

NYC  
HOME-STAT  
HOMELESS  
OUTREACH

# The Journey Home

An Action Plan  
to End Long-Term  
Street Homelessness



The City of New York  
Mayor Bill de Blasio  
Dr. Raul Perea-Henze  
Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services  
Commissioner Steven Banks  
Department of Social Services





## Message from the Mayor



My fellow New Yorkers:

I write you today with a declaration that would have seemed impossible for decades in our city: **We will end street homelessness as we know it within the next five years.**

To accomplish this will mean doing something never before seen in this country. In even embarking on our mission to help every person experiencing long-term homelessness off our streets, we are attempting something no other city has even tried. But it is not a declaration made in blind faith. It is a declaration based on the fact that, for the first time ever, we have found an approach that works—and are ready to expand it on a massive scale.

We've arrived at this progress humbly. For six years, our administration has worked relentlessly to try new approaches and help those on our streets. Over the past three years, we've cracked the code. Our outreach teams have connected with people one-on-one and developed real, lasting relationships. We've treated people with decency and compassion. We've created individualized paths that have helped more than 2,450 New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness find their way back home.

But we know that progress doesn't feel visible. And we know there is more to do until every single New Yorker has a place to call home. Those on our streets are our friends, family members, and neighbors. They have been failed by the persistent inequalities we still fight today: an economy that leaves too many living paycheck-to-paycheck, a broken health care system, inadequate mental health care.

It is our moral imperative to help every single one of them.

*The Journey Home* will bring together resources and people on a scale never seen before—working in common cause to give every person on our streets the support, housing, and care they need.

This will not be easy, and I call on every New Yorker to help. We need family and friends of those on our streets to be trusted partners. We need help identifying locations for new Safe Havens and homeless housing. We need those traveling our streets, subways, and parks not to walk by a fellow New Yorker who is struggling—but to contact our outreach team and be part of the solution.

This plan is about changing the culture of our city. It's about rising to a moral challenge we all must meet. It's about recognizing the human dignity of our fellow New Yorkers, and acting for lasting change.

Together, let's help our neighbors make the journey home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Bill de Blasio**  
Mayor



 **NYC  
HOME-STATE  
HOMELESS  
OUTREACH**

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## Executive Summary

Homelessness is a moral challenge for our City that demands everyone's attention and action.

That's why we are announcing a plan to end street homelessness as we know it. We have the tools to make a difference and there's no time left to wait.

In New York City, where we became the first city to establish a right to shelter for homeless individuals and families in need, 95 percent of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness are residing in shelter, where they are receiving services as they get back on the path to stability. The remaining five percent of those experiencing homelessness are unsheltered on our streets and in our subways—approximately 3,600 New Yorkers.

Here in New York, we know homelessness should be at most a temporary condition, not a defining identity or personal characteristic. Only about half of the people encountered on our streets by homeless outreach teams are experiencing long-term street homelessness. The rest of the people are transient, meaning they may only be on the streets for short periods of time before finding housing or reconnecting with family or friends.

Since April 2016, our outreach teams have helped more than 2,450 New Yorkers to remain off the streets through transitional or permanent housing programs. Over the last three years we have implemented multiple approaches for helping people to move permanently off the streets, including focused and persistent client-centered outreach and the groundbreaking commitment of City resources for transitional and permanent supportive housing.

But for those who remain on the streets long-term, experiencing ongoing unsheltered homelessness, disconnected from family and friends, let down in the past, we must do more.

While our strategies have made progress, we know we cannot rest. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. And we will not leave any New Yorker behind.

Each person takes a unique path to the streets, and our City has a moral imperative to help New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness find their way back home. For those who remain on the streets long-term, their personal emergency continues. For every individual we fail to reach, our City will remain in crisis. But we know that ending long-term street homelessness<sup>1</sup> is in our power. It is our mission and responsibility.

**That is why we are announcing our plan to end street homelessness as we know it by eliminating long-term street homelessness in New York City within the next five years.**

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<sup>1</sup> **Long-term street homelessness** refers to individuals who have been experiencing unsheltered homelessness for long periods of time rather than brief, limited episodes. They are characterized by the following: Are particularly vulnerable and have unique and complex needs rooted in their struggles to manage disabling conditions such as a serious and persistent mental illness, substance use disorders, or physical disabilities; often reject traditional emergency settings for unsheltered conditions and have touchpoints across multiple City systems; and lack the resources to address conditions on their own, thus requiring tailored interventions and an enhanced level of cross-system integration and support.

Today, we're marshalling new and critical resources to give our outreach teams tools to achieve this goal. We will:

1. Increase Safe Haven capacity by opening 1,000 new Safe Haven beds.<sup>2</sup>
2. Create 1,000 new low-barrier permanent apartments by working with partners across the housing and social services sectors.<sup>3</sup>
3. Deliver new health resources to people where they are, providing treatment through street medical care and behavioral health care, and build the trust needed for clients to come inside.
4. Provide coordinated rapid outreach response through the Street Homelessness Joint Command Center.
5. Leverage state-of-the-art outreach technology to better connect clients to the individualized services they need to transition into housing.
6. Expand diversion and outreach in our subway system.

But government cannot do this alone. Our outreach providers, who work across the five boroughs engaging New Yorkers 24/7/365, as a collaborative team, need your help.

Through #OutreachNYC, some 18,000 City employees across five frontline agencies are responding to the call. And we have launched a campaign to help family and friends reconnect with their loved ones and forge additional pathways off the streets.

Now, we invite everyone to join us at the table: faith, civic, and business leaders—and everyday New Yorkers. Particularly, we want to hear from you to identify the most effective locations for Safe Havens and low-barrier permanent housing so that we can once and for all dramatically reduce the number of people on the streets and end this crisis for our City.

The City is committing the resources for this mission, but to accomplish this goal, we must all do our part to acknowledge our shared responsibility for uplifting one another and to transform our City for the better.

Turn to page 25 to learn how you can take action to help end street homelessness as we know it.

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<sup>2</sup> **Safe Havens** are programs targeted towards supporting unsheltered homeless individuals, many of whom may be resistant to accepting services. Such programs provide low-barrier transitional settings and specialized supports needed to prepare for permanent housing.

<sup>3</sup> **Low-barrier permanent apartments** build on the success of Safe Havens and provide a harm-reduction, housing-first model that includes intensive wrap-around medical and mental health services.



**NYC**  
Street to Home  
Outreach



 **NYC HOME-START  
HOMELESS  
OUTREACH**

**Here in New York,  
we know homelessness  
should be at most a  
temporary condition,  
not a defining identity  
or personal  
characteristic.**

## Background on the Homelessness Crisis

In the United States, homelessness is a complicated citywide, regional, and national challenge, affecting individuals and families from all walks of life. Rising rents continue to outpace stagnant wages, making it harder and harder to make ends meet. Across the country, evictions are up, and people are falling through the cracks of broken health care and behavioral health systems.

On the West Coast, there are more than 44,000 people living on the streets of Los Angeles, more than 6,300 in Seattle, and more than 4,300 in San Francisco. By comparison, in New York City—the largest big city in America—there are 3,600 people who are experiencing street homelessness. While there is more to be done, we are in the forefront of addressing this challenge, with localities across the nation looking to us as a model.<sup>4</sup>

The NYC Department of Social Services (DSS) has made important progress, developing a comprehensive approach that had been missing for many years and positively changing the lives of thousands of New Yorkers for the better for the long-term. Through *Turning the Tide on Homelessness*, the de Blasio Administration is using every tool at its disposal to help New Yorkers in need get back on the path to stability. And our strategies are taking hold and headed in the right direction:

1. We're the first city in the country to implement a universal right-to-counsel initiative providing lawyers to tenants facing eviction, part of our City's prevention-first approach to addressing homelessness—as a result, unlike the rest of the country, evictions are down by about a third in NYC, keeping more than 105,000 people in their homes.
2. We rebuilt rental assistance programs from scratch and reinstated rehousing initiatives after the City and State cut them in 2011, which drove homelessness up by nearly 40%. Through these efforts we've helped more than 133,672 New Yorkers secure permanent housing since 2014, broken the trajectory of growth of our shelter census and held it flat for two years for the first time in a decade, and are beginning to reverse the trend.
3. We are transforming a haphazard shelter system—ending the use of decades-old stop-gap measures like clusters and commercial hotels once and for all, and already ended the use of more than 200 substandard shelter sites.
4. The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) has implemented the most comprehensive street outreach program in the nation, HOME-STAT (Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement Street Action Teams)—with outreach teams canvassing the five boroughs and engaging unsheltered New Yorkers 24/7/365.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, watch the NBC LA series by Amy Corral and Joel Grover, Could the New York Solution to Homelessness Work in LA? [https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Could-the-New-York-Solution-to-Homeless-Work-in-LA\\_Los-Angeles-565466922.html](https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Could-the-New-York-Solution-to-Homeless-Work-in-LA_Los-Angeles-565466922.html).

**Upon confirming an individual is experiencing unsheltered homelessness, HOME-STAT outreach teams offer them shelter and services immediately—and all New Yorkers experiencing homelessness have a right to shelter at their first encounter and every subsequent encounter.**

**HOME-STAT is the City’s 24/7/365 street homelessness outreach effort,** through which hundreds of highly-trained not-for-profit outreach staff, including licensed social workers, canvass the streets, proactively engaging homeless New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness, offering services and assistance, and working to gain their trust with the goal of addressing the underlying issues that may have caused or contributed to their street homelessness in order to ultimately help these individuals transition off the streets. HOME-STAT also provides aftercare services, continuing to work with individuals as they make that transition to ensure that they get the supports they need to remain in housing and off of the streets.

Through HOME-STAT, we have:

- Tripled the City’s investment in street homelessness programs from approximately \$45M to more than \$140M today.
- Tripled the number of emergency Safe Haven and stabilization beds<sup>5</sup> dedicated to serving street homeless New Yorkers citywide from 600 to more than 1,800 today.
- Tripled the number of outreach staff from fewer than 200 to more than 550.
- Built the City’s first-ever By-Name list of individuals known to be homeless and residing on the streets to improve delivery of services to help them come off the streets.<sup>6</sup>
- Increased joint outreach operations with NYPD and partner agencies such as NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), FDNY Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks) to engage more New Yorkers and offer more supports.

The DHS HOME-STAT staff has also expanded joint operations with NYPD in Midtown Manhattan to seven days per week, and enhanced coordination with the NYPD and MTA in the subways to provide alternative pathways to permanence. During joint outreach operations, NYPD officers accompany HOME-STAT outreach teams as they canvass and jointly offer services to unsheltered homeless individuals, with the goal of providing the unique combination of services that will ultimately help them come indoors.

Currently, NYPD and HOME-STAT conduct joint outreach operations above ground in Midtown Manhattan, seven days a week, between 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 60<sup>th</sup> Street. At the same time, HOME-STAT outreach teams in the subways typically focus on high-activity subway stations, including terminals and end-of-line stations, while Transit District PD (TD-PD) primarily focuses on subway cars.

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<sup>5</sup> Stabilization beds are low-threshold private rented rooms for clients experiencing long-term unsheltered homelessness, where clients may stay until they are placed in permanent housing or a long-term transitional setting. Clients must be referred by outreach teams and be able to care for themselves. Case management is provided by outreach teams.

<sup>6</sup> Learn more about Street Outreach at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/outreach/street-outreach.page>.



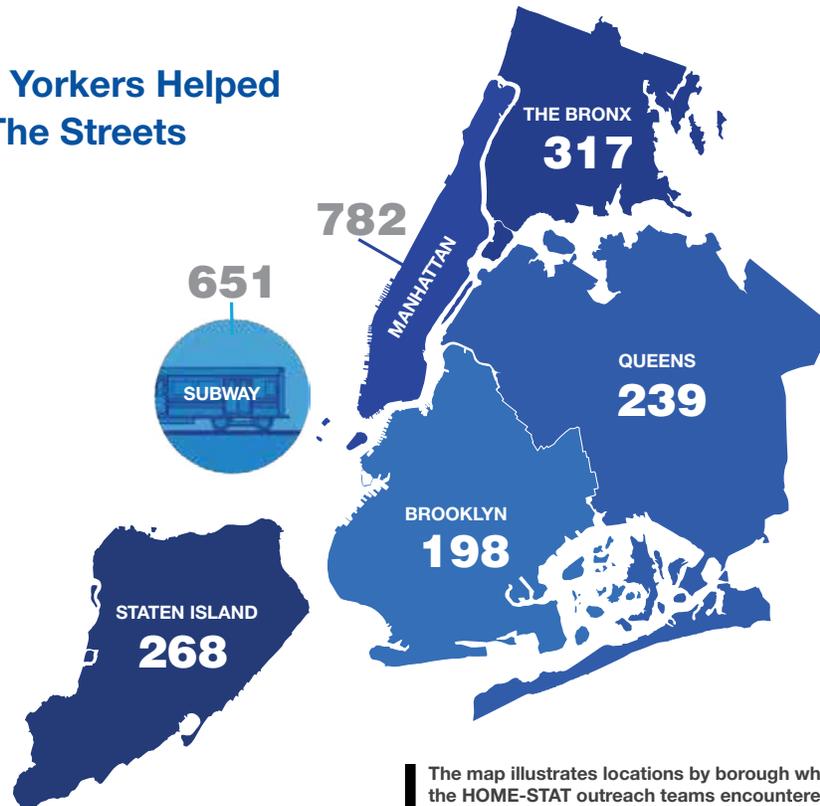
HOME-STAT is the largest dedicated outreach team in the nation engaging those experiencing street homelessness 24/7/365, no matter what the weather.

In their ongoing efforts to offer services, supports, and a helping hand, HOME-STAT outreach teams have access to:

- **licensed clinicians** who work with clients on the streets, provide on-going case management, and assess each individual for immediate risk/crisis during each encounter;
- **psychiatrists** who perform psychiatric evaluations on the streets, as needed, helping understand and better meet the individual needs of each unsheltered New Yorker; and
- **substance use resources**, including the ability to immediately connect individuals to a variety of treatment and support programs—and staff trained in naloxone administration.

Thanks to these investments, HOME-STAT outreach teams have helped more than 2,450 homeless New Yorkers remain off the streets since April 2016.

## New Yorkers Helped Off The Streets



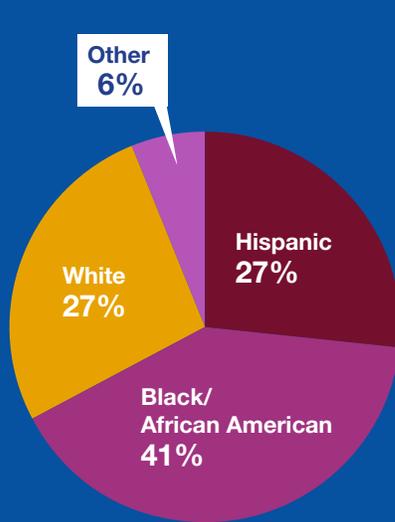
The map illustrates locations by borough where the HOME-STAT outreach teams encountered and engaged more than 2,450 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness and made the breakthroughs that encouraged them to accept services.



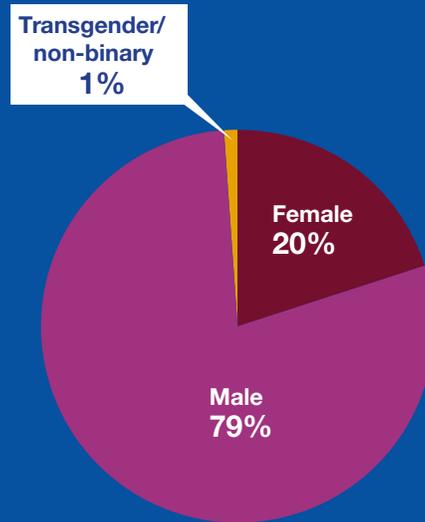
In 2018, nearly all people experiencing homelessness in New York City were sheltered (95%).

Every engagement represents progress in the right direction, and the more opportunities we have for engaging New Yorkers in need, the better. We remain focused on increasing pathways off the street for these New Yorkers, and we are undeterred in our efforts to offer a helping hand.

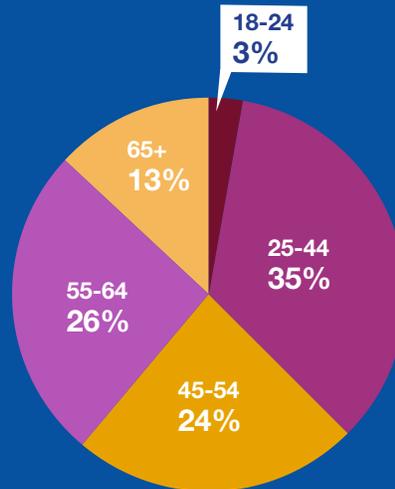
New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness come from all backgrounds, genders, and age groups.



**RACE\***



**GENDER**



**AGE\***

\*Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## **Unsheltered New Yorkers: Our Family Members, Friends, and Neighbors**

Street homelessness can happen to any one of us. These individuals are our family members, friends, and neighbors. They are human beings with inherent dignity. Every person living on the streets has a story about how they got there. In many cases, they have fallen through every available social safety net. Systems and institutional settings have let them down in the past. In some cases, society has abandoned them altogether. And no two individuals' cases are alike.

It is our responsibility to get to know each and every one of these individuals, person-by-person. It is our job to see and uplift them, to never forget their essential humanity. And it is our everyday mission to meet them where they are so we can understand their struggles, including the unique set of factors that may have contributed to their homelessness, and to rebuild trust so we can help them find their unique pathway off the streets.

### **Support for Runaway and Homeless Youth**

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) funds services for Runaway & Homeless Youth that include Drop-in Centers for youth up to age 24, Crisis Services Programs, Transitional Independent Living Programs (ages 16-21), and Street Outreach and Referral Services.

These services are designed to protect runaway and homeless youth, who are primarily transient, and reunite them with their families whenever possible. DYCD also funds specialized programming for runaway and homeless young people who are pregnant and parenting, sexually-exploited, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth. DYCD is committed to providing funding for a variety of services in order that all runaway and homeless young people will have access to the resources they need to get off the streets and stabilize their lives. For more information, visit <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/runaway-homeless-youth.page>.

# Action Plan to End Long-Term Street Homelessness

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New York City has made important progress by implementing a comprehensive approach, with more than 2,450 New Yorkers who were living on the streets helped onto a pathway to stability and a better life, thanks to our dedicated outreach teams.

There is so much more to do. Our City cannot accept that thousands of New Yorkers sleep on the streets every night. Our City cannot accept a status quo that lets our neighbors live unsheltered. In our time, we must take action to reflect our values and become a City that can end this crisis—and our City will not rest until we transform that day-to-day reality for our fellow New Yorkers.

To take our progress further, we are giving our outreach teams new tools.



The Kelly, a Safe Haven in Harlem, offers 60 beds and comprehensive, on-site case management, psychiatric care, and housing placement for men and women with mental health illnesses.



## Increase Safe Haven Capacity

### ✓ Open 1,000 new Safe Haven beds

- To reach our goal, we are committing new transitional housing resources to address the specific needs of unsheltered New Yorkers. In the coming years, we will open 1000 new Safe Haven beds, in partnership with communities across the five boroughs, including with the support of the faith-based community, building on the progress we have already made. This Administration has more than tripled the number of Safe Haven and stabilization beds citywide since 2014, bringing the total up from 600 to more than 1800 today, with hundreds more set to open in the coming years. The new beds announced today will increase the citywide total to 2800 low-barrier transitional beds dedicated to serving unsheltered individuals.
- Safe Havens provide an immediate alternative transitional housing resource with flexible program requirements and robust case management services, which outreach teams have found are more effective than traditional shelter for helping unsheltered homeless individuals stabilize their lives.<sup>7</sup>
- Safe Havens are low-barrier programs targeted towards supporting unsheltered homeless individuals, many of whom may be resistant to accepting services.
- Safe Havens provide transitional settings and specialized services where New Yorkers in need can get back on the path to stability and prepare for permanent housing.
- At times, homeless outreach teams may also seek to use single-room occupancy (SRO)-type rooms as overnight capacity to ensure unsheltered New Yorkers who are ready to accept limited services have a place to sleep and continue their engagement, with the goal of encouraging a more effective transition off the streets.
- While the City develops more Safe Haven capacity, authorizing increased use of these locations will give outreach teams greater flexibility to offer more options to clients.



## Call to action!

**Who:** Faith, community, and business leaders, property owners, nonprofit providers.

**What:** Help us identify and open locations for new not-for-profit operated Safe Havens.

<sup>7</sup> To watch a video about how Safe Havens provide those experiencing street homelessness with the services and settings they need to get back on their feet, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmkcTT54FXY>.

## Journeys Off the Street



### Client Story: MS

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Here's the story of MS, whose experience represents so many of the challenges faced by unsheltered New Yorkers and the outreach teams working hard to serve and support them. MS is a former DHS/HOME-STAT client helped off the streets and into transitional and then permanent housing

by HOME-STAT outreach teams. Those teams worked closely with MS for a long time, getting to know him and understand the factors that contributed to his homelessness. Despite the barriers he faced expressing himself, they built a trusting relationship that ultimately resulted in him accepting services. This victory was achieved when the outreach teams took a 'village' approach and got various people in his support network involved in the process of reaching out to provide a helping hand, including his childhood friends, hospital staff he'd befriended over the years, and others. His story exemplifies the work HOME-STAT outreach teams do every day: getting to know each homeless New Yorker, meeting them where they are, and providing them with support on their path back to stability. MS is one of the more than 2,450 New Yorkers who've voluntarily accepted services, transitioned off the streets, and gotten back on the path to stability.

**Watch his story, *The Road: A Turning the Tide Story***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBocRobN2ds>



## Call to action!

### Who:

Faith, community, and business leaders, property owners, nonprofit providers.

**What:** Help the City identify and acquire properties for low-barrier permanent housing and ensure community partners are aware of our search for vacant units.



## Create Paths to New Permanent Housing

### ✓ Create 1,000 low-barrier permanent apartments for New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness

- Our systems must match the needs of unsheltered New Yorkers—and for many New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness there is no solution except immediate housing. DSS will develop a harm-reduction housing first model that includes intensive wrap-around medical and mental health services, managed by non-profits. We look forward to working with partners across the housing and social services sectors to develop this approach.

### ✓ Announce *Property Pathways Request For Expression of Interest (RFEI)* with The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

- This initiative works to identify privately-owned properties throughout the City with a large share of vacancies that can be converted into safe, secure permanent housing. These new apartments could be immediately occupied by eligible households, including some who are formerly unsheltered individuals.

### ✓ Connect unsheltered individuals directly with rental assistance

- We are making it clear that a shelter stay is not a requirement for unsheltered individuals working with outreach teams to qualify for rental assistance.
- HOME-STAT outreach teams will be able to use rental assistance to directly connect long-term unsheltered individuals to housing.
- For unsheltered individuals seeking to utilize rental assistance, the City will work to expedite rehousing placements.

### ✓ Enhance supportive housing placement processes, streamline utilization

- This Administration has awarded thousands of units of supportive housing through the City's 15/15 initiative. Through NY/NY 15, New York City committed to developing 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next 15 years.
- By engaging provider partners and other stakeholders in a supportive housing taskforce, we will redouble our efforts to identify and improve our use of supportive housing units.
- The NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) will enhance the supportive housing placement process, including through the launch of a new eligibility and tracking database system during 2020.
- Helping individuals who have stabilized their lives and no longer need supportive services to transition and move on to more appropriate permanent housing will enable us to connect New Yorkers most in need to this valuable resource.



**While some health problems precede and contribute to homelessness, some are consequences of being homeless, as homelessness complicates the treatment of many illnesses.**



## **Deliver new health resources to people where they are, providing treatment through street medical care and behavioral health care, and building the trust needed for clients to come inside**

### **✓ Expand Street Medical Program to all 5 boroughs**

- Currently, our outreach providers' Street Medicine program operates in Manhattan and parts of Brooklyn and Queens—we will expand the Street Medicine approach to all five boroughs, ensuring providers have dedicated medical units they can deploy to provide rapid response care on the streets and in the subways.
- This expansion means that anyone living on the streets or in the subways can access medical care in the environment in which they are most comfortable—a crucial tool for building trust and bringing people inside, as well as solving critical medical problems.

### **✓ Ensure unsheltered New Yorkers with the most serious mental health challenges are closely connected to care through more effective approaches to provide behavioral health services**

- We will ensure people experiencing street homelessness with serious mental health needs are referred to care coordination or engaged by mobile treatment teams, which bring ongoing clinical care to people where they are. Thrive-supported mobile treatment teams provide psychosocial and psychiatric assessment, medication management, care coordination, peer support, and housing placement assistance. Additionally, teams offer specialized treatment interventions for trauma and substance use—including referrals to medication assisted treatment—and take a harm reduction approach.
- Stemming from the work of the NYC Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force, we have expanded crisis prevention and response services for New Yorkers with serious mental health needs citywide, coordinated by the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC. New Health Engagement and Assessment Teams (HEAT) will proactively engage people and connect them to support to prevent crises and additional Mobile Crisis Teams—composed of clinicians, case managers, and peers—will be added to ensure more rapid response time to urgent situations.
- The City is also expanding the number of Co-Response Teams citywide. These are comprised of two police officers and a mental health clinician, coordinated with ThriveNYC, who intervene before and after crises, connecting people to care and other stabilizing support such as housing, benefits, or family. And in two high-needs precincts, Co-Response Teams will assist in the response to 911 mental health emergency calls—the first time mental health professionals will be part of the City's response to 911.

- And in 2020, the DOHMH will open two Support and Connection Centers (formerly known as Diversion Centers) that will serve people referred by the NYPD who need support and services for mental illness, substance use and health and social issues. The Centers will provide behavioral health assessments, medication, and medically-supervised substance use stabilization and withdrawal management, among other services.

✓ **Coordinated care through our public hospital system**

- NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) is the largest municipal health care system in the world, providing a comprehensive spectrum of services including emergency services, acute inpatient, ambulatory services for mental health and substance use disorders, and community and outreach-based services.
- Bellevue is the largest of the H+H facilities, providing a full continuum of services for mental health disorders as well as substance use disorders. As a Comprehensive Psychiatry Emergency Program (CPEP), it includes an emergency room with extended observation capacity and mobile crisis services, as well as mental health and substance use disorder clinics with both methadone and buprenorphine opioid treatment programs.
- Recognizing this significant suite of supports H+H can offer and build on efforts engaging and supporting our long-term unsheltered clients with the highest, often overlapping needs, DHS is coordinating directly with H+H to develop targeted service plans, person-by-person, based on each individual’s unique circumstances.

✓ **More qualified medical and mental health professionals on hand**

- To build on their new, more compassionate approach to street homeless outreach and achieve the most robust and supportive response, the NYPD Homeless Outreach Unit is hiring additional nurses to guarantee they can also access on-street evaluative resources, as announced in August 2019.
- This will ensure NYPD officers who specifically conduct outreach operations or who may happen to encounter and engage unsheltered New Yorkers in their daily patrols can provide medical care and mental health assistance as needed.



## Deliver 24/7 Multi-Agency Outreach Response

### ✓ Street Homelessness Joint Command Center

- DHS and NYPD lead a 24/7/365 Street Homelessness Joint Command Center that conducts interagency rapid outreach deployment from a central location using precision mapping, client information, and rapid response to incoming notifications.
- To address the most challenging cases of unsheltered homelessness involving high-needs clients—who often face the most significant, overlapping needs, including mental health and substance misuse—the Joint Command Center develops tailored interventions on a case-by-case basis to work towards a breakthrough to encourage these individuals to finally accept services and transition off the streets and out of the subways. Individual plans are created in close collaboration with partners including DOHMH, H+H, FDNY Emergency Medical Services, and contracted outreach providers.

### ✓ Proactive action plans to provide assistance and address conditions

- We are bringing the power of interagency collaboration to bear to analyze trends and data from 311 and OutreachNYC, more effectively identifying opportunities for proactive joint operations, including to offer assistance to those in need and in partnership with Parks, the Department of Buildings (DOB), and DSNY to address street homeless conditions as they arise.





## Call to action!

### #OutreachNYC

It can take a village of support to make the connection or the breakthrough that encourages someone to finally accept services and come indoors. Individuals on the streets are someone's father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife or loved one, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, cousin, friend or neighbor. That's why we're calling on all New Yorkers to help our homeless neighbors to make the journey home.

**City Employees:** #OutreachNYC is a new, citywide, multi-agency effort to help homeless New Yorkers across all five boroughs, through which 18,000 frontline City Agency employees are being trained to participate in ongoing, round-the-clock HOME-STAT homeless outreach by submitting 311 Service Requests for outreach assistance in real time when they see someone in need. Their goal is to help more unsheltered New Yorkers transition off the streets and subways into transitional and permanent settings.

**Family and Friends:** Family and friends of New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness are now able to submit reports for those relatives and friends through 311, and those reports will be routed directly to the DHS for triage and coordinated action. The expansion is being accompanied by a citywide social media ad campaign launched in December urging family and friends of individuals experiencing street homelessness to help us bring their family member or friend home during the holiday season.





## Leverage State-of-the-Art Outreach Technology

### ✓ Enhancing StreetSmart, the first case management and reporting application for unsheltered individuals of its kind nationwide

- This pioneering digital solution, which uses the most up-to-date open source technology, provides frontline HOME-STAT teams across the five boroughs access to a unified and intuitive case management system. Upcoming enhancements that will be part of StreetSmart will enable multi-disciplinary teams—comprised of case workers, clinicians, and analysts—to continue using this comprehensive technology for tracking client and case details; documenting progress on engagements and outreach efforts with specific groups of clients; and providing social services in real time.
- It is critical that outreach teams are able to identify the needs of individual clients in order to provide services most effectively. The enhanced solution will not only support these teams in helping New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness, it will also provide them with a mechanism to track outcomes after clients have accepted services and come indoors to a transitional or permanent setting.
- StreetSmart also functions as the technological infrastructure for outreach providers to interface with the comprehensive By-Name list that they build and maintain together in real time, enabling them to seamlessly engage clients, wherever they are encountered in New York City. The By-Name list includes historical and latest details about the engagements that have occurred, paired with the most up-to-date service needs of the client—regardless of which provider most recently engaged them.



## Call to action!

**Who:** Tech and business leaders.

**What:** We must create an approach to HOME-STAT that is both user-centered and focused on expediting help for individuals who are experiencing street homelessness. The City welcomes the expertise and resources of programmers and product managers to leverage critical tech tools, and optimize analytics.

## Journeys Off the Street



### Client Story: KD

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In 2014, KD was living in a room in Bushwick when disputes with his landlord escalated to the point when he lost his home and ended up on the streets. KD refused to come into shelter, instead relying on a loose network of City and non-profit services for assistance when he needed it. As KD suffers from mental health and substance use challenges, his time on the street was marked by difficult stretches, including being struck by a truck which left him permanently reliant on a cane.

KD met a Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC) transit homeless outreach team in 34<sup>th</sup> St. Penn Station in October of 2018. A few weeks later, KD came to the BRC Transit Homeless Outreach office to discuss services, and he was put on BRC's caseload.

Over several months, through consistent engagement, BRC was able to move KD into a Safe Haven in May of 2019. Inside, KD was able to focus not on survival, but on finding his own space and moving to permanent housing. With the support of the staff, he was able to gather essential documents and complete a housing application. Soon, he was found eligible for a City housing voucher and was able to move into his own apartment. The persistent and coordinated efforts of the BRC outreach teams guided KD from sleeping on the streets and subways to living stably inside.



## Expand Diversion and Outreach in Our Subway System

### ✓ Expanding Subway Diversion across the entire subway system to prevent unnecessary criminal justice involvement

- Working in close partnership with the MTA and New York City Transit (NYCT), the NYPD and DHS are expanding the Subway Diversion Initiative underground across Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens, enhancing Police Officers' approach to engaging and offering services to unsheltered New Yorkers in the subway, with a focus on diverting individuals from the criminal justice system toward outreach services and supportive programs.
- Participants who opt into the program complete an assessment with an outreach team, receive a referral to shelter and/or other services, and have their summonses cleared, ultimately diverting them toward shelter and away from unnecessary formal court processes.

### ✓ Enhanced overnight end-of-line engagement and rush hour outreach

- At the same time, HOME-STAT outreach teams will expand overnight subway outreach in end-of-the-line stations with assistance from the NYPD as well as the MTA and NYCT, strategically deploying coordinated canvassing across 10 high-activity end-of-line subway stations, and will also increase subway outreach during rush hour at key stations—to engage homeless individuals and help them come out of the subways and accept services.



## Journeys Off the Street



### Client Story: IA

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Since 2014, IA had been deeply entrenched living on the streets in the Bronx. She was resistant to all services offered to her by BronxWorks outreach staff who engaged her frequently. IA has severe mental health needs, and often yelled at outreach workers when they attempted to engage her. She is very guarded about personal information, but she has reported that she was a Naval Reservist for some time. She is well known and cared about by her surrounding community, who worried about her health and well-being, especially during the winter. IA refused placement even in the worst weather.

On October 20, 2019 she was admitted to Jacobi Hospital for chest pains, which opened a window for the outreach team to begin to build trust with IA. By November, IA agreed to be placed in a Safe Haven—after almost six years of being on the street. Since then, she has been inside every day, and is beginning to work with staff on the process of moving into a permanent housing placement.



# How You Can Help

## All New Yorkers

People who are living on the street are our neighbors: it is our collective responsibility to treat them with dignity and learn how we might support them.

- If you see someone who you believe to be experiencing unsheltered homelessness, report it to 311 and request outreach assistance.
- Family and friends can play crucial roles in helping someone come off the streets. Family and friends of New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness are now able to submit reports for those relatives and friends through 311, and those reports will be routed directly to the Street Homelessness Joint Command Center for triage and coordinated action.
- Help reduce stigma around homelessness: learn about homelessness and the City’s ongoing efforts to help New Yorkers move inside and into permanent housing.<sup>8</sup> If you hear negative stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness, speak up with facts and compassion.
- Faith leaders are strong messengers to engage communities about the importance of supporting our homeless neighbors. We encourage congregational conversations and engagement around this issue and the City is reaching out to faith leaders for volunteers to engage in this plan.
- If you are interested in volunteering, please visit <https://www.nycservice.org/search/#s> and search by interest using the category “Homelessness and Housing.”
- Sign up at [nyc.gov/HOPE](http://nyc.gov/HOPE) for the January 27, 2020 HOPE Survey, our annual point-in-time survey of New Yorkers sleeping unsheltered on the streets, which provides HOME-STAT outreach teams with valuable information they use in their year-round efforts to ensure they are meeting New Yorkers’ needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Read about the City’s plan, *Turning the Tide on Homelessness* at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/turning-the-tide-on-homelessness.pdf>.



# How You Can Help

## Faith, Community, and Business Leaders

Faith and community leaders, businesses, philanthropy, and the provider community can all be of great help.

- In order to open 1,000 new Safe Haven beds and 1,000 new low-barrier permanent apartments, help us identify, acquire, and open new locations that will be operated by not-for-profit social service providers. If you would like to recommend a location, please do so online at [nyc.gov/DHS/suggestions](https://nyc.gov/DHS/suggestions) or email us at [intergov@dss.nyc.gov](mailto:intergov@dss.nyc.gov).
- DHS works closely with faith communities to support people experiencing homelessness. We welcome partnerships to identify buildings appropriate for Safe Haven or low-barrier permanent housing beds, or to discuss other opportunities for collaboration and community service.
- Shelter remains the most appropriate next setting for many people who are experiencing homelessness, as close as possible to the anchors of their daily life, close to schools, employment, health care, houses of worship or support networks of family and friends. These are exactly the kinds of social supports and connections to community that can help families and individuals stabilize their lives after losing their homes, which can in turn help them move out of shelter more quickly. Please join us at the table to support our shelter-siting process and support our homeless neighbors.



DHS welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the business community and tech sector to serve the needs of homeless clients, whether through partnerships or in-kind donations. To discuss such opportunities, please submit an inquiry at [nyc.gov/DHS/suggestions](https://nyc.gov/DHS/suggestions) or email us at [intergov@dss.nyc.gov](mailto:intergov@dss.nyc.gov).

And we welcome other ideas from every community!



### Client Story: K

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Client K was sleeping on the streets in East Harlem in the fall of 2015 when the Manhattan Outreach Consortium (MOC) outreach staff first met her. She was in her late 50s, and had a long history of trauma and street homelessness. She was willing to engage with the team, and she was added to the caseload and began to meet with her case manager. Through the MOC team psychiatrist, K was diagnosed with Bipolar I Disorder, PTSD, and Alcohol Dependence. By December, she accepted placement at a women's shelter where she was connected with on-site psychiatric care which helped her reduce her substance use, reconnect with her family, and place her in an in-patient rehabilitation program.

All of this positive momentum was cut short by a sudden death in K's family. That loss led K to a substance use relapse and began a traumatic cycle of street homelessness, incarceration, and detox. Her MOC outreach team during this time of turmoil actively stayed in touch with K, leading her to come inside to a Safe Haven in February 2017. The ongoing support of her outreach worker and the staff at the Safe Haven led to K stabilizing her life, working on her sobriety, and mental and physical health needs. In the Safe Haven, K prioritized her goals of employment and housing, ultimately leading her to find permanent supportive housing in April of 2018.

While the transition to permanency was not without its difficulties, K was provided continuous support by her outreach team along with the guidance of supportive housing staff. K continues to be stably housed and working towards her goals.



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