

INTRODUCTION TO THE SHELTER REPAIR SCORECARD

As part of the effort to improve conditions in homeless shelters, Mayor Bill de Blasio created the Shelter Repair Scorecard to publicly report on the conditions of homeless shelter facilities and track progress made by the expanded repair program to address sub-standard conditions. Data shows that increased inspections have been finding more violations than ever before, and that City and shelter providers have cleared more than 26,000 violations over the last two years.

“We are determined to give every family and individual in a homeless shelter decent living conditions. We have been increasing inspections to identify problems, and we now have a scorecard to track our progress in addressing them. Many of these violations are long-standing problems stemming from a lack of funding. We are increasing our repair work for all shelters and have increased our funding for not-for-profit shelter providers. We won’t rest until every shelter meets standards,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

The new 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.**
- The 357 non-cluster city homeless shelters had 6,983 open violations at the end of 2015, before the new Shelter Repair Squad 2.0 began work.
- Of these 357 shelters, 190 sites had ten or fewer violations, 92 of those sites had five or less.
- The 265 cluster shelters, which house only 20 percent of the total shelter population, had 14,418 violations, or 70 percent of the total.
- 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.

Last month, the Administration 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.

The City has substantially increased its inspections of shelters and its identification of problems. Some examples include the following:

- In 2015, as a result of the 8,665 inspections completed by the Departments of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD); Buildings (DOB); Health and Mental Health (DOHMH); and the Fire Department (FDNY), 17,312 violations were identified. That is 47 percent more than the 11,785 violations identified in 2013.
- The Fire Department alone issued 730 violations in 2015, more than double the 355 violations issued in 2013.
- 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.
- Identifying more violations has resulted in more being fixed. Looking at just HPD violations, the City shelter providers and building owners cleared more than 14,000 violations in 2015, up from more than 12,000 cleared in 2014 and fewer than 10,000 in 2013.

The City is already at work fixing violations and will work with shelter providers to resolve the remaining violations.

- The Shelter Repair Squad 1.0 cleared 12,000 violations after it was created in May 2015.
- Since it started on January 1, 2016, the Shelter Repair Squad 2.0 has been inspecting and clearing conditions, and that work will continue with teams from HPD, HRA and DHS focused on clearing conditions in non-cluster shelters.
- 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 reviewing 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 up until now.
- The City is also developing a plan for repairing City-owned shelter buildings.

The City also 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.

As noted, the City has already met with providers and committed to improving funding for maintenance and repairs beyond the increases already in the budget.

“This new initiative 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 Commissioner Steven Banks**.

“It’s impossible to fix problems and ensure proper maintenance if you don’t identify and track the problems. That’s why the City will rigorously inspect shelters and make sure they meet all the relevant standards. Where we find problems, we will work with the shelter providers and landlords to fix them, and we will hold those who refuse to fix problems, or who cannot manage the buildings appropriately, accountable,” said **Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Vicki Been**.

“We will hold all shelters to a high standard, including our own. The City is setting an example by putting in place a plan for each shelter building it owns,” said **the Mayor’s Office of Operations Director Mindy Tarlow**. “We will ensure this process is transparent, and that the City will record progress through our Shelter Repair Scorecard.”

The new 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 December 31, 2015. 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.

The Shelter Repair Scorecard starts with data as of December 31, 2015. The information will be updated monthly. 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 and 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.