelters has increased at nearly twice the rate (73 percent) as the increase in the number of homeless single adults (38 percent).
- Under Mayor Bloomberg expenditures on shelter and services for homeless people has grown to the highest levels in NYC history.
- NYC Department of Homeless Services expenditures have increased by 77 percent, from \$540.2 million (FY 2002) to \$955.3 million (projected for the current FY 2013).
- Record-high homelessness has spurred record City expenses on homeless services, due in large part to the rising cost of shelter. According to the "Mayor's Management Report," the City spent an average of \$36,799/year (more than \$3,000/month) to shelter a homeless family, and \$28,394/year to shelter a homeless single adult.
- Shelter costs for both families and individuals have increased in recent years. According to news reports, in recent months the City has opened shelters for families with costs exceeding \$40,000/year per family.

## NYC Homeless Shelter Population Under Four Mayors



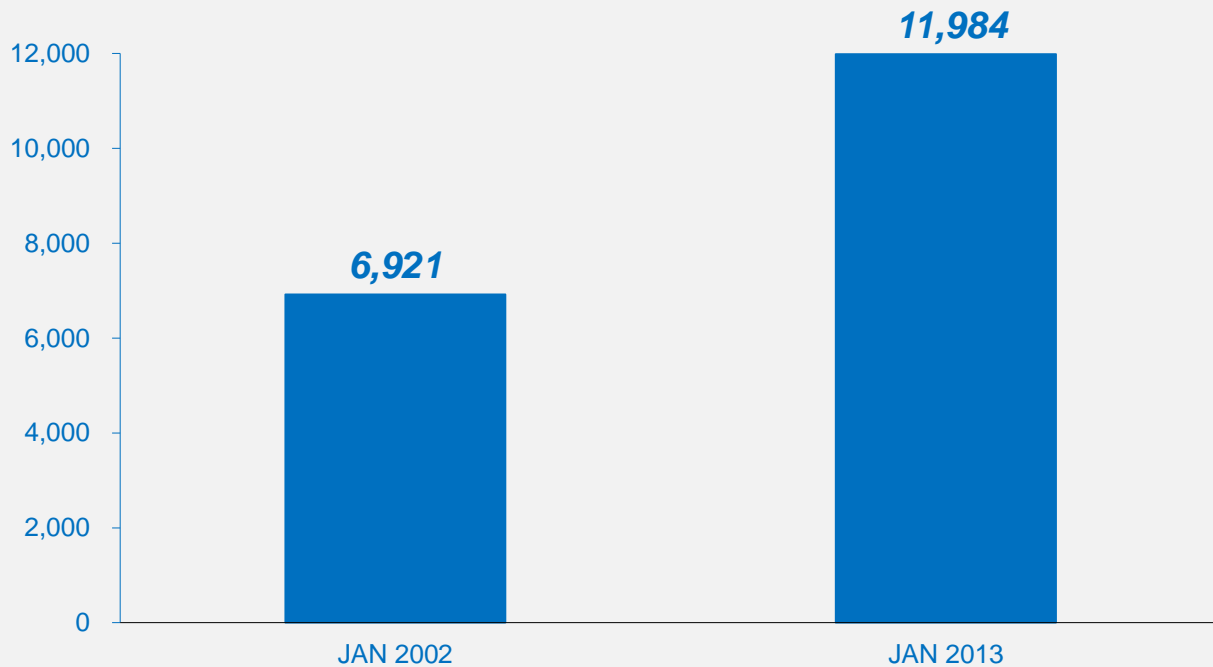
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Mayor Bloomberg's Legacy: Homeless New Yorkers in Shelters Up 61%



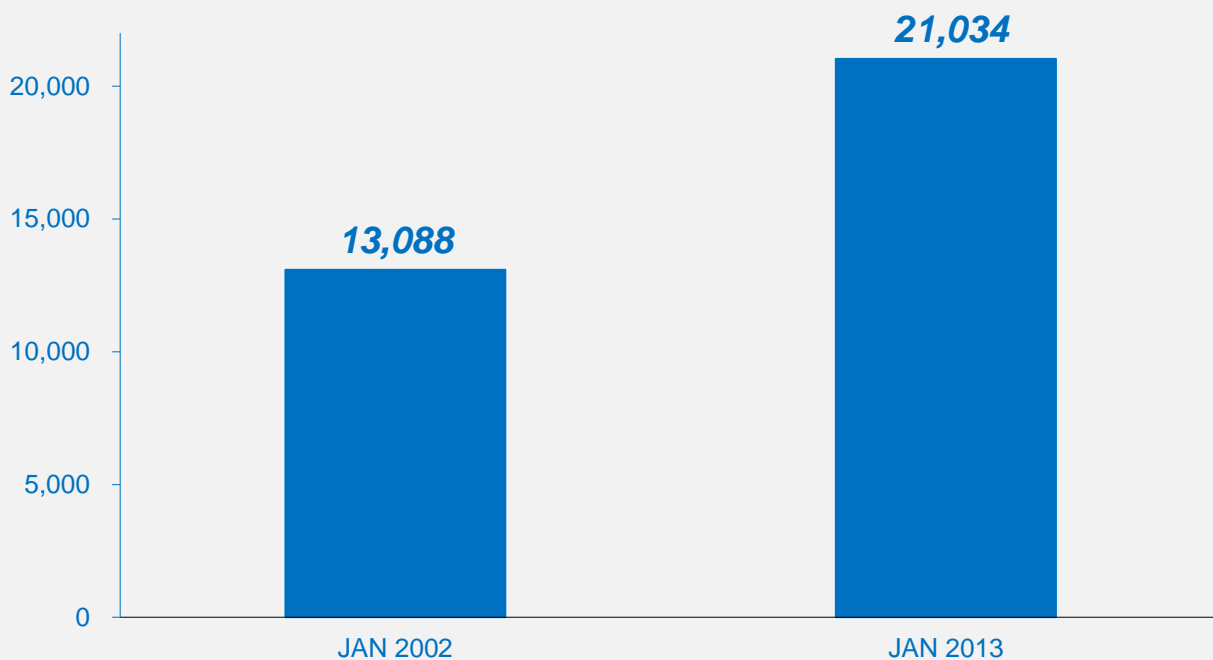
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Mayor Bloomberg's Legacy: Homeless Families 73% Increase



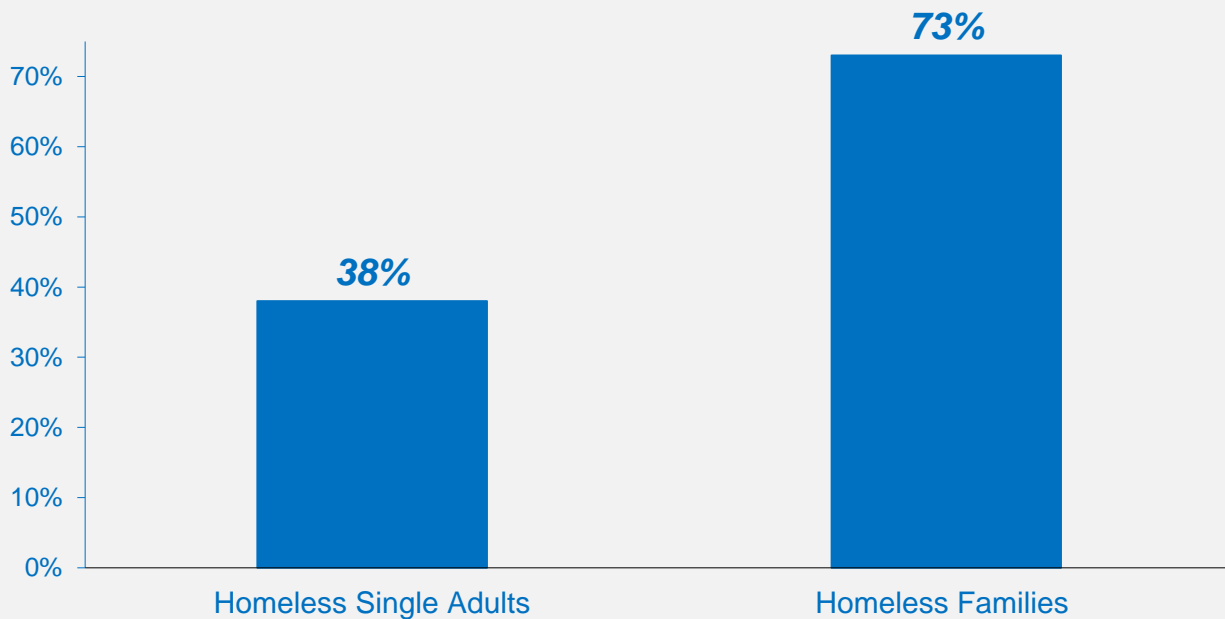
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Mayor Bloomberg's Legacy: Homeless Children 61% Increase



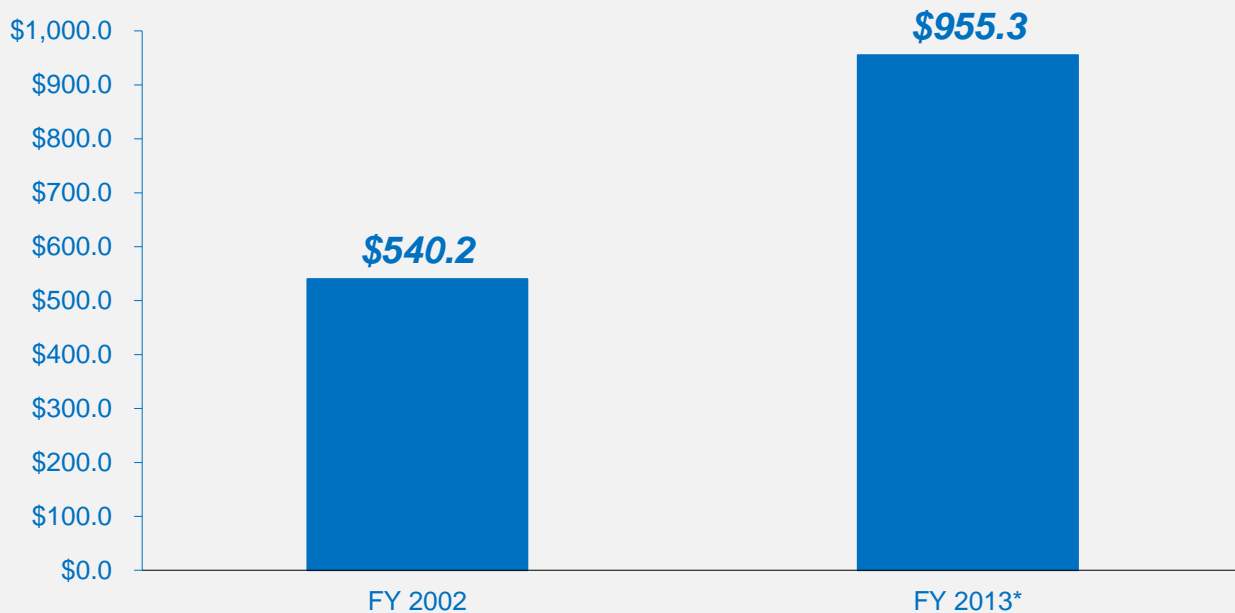
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Bloomberg Legacy: Homeless Families Up at Nearly Twice Rate for Individuals (Rate of Increase, Jan 2002-Jan 2013)



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYCStat, shelter census reports

## Bloomberg Legacy: 77% Increase in Homeless Services Expenditures (NYC Department of Homeless Services Expenses in Millions)



Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget \*Projected expenses

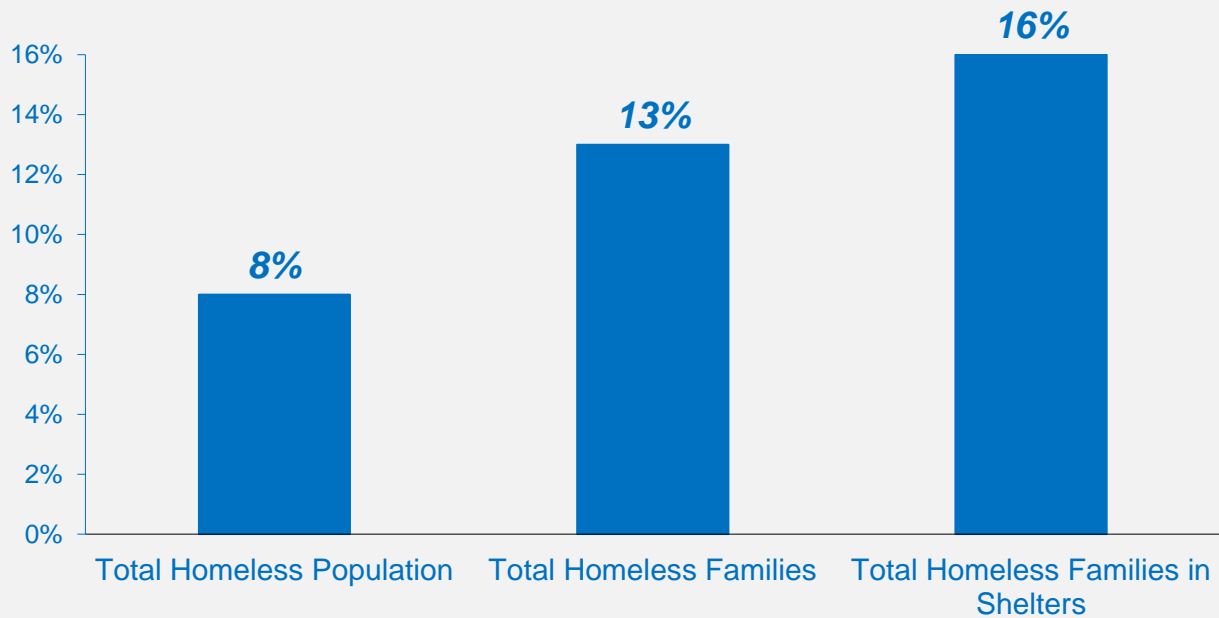
## NYC Homelessness: Growing Share of a National Problem

The sharp rise in New York City's homeless population has contributed significantly to worsening homelessness nationwide, particularly among families. As a recent Census Bureau report documented, one in four homeless children sheltered in the United States is in a New York shelter. And according to 2012 Federal homelessness estimates, New York City saw the largest increase in homelessness of any city nationwide.

- Each year for most of the past decade, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) produces estimates for the nation's homeless population. While many advocates and policy experts question the accuracy of these estimates for the unsheltered homeless population, they are helpful at examining trends across states and localities.
- In a December 2012 report, HUD estimated that the homeless population nationwide had remained stable over the previous year – but increased significantly in New York City.
- According to HUD's December 2012 report, in early 2012 homeless people in New York City represented nearly one in twelve (8 percent) of the total estimated homeless population in the United States.
- Of all homeless families in shelters nationwide, one in six (16 percent) are homeless in New York City.
- According to the HUD data, New York City experienced the largest increase (11 percent) of any locality in the United State between early 2011 and early 2012.
- While national estimates of homelessness for 2013 are still being compiled, it is likely that New York City will again account for the largest increase of any locality given NYC's sharp rate of increase over the past year.
- According a September 2012 report from the U.S. Census Bureau, based on comprehensive 2010 decennial census data, more than one of every six (17 percent) sheltered homeless people in the United States are homeless in New York state, with the majority in New York City shelters.
- According to the Census Bureau report, more than one of every four (26 percent) homeless children sheltered in the United States reside in shelters in New York state, with the majority in New York City shelters.

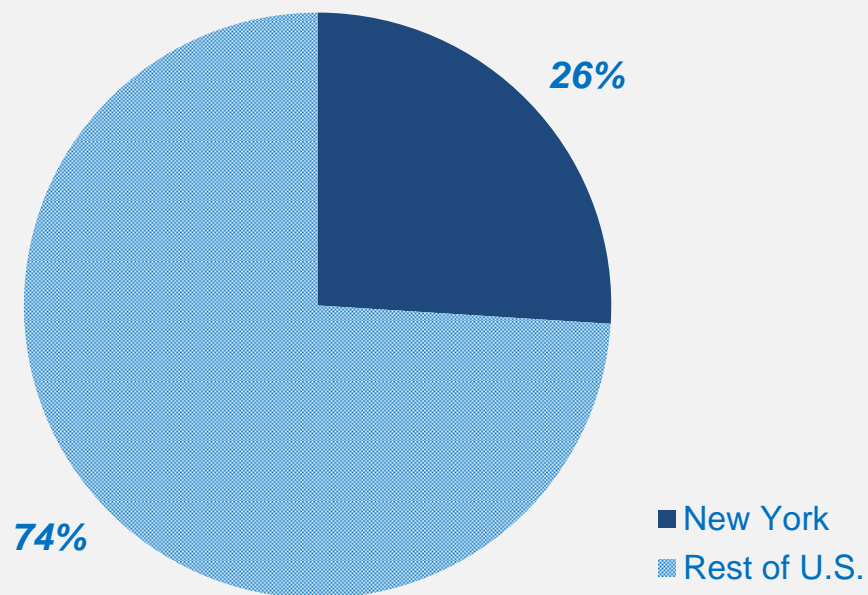


## NYC Homeless Population a Significant Share of All Homeless Nationwide (Percentage of Estimated U.S. Homeless Population in NYC)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "2012 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness" (Dec 2012)

## More than 1 in 4 Homeless Children in U.S. Shelters Sleep in New York Shelters, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Part II

# Behind the Record Rise in NYC Homelessness

Driving the historic rise in New York City homelessness are two major factors: (1) NYC's worsening housing affordability crisis, made more acute in recent years by the lingering effects of the economic recession; and (2) the wholesale failure of Mayor Bloomberg's homeless policies, in particular his elimination of all permanent housing assistance for homeless families.

### NYC's Widening Housing Affordability Gap

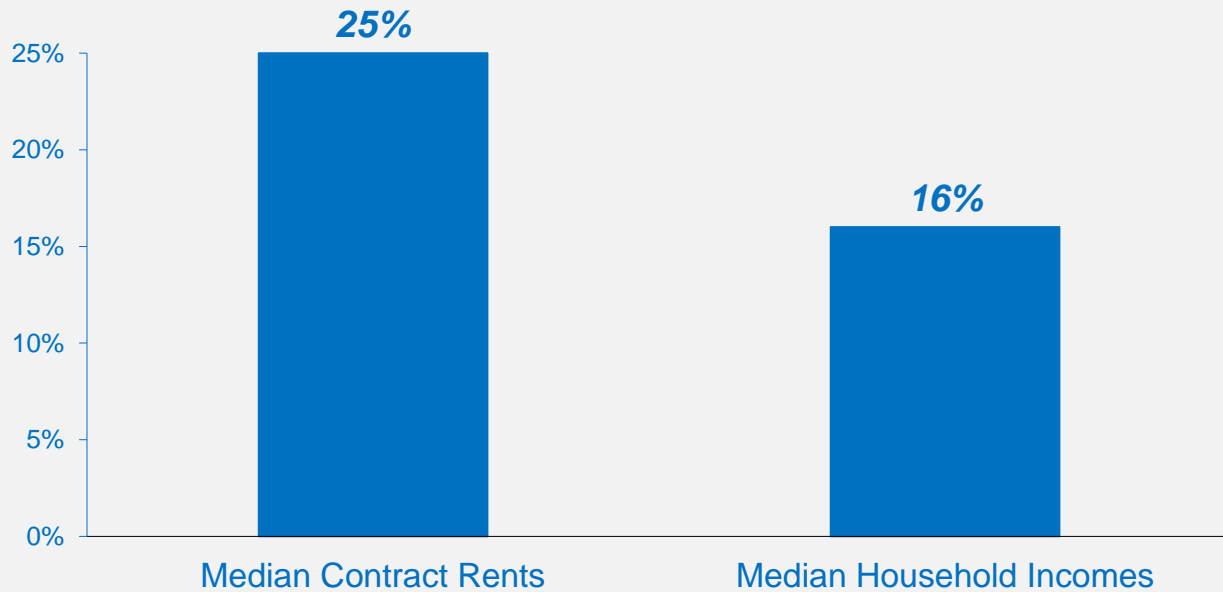
Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources shows overwhelmingly that New York City's housing affordability gap – the gap between apartment rents and tenant incomes – has grown wider in recent years.

Indeed, unlike in some other housing markets, apartment rents in New York City continued to rise in the years both before and after the 2008 economic crisis struck.

- According to Census Bureau data analyzed in a June 2012 report by the Community Service Society, median apartment rents increased by 25 percent from 2005 through 2010, and rose every year during that period.
- In contrast, median household income fell from 2008 through 2010, as the incomes and rents gap widened.
- Thus, over the period 2005 through 2010, median household income rose 16 percent while median contract rents rose by 25 percent.
- Over the same period, rent burdens – the share of tenant income going to pay for rent – rose substantially, and rose at particularly high rates for the lowest-income renters.
- Over the period 2005 through 2010, median rent burdens for tenants who did not receive housing subsidies grew from 45 to 49 percent, while unassisted low-income tenants (those earning up to twice the poverty rate) saw their median rent burden rise from 60 to 65 percent.
- From 2005 to 2011, also according to Census Bureau data, the share of low-income tenants paying more than half of their income towards rent rose from 41 to a staggering 49 percent.
- And over this same period, the share of poor tenants paying more than half of their income towards rent rose from 66 to a staggering 80 percent.
- Contributing to the widening affordability gap in New York City is the persistence of high rates of unemployment more than four years after the 2008 economic crisis struck. This is particularly true in the Bronx and Brooklyn, the two NYC boroughs with the largest concentrations of poverty and severe housing problems like high rent burdens.
- In January 2008, according to New York State Department of Labor data, the unemployment rate was 5.3 percent in New York City overall, 5.6 percent in Brooklyn, and 7.1 percent in the Bronx.
- However, in December 2012, the unemployment rate remains significantly higher – 8.8 percent in New York City overall, 9.5 percent in Brooklyn, and 11.9 percent in the Bronx.

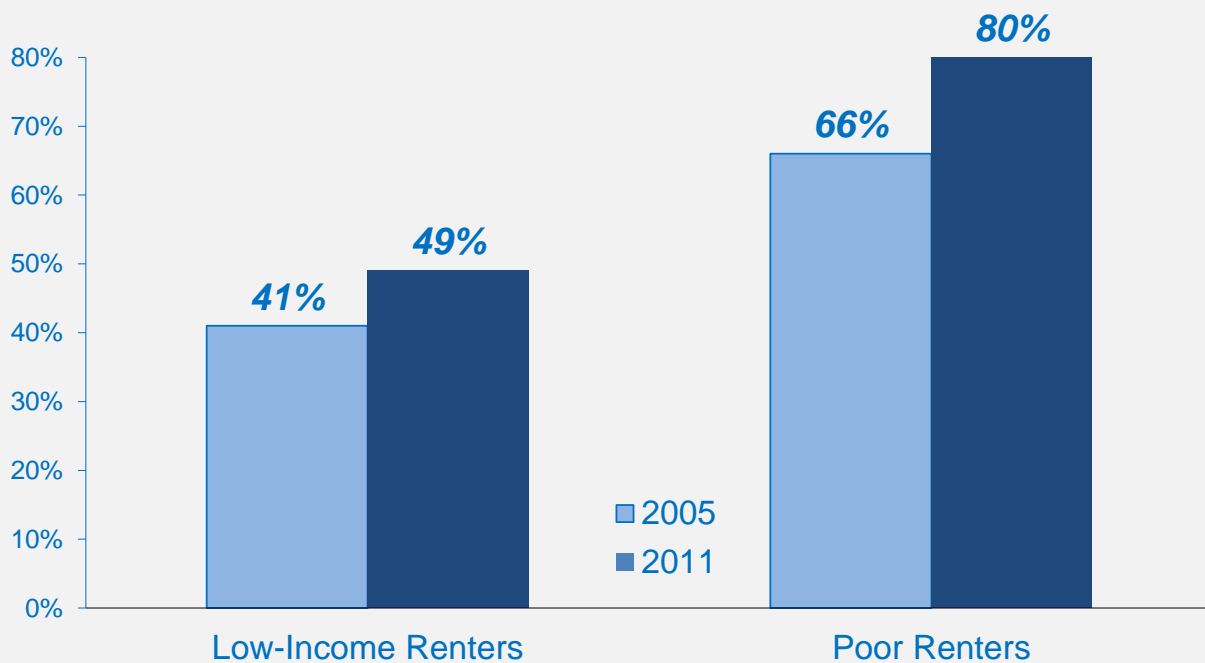
## NYC's Widening Housing Affordability Gap, 2005-2010

(Percentage Increase in Rents and Incomes)



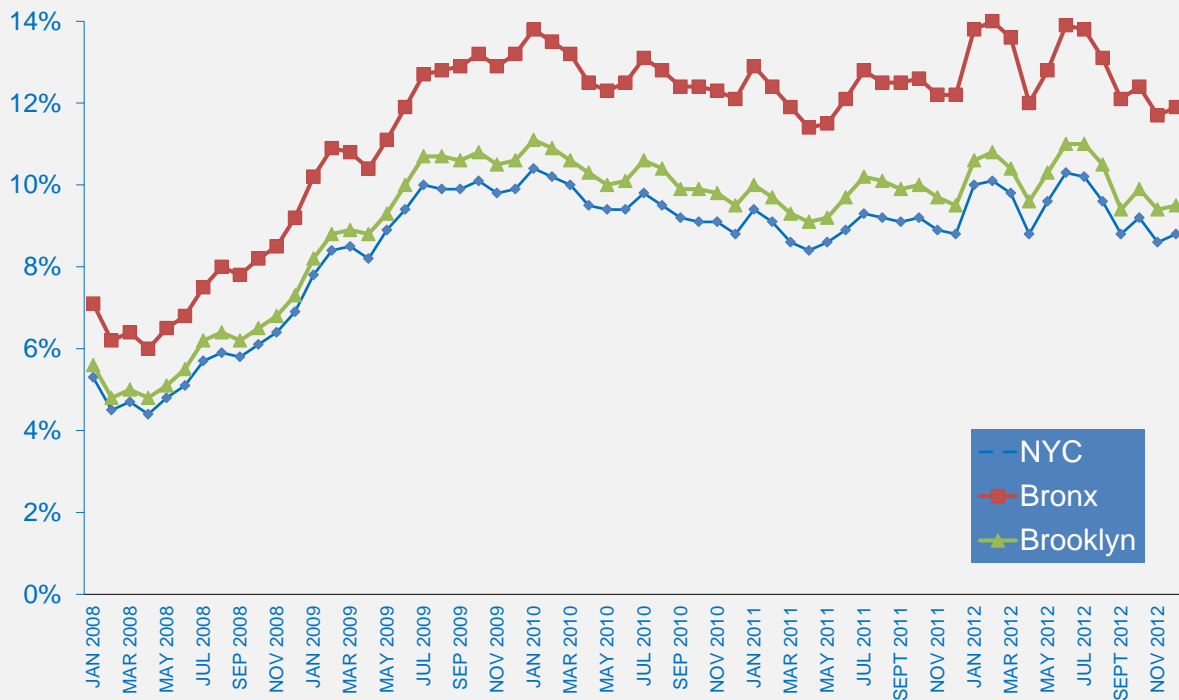
Source: U.S. Census Bureau data from Community Service Society report (June 2012)

## Share of Renters Paying More than Half of Income Towards Rent, 2005-2011



Source: U.S. Census Bureau data from Community Service Society report (June 2012)

# NYC Unemployment Rate Remains High



Source: NYS Department of Labor

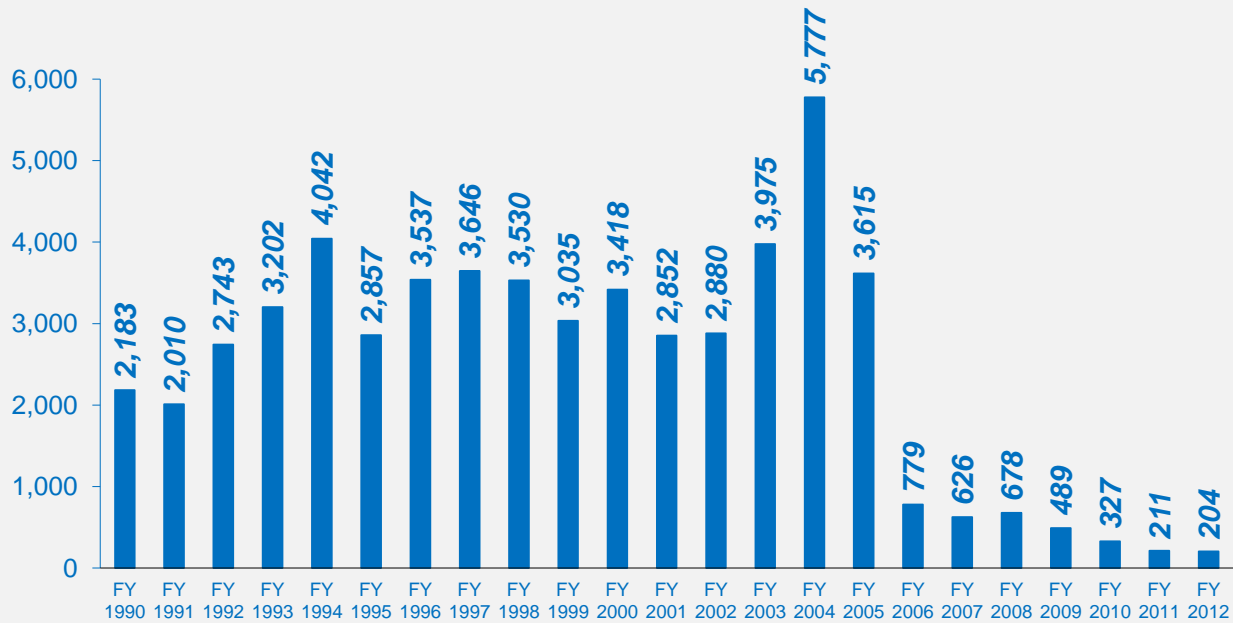
## Failure of Mayor Bloomberg's Homeless Policies

Perhaps the single biggest contributor to unprecedented homelessness in New York City is that, for the first time since modern homelessness emerged more than three decades ago, the City now provides no housing assistance to help homeless children and families move from shelters to permanent housing.

- Previous New York City mayors, from Ed Koch to David Dinkins to Rudy Giuliani, targeted Federal and City housing resources to help homeless families relocate from shelters to stable, permanent housing.
- Beginning under the Koch administration, the City of New York began helping homeless families re-locate from the municipal shelter system to permanent housing by allocating a modest share of scarce Federal public housing apartments (administered by the New York City Housing Authority, or NYCHA) and Federal housing vouchers, known as Section 8 vouchers.
- From FY 1990 through FY 2005, under four New York City mayors, the City helped more than 53,000 homeless families – including more than 100,000 children – move to long-term, permanent housing using these Federal housing programs.
- Over the same period, an additional 11,000 homeless families with more than 20,000 children were moved from shelters to City-subsidized apartments – many of them apartments created under the late Mayor Ed Koch's acclaimed "Housing New York" ten-year plan.
- The priority use of Federal housing programs, begun by Mayor Koch, was continued under Mayors Dinkins and Giuliani and even through the first three years of Bloomberg's first term, when it contributed to a significant reduction in family homelessness from 2003 to 2004.
- Two decades of academic research document overwhelmingly that homeless families who exit the shelter system with Federal housing assistance have the lowest rates of return to shelter.
- In contrast, families who exit the shelter system with no housing subsidies have the highest rates of return to shelter – as many as half of all such families were shown to return to homelessness.
- Mayor Bloomberg broke with the successful approach used by previous mayors in 2005, eliminating priority referrals for homeless families to Federal housing programs and substituting flawed, temporary rent subsidies.
- Two years ago the City terminated the last of the temporary subsidy programs (Advantage), leaving homeless families with no housing assistance whatsoever to move into permanent housing.
- As a result unprecedented numbers of formerly homeless families now return to the costly shelter system – all due to the lack of proven, affordable housing options.
- During the period when NYC utilized Federal housing programs to help homeless families leave the shelter system, only one-quarter of all families entering the shelter system was formerly homeless.
- Now, according to City data, nearly two out of three (63 percent) families entering the shelter system are formerly homeless.

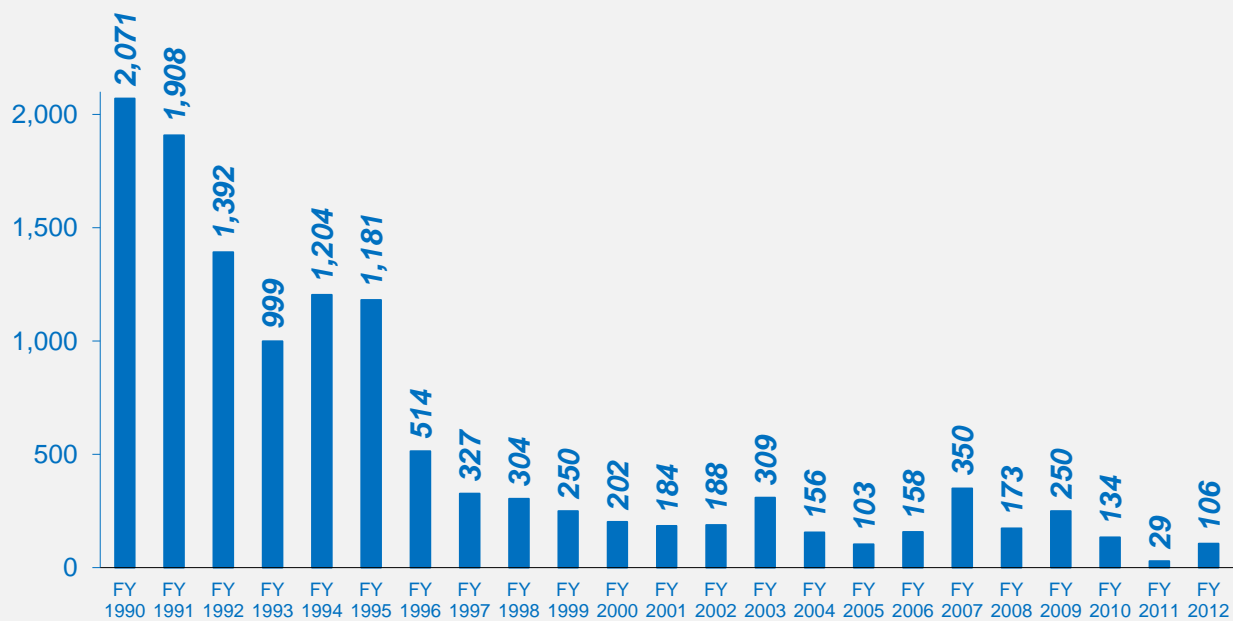
- Many of the formerly homeless families entering the shelter system are former Advantage recipients. According to City data, more than 6,500 Advantage families with 14,000 children have returned to the shelter system as of the end of 2012. This represents nearly 38 percent of all Advantage recipients who lost their time-limited Advantage subsidy and were left without any housing assistance.
- Under Mayor Bloomberg expenditures on shelter and services for homeless people has grown to the highest levels in the City's history – a projected \$955.3 million projected for the current FY 2013 – a 77 percent increase since the Mayor took office.
- Another factor behind record NYC expenditures on homeless services is the rising cost of shelter itself. According to the "Mayor's Management Report," the City spends an average of \$36,799/year (more than \$3,000/month) to shelter a homeless family, and \$28,394/year to shelter a homeless single adult.
- Shelter costs for both families and individuals have increased in recent years. In recent months, the Bloomberg administration has opened more than a dozen new shelters with the price tag at some facilities exceeding \$40,000/year per family.
- The high cost of shelter for homeless families – much of which is paid for by City and State tax dollars – is one of the major reasons previous NYC mayors utilized Federally-funded housing programs – including public housing and Section 8 vouchers to help homeless families leave shelters.
- Indeed, according to a June 2012 NYC Independent Budget Office (IBO) analysis, the City could both reduce the number of homeless children and families in the shelter system – as well as save millions of dollars spent on shelter – by utilizing at least 2,500 NYCHA public housing apartments per year to help homeless families, a proposal advanced by the New York City Council and others.
- The IBO analysis concluded: "IBO found that implementing the policy outlined in the City Council proposal would result in a net reduction in the family shelter census.... IBO found that savings would be proportional to the number of placements made. Family shelter costs would be reduced by a total of \$14.7 million with 2,500 placements and \$29.4 million with 5,000 placements. With family shelter funding shared between the federal, state, and city governments, slightly more than a third of the reduction, about \$5.5 million and \$11.0 million, respectively, would reflect savings for the city."
- Despite the clear findings of the IBO analysis and similar studies by academic experts, Mayor Bloomberg and his administration have steadfastly refused to restore any affordable housing assistance to help families with vulnerable children re-locate from emergency shelter to permanent housing.

## Fewer Homeless Families Helped by Federal Housing Aid, FY 1990-FY 2012 (No. Moved from Shelters with Public Housing and Sect 8 Vouchers)



Source: Mayor's Management Report and NYC Department of Homeless Services

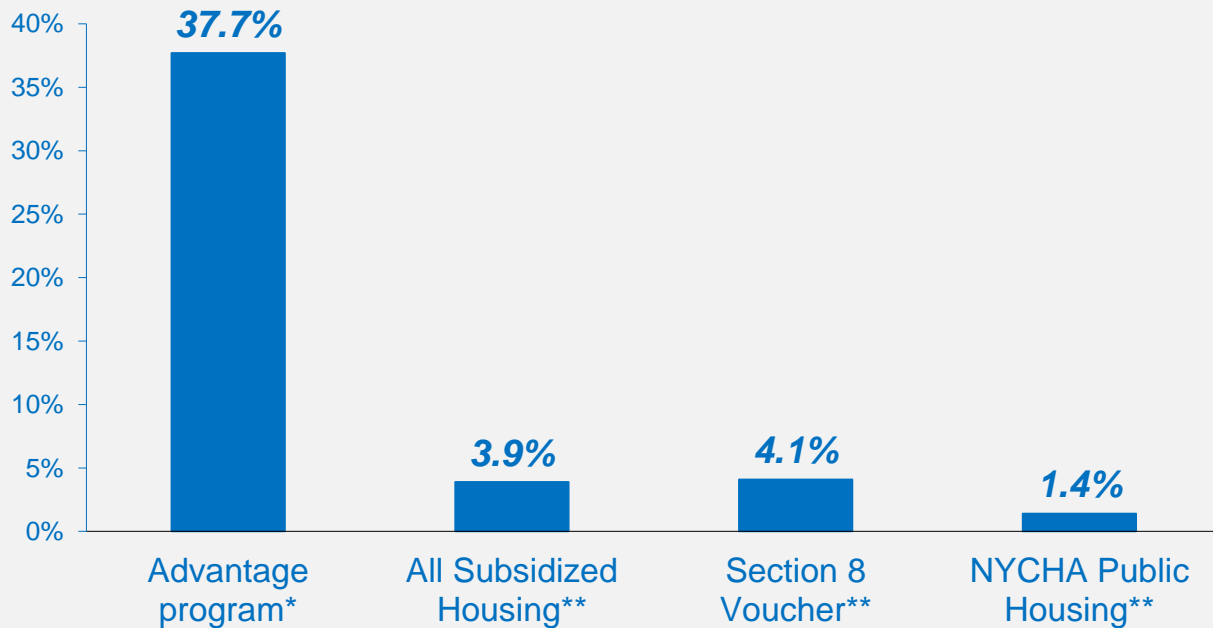
## Fewer Homeless Families Aided by City-Assisted Housing, FY 1990-FY 2012 (Number Moved from Shelters to City-Subsidized Apartments)



Source: Mayor's Management Report and NYC Department of Homeless Services

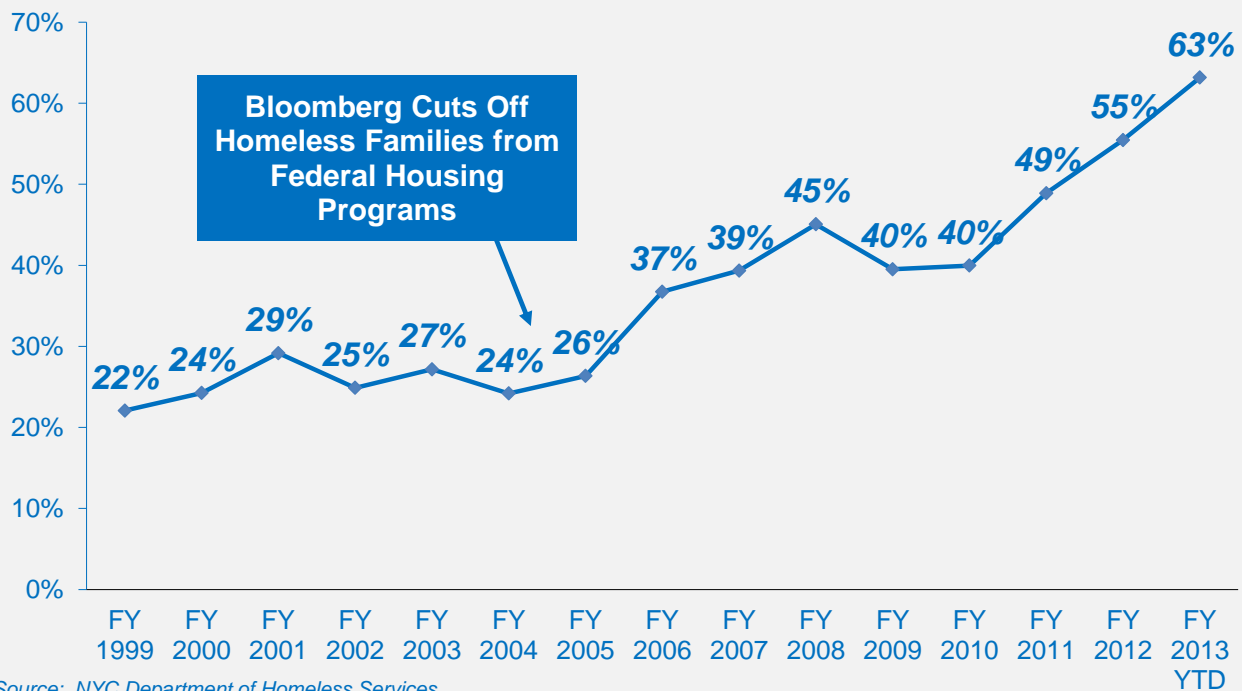


## Shelter Return Rate for Time-Limited and Non-Time-Limited Housing Aid



Source: \*NYC Department of Homeless Services (through Dec 2012), \*\*Vera Institute, "Understanding Family Homelessness" (2005)

## Percentage of All Families Entering NYC Shelters Who Were Formerly-Homeless



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services

## Part III

# An Action Plan for the Next NYC Mayor

New York City's next mayor will confront historically-high levels of homelessness. However, the next mayor can build on proven solutions to the problem of homelessness, many of them pioneered in New York City. And, through a combination of smart policies and forward-thinking investments, the next mayor can actually bring about real declines in the number of homeless children and adults and, at the same time, save taxpayer dollars spent on the costly and growing shelter system.

The following is an action plan for the next New York City mayor, a plan built on the consensus among researchers, advocates, policy experts, and homeless people themselves that long-term affordable housing assistance dramatically reduces family and child homelessness and permanent supportive housing reduces the number of homeless people living with mental illness and other special needs.

### 1. Target Permanent Housing Resources to Homeless New Yorkers

- a. Utilize existing Federal and City housing resources to move homeless families and individuals from the shelter system into permanent housing:
  - Resume priority referrals of at least 2,500 eligible homeless households per year to the NYCHA public housing waiting list. (In FY 2012 NYCHA placed more than 6,000 households into public housing apartments, none of them referrals from the NYC Department of Homeless Services.)
  - Resume referrals of eligible homeless households to Section 8 voucher waiting lists, such that homeless households can obtain at least one of every three available vouchers.
  - Reinstate the NYCHA waiting list priority status previously granted to homeless applicants for both the public housing and Section 8 voucher programs.
  - Target to homeless families and individuals at least one of every five housing units assisted by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development.
- b. Work with the State to create an effective State-City rental assistance program for homeless New Yorkers to supplement existing Federal and City housing resources. Such a program should:
  - Offer at least five years of subsidy per eligible household;
  - Be otherwise modeled on the proven federal Section 8 voucher program; and
  - Provide a mechanism to ensure housing stability for those homeless households with members with disabilities or other barriers to employment who cannot otherwise afford to retain housing after the five-year subsidy has expired.
- c. Negotiate with the State a renewed "New York/New York Agreement" to create at least 12,000 units of permanent supportive housing over three years for homeless individuals and families living with mental illness and other special needs.

### 2. Remove Barriers to Shelter for Homeless Families and Individuals

- a. Reform the current shelter eligibility process for homeless families, which currently results in many homeless children and families being wrongfully denied emergency shelter and/or forced to re-apply multiple times in order to secure stable shelter. A revised family shelter intake process should ensure that shelter placements are

not denied to families who lack alternative housing options that are both genuinely available and suitable to the families' needs, and should require the City to verify that alternative housing options are actually available and suitable.

- b. Withdraw proposed shelter eligibility hurdles for homeless single adults which would, according to DHS officials, result in as many as 10,000 homeless women and men being denied shelter each year.
- c. Guarantee that all homeless children, families, and individuals can access emergency shelter during weather emergencies especially when temperatures fall below freezing.

### **3. Ensure That Affordable Housing for the Poorest NYC Households Is a Cornerstone of the Recovery from Hurricane Sandy**

- a. Work with the Federal government to secure at least 10,000 Federal Section 8 housing vouchers to help displaced New Yorkers secure permanent housing.
- b. Ensure that evacuees who receive temporary rental assistance (e.g., through the Disaster Housing Assistance Program) are guaranteed a transition to long-term housing stability, such as a Section 8 voucher.
- c. Make immediate and long-term repairs to subsidized and supportive housing damaged during the storm.
- d. Any new housing construction must expand stock of housing affordable to extremely low-income households.

### **4. Reform and Improve the Shelter System for Homeless Families and Adults**

- a. End the use of the so-called "cluster-site"/"scatter-site" shelter program (i.e., apartment buildings used as temporary shelter at enormous cost).
- b. Phase out the use of commercial hotels and motels as temporary shelter, primarily for families, and enhance oversight of those commercial hotels and motels still in use by ending no-contract arrangements with operators, enforcing health and safety standards, and improving social services.
- c. Revise punitive administrative rules, which threaten termination of shelter for many homeless adults and families, a large portion of whom are people living with mental illness. The rules should be revised to ensure that people living with mental or physical impairments are not threatened with loss of shelter; that the City is obligated to evaluate such people for impairments; and that lack of public assistance benefits is not a sole reason for loss of shelter.
- d. Eliminate so-called "Next Step" shelters, which have punitive rules and conditions and inadequate social services for homeless families and adults.

## Notes on Data Sources

- Homeless shelter population data since September 2011 is taken from NYC Stat, administered by the NYC Mayor's Office of Operations, and is published pursuant to Local Law 37 of 2011, which requires various City agencies to report accurate data on the number of people residing in City-administered shelters. This report uses homeless shelter population data from these reports consistent with shelter census reports published by the City since the early 1980s, and includes shelters currently administered by the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and three shelters for homeless families currently administered by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), which have been included in 25 years of previous shelter census reports. The NYC Stat reports can be found here: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/nycstat/html/reports/reports.shtml>
- For the period before September 2011, data for homeless families and children is from DHS's "Emergency Housing Services for Homeless Families Monthly Report," which has been published by the City since the early 1980s. This DHS monthly report includes approximately 200 families (with approximately 1,000 people) who reside in homeless shelters currently administered by HPD.
- For the period before September 2011, data for homeless single adults in municipal shelters is from the following DHS reports: (1) DHS daily census reports for shelters for homeless single men and women, which have been produced daily by the City since 1982; (2) DHS census reports for shelters for homeless veterans; and (3) DHS census reports for "safe haven" shelters, which are restricted to long-term street homeless adults. (Note that the large majority of shelters for veterans and "safe haven" shelters were once included as part of the DHS daily adult shelter census report. These shelters were "converted" to different service models beginning in 2007 and were then excluded, in various stages, from DHS daily adult shelter census report and from DHS's website.) Data for homeless single adults also includes data for homeless people sleeping in DHS "stabilization beds," which are also restricted to chronically street homeless adults, but only since July 2010; this data is taken from DHS "Critical Activities Reports," available on the DHS website.
- Unemployment data is from the New York State Department of Labor.
- Data on rents and tenant incomes is from the U.S. Census Bureau and included in the Community Service Society's report, "What If Making the Rent Left You with only \$4.40 per Day for Everything Else" (June 2012), available at <http://www.cssny.org>.
- Data about Federal homelessness estimates is from the December 2012 report "The 2012 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness," available at <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm>. Additional Census Bureau data about homeless shelter populations is from the September 2012 report, "The Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population: 2010," available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/reports/c2010sr-02.pdf>.
- Data about Federal housing programs, the Advantage program, and other housing subsidy programs is from the City of New York, Mayor's Office of Operations, "Mayor's Management Report" for various years, available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/html/home/home.shtml>, as well as from DHS "Critical Activities Reports," available on the DHS website.

*For more information, please visit [www.coalitionforthehomeless](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless).*