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## **MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES CITY AND SHELTER PROVIDERS FIXED MORE THAN 12,000 VIOLATIONS**

### *City continues aggressively inspecting homeless shelters*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today released the February Shelter Repair Scorecard, which shows that the City is aggressively finding and repairing conditions in homeless shelters. Under the Shelter Repair Squad 2.0, in two months the City and shelter providers have repaired almost as many violations as were fixed in all 2015. In addition, The City has already conducted in two months a third as many inspections as it did in all of 2015.

- The 2,660 inspections conducted in just two months is almost a third of the 8,665 conducted in all of 2015. Those inspections identified 11,125 new violations and conditions
- The two-month total of 12,026 repairs completed is almost as many as the total of 12,934 violations cleared in all of 2015.
- At the end of February, even after the new round of inspections, there were 6,486 outstanding violations in non-cluster shelters, compared to 6,983 violations on December 31, 2015.

“The point of the Shelter Repair Scorecard and the Shelter Repair Squad was to both aggressively inspect and find problems in shelters and aggressively fix them, while being publicly accountable. By both conducting an unprecedented number of inspections and a record number of repairs, and publicly reporting the results, we have proved with actions our commitment to improving conditions in homeless shelters. We are determined to give every family and individual in a homeless shelter decent living conditions,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“I’ve worked in several cities to address the needs of low-income families and individuals, and this administration’s new shelter repair program to provide safe and decent shelter is unprecedented. I would like to thank the City workers from many agencies who worked so hard to improve conditions for our homeless families,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Herminia Palacio**.

The Shelter Repair Scorecard defines the scope of the problem by listing conditions at all homeless shelters in New York City that do not meet applicable regulations, and makes it possible to track progress in dealing with them. The scorecard can be accessed [here](#). An Excel version of the scorecard can be accessed [here](#).

The data shows:

- While no sub-standard conditions are acceptable, many shelters have relatively few violations. Family shelters (excluding clusters) have an average of about half a violation per apartment, the same as the average for all buildings in New York City.
- Of the 330 non-cluster City homeless shelters, 157 sites had ten or fewer violations, 90 of those sites had five or less.
- The 303 cluster shelters, which house only 23 percent of the total shelter population, had 14,054 violations, or 68 percent of the total.
- The Scorecard lists 26 cluster buildings with 315 units that are designated for closure this fiscal year, which are listed separately on the summary. Also, 12 cluster buildings with 15 units have already been closed, and violations associated with those buildings, are not included in the summary totals.

Cluster shelters are groups of individual apartments in larger buildings, and the violation total includes all the violations in each building, not those solely relating to the cluster units. The administration has announced a plan to phase out the use of cluster shelters – where the majority of the violations are found. As the City ends the use of cluster shelters, returning them to the market so that the apartments can serve as low-rent housing, it will insist that building owners bring their buildings up to code, and will work to ensure that they remain part of the City’s rent-regulated stock or enter an affordability program. As part of the 90-day review ordered by the Mayor, the City found that some entities called shelters for a number of years were actually clusters; they have since been moved into the cluster category. In addition, the Scorecard now separately reports on a group of clusters that are pending closure within a few months.

- Going forward, for the first time in New York City’s history, there will be inspections twice a year of all sites used to house homeless individuals and families.
- The FY 2016 shelter maintenance and repair budget totals \$54 million, of which \$17 million has been added since the beginning of the de Blasio administration. The capital budget includes \$120 million in the four-year plan.
- As part of the review of homeless services ordered by the Mayor, the City is evaluating payments to shelter providers to ensure they are sufficient to fund maintenance, and is assessing the capital needs of shelters, which have not been adequately provided for many years.
- The City has also implemented a plan for repairing City-owned shelter buildings.

In addition, the City has adopted some recommendations from shelter providers on how to most effectively improve conditions in the shelter. For example, because many shelters find it difficult to pay the cost of having a repair re-inspected to prove the violation was cleared, HPD is offering limited free inspections for nonprofit providers who have violations that have been repaired but not cleared. The City has also agreed to:

- Ensure that all providers have clear information about the standards and regulations against which they are measured so that they can train their staff to respond to them.
- Increase coordination among City agency inspectors and conduct joint inspections as much as possible to reduce the burden of frequent inspections.
- Explore ways to reduce the time it takes for violations to be cleared after the supporting paperwork is filed.
- Create a working group of shelter providers to discuss the best means of working together to improve shelter conditions, which has already had its first meeting.

“Many of these violations are long-standing problems stemming from a lack of funding. This new initiative that began literally on New Year’s Day is part of the 90-day review of homeless

services that the Mayor ordered on December 15, 2015. We have taken a number of immediate steps to identify and fix shelter conditions that have built up over many years, including increasing funding to address maintenance and capital needs for not-for-profit organizations that are essential to providing decent shelter for homeless New Yorkers,” said **Human Resources Administration Commissioner Steven Banks**.

“The Shelter Repair Squad is actively working to find and fix the problems in our shelters, and making real-time progress – as the latest Scorecard demonstrates. The 12,000 repairs made in just the last two months make a real difference in the lives of homeless New Yorkers seeking a safe, decent refuge as they try to rebuild their lives. Our team will continue to work with all of our sister agencies, service providers and building owners to ensure that the shelter we provide is safe and well-maintained,” said **Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been**.

“The Shelter Repair Scorecard offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate the significant efforts of multiple city agencies to address conditions in city shelters. We continue to refine the Scorecard to maximize its transparency so we can track our progress, hold ourselves accountable, and inform the public. We’re proud of the progress the City and providers have made in repairing unacceptable conditions and will continue to push for safe shelter conditions citywide,” said **Mindy Tarlow, Director of Mayor’s Office of Operations**.

The Shelter Repair Scorecard contains:

- A summary page showing the total number of inspections conducted, any new problems found, and violations and other conditions resolved each month.
- A list of all shelter buildings, with summaries of the conditions in each building.
- A report card for each individual shelter with the number of each type of violation and progress in fixing them. This page will describe the type of shelter, the total number of units and the owner of the building.

All open violations are reported as of a set date, in this case February 29, 2016. While some violations may have been repaired, documentation of the repairs may not have been processed as of that date – those repairs will be reflected in a later scorecard.

Shelter addresses are not included due to confidentiality requirements of the New York State Social Services Law.

It is important to note that shelter providers who lease the property may have limited ability to require the owner to make repairs. The City is moving to put all shelters under contract to improve its ability to require and fund repairs.

The administration is moving to improve conditions in homeless shelters by:

- Expanding the Shelter Repair Squad to improve shelter conditions and respond quickly to resident concerns.
- Ending the use of “cluster site” housing, which has often been sub-standard, and transitioning to new models designed to promote permanent housing.
- Establishing a shelter repair hotline for shelter residents to register issues about shelter conditions starting February 1.
- Reversing disinvestment in not-for-profit shelters, funding capital and maintenance needs.

- Reinforcing the requirement that shelter providers keep shelters open for residents during the day.
- Enhancing programming in shelters, including new job training and employment programs.

“To support our city’s most vulnerable residents, and guarantee equitable living standards for all New Yorkers, we must start by ensuring that our shelters are properly maintained in safe condition. The Buildings Department is committed to protecting the public through coordinating inspections with our partner agencies on the Shelter Repair Squad,” said **Department of Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler**.

“Extensive bi-annual inspections of shelters by the FDNY, together with other City agencies, are critical to providing the safe living conditions homeless New Yorkers deserve,” said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. “The Department is committed to doing its part to improve the fire safety of every shelter in our city.”

“Living conditions are key determinants of public health, and the Health Department is pleased to participate in the effort to improve conditions in shelters by holding operators to the same standards as other landlords,” said **Dr. Mary Travis Bassett, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Health**.

Since taking office, the de Blasio administration has helped over 30,000 New Yorkers move from shelter to permanent housing, or stay in their homes and avoid shelter altogether through newly created rental assistance programs and shelter exit programs, and served over 100,000 New Yorkers with community-based homelessness prevention service. The administration has also:

- Funded a ten-fold increase in legal services to prevent unlawful eviction and protect affordable housing.
- Launched a plan for 15,000 units of supportive housing – permanent housing with supportive services to help stabilize lives of homeless individuals.
- Ended chronic veteran homelessness.
- Launched HOME-STAT to ensure consistent, continued outreach to all street homeless, encouraging them to seek shelter, medical care and other services.
- Removed 30 encampments, and put in place a system to monitor new encampments where services are provided to homeless individuals.
- Doubled the number of drop-in centers, a gateway to bringing people in from streets to shelters.
- Added 500 Safe Haven Beds in houses of worship, which are lower threshold shelters often more attractive to individuals who reject traditional shelters.
- Increased by 50 percent the number of beds at Domestic Violence shelters, to serve total of 13,300 individuals.
- Expanded daytime jobs training and vocational programming at shelters to serve almost 20,000 individuals to ensure residents have access to shelter during the daytime.
- Tripled the number of beds for runaway homeless youth – totaling 750 beds.

“We are obligated to provide safe, clean shelter for every homeless individual in our city,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “We must make good on that responsibility – which is why identifying where our shelters fall short and investing in essential repairs and upgrades is so important. I commend the mayor for making progress on this moral imperative.”

“For too long, unacceptable living conditions have been allowed to persist in homeless shelters across New York City. Homeless New Yorkers deserve to know that the shelters they rely on in their time of need are clean, hospitable and, most importantly, safe. I commend the de Blasio administration for working with committed providers to make real progress toward improving conditions in our shelter system. I look forward to working with the Mayor and providers to continue this important move forward for our city's most vulnerable,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the Committee on General Welfare.**

“Today's findings make it clear that when providers and the City work together across agencies, we get results – and results are exactly what the thousands of women and children trying to break the cycle of homelessness need,” said **Christine C. Quinn, President and CEO of Win.**

“Infractions are down across the city in a record amount of time, which means that homeless families at Win and other providers are living in safer, cleaner spaces, which frees them up to better care for their children, keep their jobs or search for work, and search for permanent housing. But the most important point is that the administration isn't just looking at literal short term fixes, but proactively going after problems that can snowball in the long term and become serious, resulting in unsafe conditions and in fines that divert precious dollars away from funding actual services. The Mayor and the administration deserve real credit for this. Win stands at the ready to continue to work with our peers and City Hall to make sure that while we execute policy that will actually reduce the homeless population, we are ensuring that those who currently depend on the shelter system have the best living space possible in the meantime.”

“All New Yorkers deserve a healthy and safe place to live, and residents of homeless shelters should be no exception. Thank you to the de Blasio administration for taking on these much needed repairs and for creating a system of transparency to track the progress being made. Until we can connect people to permanent, affordable housing - we must ensure that all New Yorkers in need feel safe and comfortable in our shelter system,” said **Alyssa Aguilera, Co-Executive Director of VOCAL-NY.**

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