

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

Steven Banks, Commissioner
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WHAT WE DO

The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) works to prevent homelessness before it occurs, address unsheltered homelessness, and assist homeless New Yorkers in transitioning from shelter and the street to permanent housing. DHS collaborates with not-for-profit partners to provide temporary shelter and services that New Yorkers experiencing homelessness need to achieve and maintain housing permanency. In February 2017, Mayor de Blasio released a comprehensive plan to turn the tide on homelessness, neighborhood by neighborhood; followed by “The Journey Home” in December 2019, an action plan to end long-term street homelessness.

FOCUS ON EQUITY

In New York City and throughout the United States, homelessness is driven by income and racial inequities, lack of affordable and supportive housing and stagnant wages combined with social factors, including domestic violence, de-institutionalization of persons who have mental illness without sufficient community-based services and discharges from a range of institutions. DHS addresses homelessness by connecting New Yorkers to preventive services that help them remain in their homes and, when prevention is not an option, by providing safe and appropriate transitional shelter, services to unsheltered New Yorkers, and placement into permanent subsidized and supportive housing. In partnership with the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and other agencies, DHS provides access to targeted rental assistance to help eligible families and individuals avoid or exit shelter.

In Fiscal 2016 Mayor de Blasio announced a comprehensive plan to reform the delivery of homeless services in New York City. “Turning the Tide,” a report issued in February 2017, laid out a blueprint for moving forward with the reforms, providing borough-based services and shrinking the footprint of the shelter system by closing 360 facilities, including eliminating the 21-year old “cluster” apartment program.

In December 2019, DHS announced “The Journey Home,” an action plan to end long-term street homelessness with enhanced efforts around new permanent housing, and safe havens, outreach, and cross-agency collaborative interventions to bring these solutions to those New Yorkers who have been the hardest to reach.

People of color, particularly African-Americans, are over-represented among those who are experiencing homelessness, both in New York City and throughout the country. Poverty is a strong predictor of homelessness; and Black families and individuals are more likely to experience poverty, especially deep poverty, than their White counterparts. Higher incarceration rates, especially for Black men, are also linked to increased risk of homelessness. Mayor de Blasio’s investment in services that strengthen communities; services in shelter that provide people with tools to move out of poverty; and the development of stable permanent housing and rental assistance programs provide a foundation to counteract these historic inequities.

OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

SERVICE 1 Provide temporary emergency housing to homeless individuals and families.

- Goal 1a Ensure that individuals and families have access to emergency shelter and are immediately connected to appropriate mainstream resources.
 - Goal 1b Ensure that all temporary shelters for homeless individuals and families are clean, safe and well-run.
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SERVICE 2 Coordinate and/or provide support services to help individuals and families who are homeless exit shelter as quickly as possible.

- Goal 2a Facilitate exits and minimize clients' length of stay in shelters.
 - Goal 2b Minimize re-entries into the shelter services system.
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SERVICE 3 Help chronically unsheltered homeless individuals find stable, safe living situations.

- Goal 3a Reduce the number of unsheltered homeless individuals.

HOW WE PERFORMED IN FISCAL 2021

SERVICE 1 Provide temporary emergency housing to homeless individuals and families.

Goal 1a

Ensure that individuals and families have access to emergency shelter and are immediately connected to appropriate mainstream resources.

In Fiscal 2021, the average number of adult families and families with children in shelter per day declined by 19.2 percent and 16.2 percent respectively compared to the prior year, driven primarily by fewer entrants to shelter and continuing exits to permanent housing despite the pandemic. Adult families and families with children entering DHS shelter decreased by 52.8 percent and 39.5 percent, respectively. DHS has made progress reducing the number of families experiencing homelessness and residing in shelter on any given night, with the peak number of individuals in those families declining by over 10,000 between 2014 and 2021. The decline of families in shelter began prior to the pandemic and can be attributed, in part, to several factors: the increase in legal services funding over the last few years; an increase in payments for rent arrears and a resultant decline in evictions; and increases in subsidized housing placements since the inception of the City's rental assistance and rehousing programs in 2014. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was correlated with a further decline in family shelter entries, as evictions were suspended, some families may have sheltered in place, and exits to subsidized housing continued.

The average number of single adults in shelter per day increased by 6.8 percent over the previous period. While the number of new single adult entrants declined, the average length of stay continued to increase, contributing to the census growth. Compounding the lack of affordable and supportive housing, COVID-19 public health measures made it especially challenging to place single adults into permanent housing. DHS continues to focus on addressing the housing and services needs of those longest in shelter, including through targeted interventions for elderly clients and clients with disabilities.

In Fiscal 2021, 57.6 percent of families with children entering shelter received an initial placement according to the youngest school-aged child's school address, a 2.3 percentage point increase compared to Fiscal 2020. In Fiscal 2021, 75.4 percent of families with children in shelter resided in an ongoing shelter placement in the borough of their youngest child's school.

All families with children in shelter have access to dedicated licensed social workers who conduct behavioral health assessments, developmental screenings for children, and provide services to help address barriers to permanent housing. These clinicians served 80 percent of families in shelter in Fiscal 2021, essentially the same as in Fiscal 2020.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
★ ● Average number of adult families in shelters per day	2,461	2,475	2,510	2,455	1,983	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ ● Average number of families with children in shelters per day	12,818	12,619	12,415	11,719	9,823	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ ● Average number of single adults in shelters per day	13,626	14,847	16,094	16,866	18,012	↓	↓	Up	Down
★ Adult families entering the DHS shelter services system	1,583	1,469	1,433	1,118	528	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ Families with children entering the DHS shelter services system	12,595	12,151	11,965	10,087	6,107	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ Single adults entering the DHS shelter services system	19,800	21,177	21,122	20,296	18,127	↓	↓	Neutral	Down
Families with children receiving public assistance (average) (%)	81.5%	80.9%	80.3%	80.9%	84.7%	85.0%	85.0%	Neutral	*
Average school attendance rate for children in the DHS shelter services system (%)	82.7%	82.3%	83.9%	85.0%	NA	*	*	NA	Up
Families initially placed in shelter in the borough of their youngest school-aged child's school address (%)	48.9%	49.8%	52.9%	55.4%	57.6%	85.0%	85.0%	Up	Up
Families living in shelter who received biopsychosocial screenings from mental health clinicians (%)	NA	36%	66%	79%	80%	80%	80%	NA	Up
Families in shelter living in the borough of their youngest child's school (%)	NA	NA	73.1%	76.1%	75.4%	*	*	NA	Up

★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ↑↓ Directional Target * None

Goal 1b

Ensure that all temporary shelters for homeless individuals and families are clean, safe and well-run.

The rate of serious incidents increased in all three systems, driven almost entirely by health-related categories. COVID-related incidents, including quarantining of both staff and clients for contagious diseases, accounted for more than a quarter of the overall increase in serious incidents. Additionally, the Agency's Serious Incident Unit (SIU), a centralized unit for all incident reporting that operates 24 hours a day, year-round, continued its new quality assurance review process and staff were retrained during the fiscal year, resulting in more accurate reporting and tracking.

There were increases in the average daily cost of shelter for single adult and adult family shelter. Despite a decline in the nightly cost of commercial hotel rooms used for shelter, the increase of 5.4 percent in the cost of adult shelter was primarily due to the use of several thousand additional commercial hotel rooms, beginning in April 2020, in order to de-densify congregate shelters and prevent the spread of COVID-19. For both single adults and adult families the continuing replacement of older, low quality facilities with new, borough-based programs also contributed to the increase. Family with Children shelter rates declined by four percent due to a combination of the lower nightly cost of commercial hotels and fewer numbers of families in these facilities as more families were placed in the new borough-based shelters.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
★ Adult shelter inspections with safety, maintenance or cleanliness deficiencies per 1,000 beds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	*	*	Neutral	*
★ Serious incidents in the adult shelter system, per 1,000 residents	NA	NA	20.6	26.6	38.1	↓	↓	NA	Down
Serious violent incidents in the adult shelter system, per 1,000 residents	1.6	1.6	2.0	2.2	2.5	*	*	Up	Down
★ Serious incidents in the adult family shelter system, per 1,000 residents	NA	NA	10.5	13.8	16.3	↓	↓	NA	Down
Serious violent incidents in the adult family shelter system, per 1,000 residents	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.0	*	*	Down	Down
★ Serious incidents in the families with children shelter system, per 1,000 residents	NA	NA	5.6	7.6	11.5	↓	↓	NA	Down
Serious violent incidents in the families with children shelter system, per 1,000 residents	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.0	*	*	Up	Down
Cost per day for shelter facilities - Single adult facilities (\$) (annual)	\$99.46	\$117.43	\$124.38	\$130.63	\$137.74	*	*	Up	*
Cost per day for shelter facilities - Family facilities (\$) (annual)	\$167.84	\$187.46	\$196.23	\$198.67	\$191.36	*	*	Up	*
– Adult families	\$138.13	\$147.49	\$158.71	\$171.40	\$172.99	*	*	Up	*
– Families with children	\$171.21	\$192.10	\$201.60	\$202.69	\$193.76	*	*	Up	*
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ↑↓ Directional Target * None									

SERVICE 2 Coordinate and/or provide support services to help individuals and families who are homeless exit shelter as quickly as possible.

Goal 2a

Facilitate exits and minimize clients' length of stay in shelters.

Homeless clients continue to be placed into permanent, stable housing through a variety of City and federally funded rental assistance programs and prior to the pandemic, exits to permanent housing were increasing for all populations. However, efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19, which encouraged New Yorkers, including landlords and brokers, to remain inside as much as possible, resulted in a sharp decline in apartment showings before DHS shifted to virtual showings. Placements to permanent housing for single adults and families with children declined in Fiscal 2021 compared to Fiscal 2020 as a result. Single adult exits to permanent housing decreased by 17.2 percent and families with children exits to permanent housing decreased by 10.1 percent compared to Fiscal 2020. Adult family exits to permanent housing increased by 6.7 percent compared to Fiscal 2020. DHS staff continued to assist clients in finding and moving into permanent housing during the pandemic to the extent possible and, in accordance with City safety guidance, have added remote alternatives to the normally in-person housing search process. Average length of stay increased for all populations. While there were fewer entrants to shelter compared to the prior period, this led to fewer families and individuals with short-term stays and resulted in an increased proportion of the population with long-term stays in shelter.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
Single adults exiting to permanent housing	8,043	8,593	8,912	7,890	6,535	*	*	Down	Up
– subsidized	3,633	4,157	5,001	4,824	4,601	*	*	Up	Up
– unsubsidized	4,410	4,436	3,911	3,066	1,934	*	*	Down	Up
Adult families exiting to permanent housing	570	513	543	465	496	*	*	Down	Up
– subsidized	313	331	439	379	393	*	*	Up	Up
– unsubsidized	257	182	104	86	103	*	*	Down	Up
Families with children exiting to permanent housing	8,571	8,933	9,137	7,992	7,186	*	*	Down	Up
– subsidized	5,421	6,446	6,872	6,142	5,642	*	*	Neutral	Up
– unsubsidized	3,150	2,487	2,265	1,850	1,544	*	*	Down	Up
★ Average length of stay for single adults in shelter (days)	383	401	414	431	476	↓	↓	Up	Down
★ Average length of stay for adult families in shelter (days)	550	561	580	630	773	↓	↓	Up	Down
★ Average length of stay for families with children in shelter (days)	414	438	446	443	520	↓	↓	Up	Down
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator “NA” Not Available ↑↓ Directional Target * None									

Goal 2b Minimize re-entries into the shelter services system.

The overall rate of clients who have returned to shelter within one year continued to decline for all populations: by 2.4 percentage points for single adults, 0.4 percentage points for adult families and 1.5 percentage points for families with children. This continues a trend of dramatic declines in overall return rates that began in 2015 with the implementation of new rental assistance programs, expansion of supportive housing development and enhanced access to Section 8 and NYCHA housing for shelter clients since the beginning of the Administration.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
★ Single adults who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	18.3%	17.5%	17.3%	14.2%	11.8%	20.0%	20.0%	Down	Down
★ – subsidized exits (%)	7.9%	6.9%	6.5%	5.8%	5.6%	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ – unsubsidized exits (%)	26.3%	26.3%	27.2%	24.8%	21.7%	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ Adult families who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	11.5%	8.0%	5.6%	1.7%	1.3%	12.5%	12.5%	Down	Down
★ – subsidized exits (%)	0.6%	1.4%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ – unsubsidized exits (%)	21.6%	16.0%	13.2%	7.7%	3.6%	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ Families with children who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	8.1%	8.3%	7.0%	5.6%	4.1%	12.5%	12.5%	Down	Down
★ – subsidized exits (%)	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	1.0%	0.5%	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ – unsubsidized exits (%)	20.9%	20.4%	21.6%	19.5%	15.6%	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator “NA” Not Available ↑↓ Directional Target * None									

SERVICE 3 Help chronically unsheltered homeless individuals find stable, safe living situations.

Goal 3a Reduce the number of unsheltered homeless individuals.

The annual Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) street homeless survey was conducted from January 26 to January 29, 2021. The Fiscal 2021 HOPE survey was conducted amid a global pandemic requiring changes to the methodology, including expanding the survey to take place over four nights, to maintain health and safety. The survey found 2,376 unsheltered individuals, a decrease of 38.4 percent compared to Fiscal 2020, and 45.9 percent fewer than the 4,395 in the first survey in Fiscal 2005. The survey also found that the number of unsheltered individuals in the subways declined by 23.4 percent. In addition, to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and the related MTA overnight shutdown, the City increased efforts to engage individuals in shelter services, particularly at End of Line subway stations and opened more than 1,300 specialized beds to serve unsheltered individuals.

Through an unprecedented investment to enhance the work of street outreach programs, significant progress has been made in placing individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness into housing. In Fiscal 2021, HOME-STAT outreach workers referred 5,454 clients to placements in permanent housing, transitional programs, and other stable settings, nearly doubling the number of clients referred prior to Fiscal 2020. Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, 24/7 outreach efforts have continued—with outreach teams extending a helping hand to New Yorkers experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the streets and in the subways around the clock. The End of Line (EOL) initiative during the MTA overnight shutdown contributed to the large increase in referrals compared to 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The EOL initiative was created to help unsheltered individuals who would otherwise have been displaced due to nightly subway system-wide closures between 1:00 and 5:00 A.M. in order for the subway system to be cleaned to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
★ Unsheltered individuals who are estimated to be living on the streets, in parks, under highways, on subways, and in the public transportation stations in New York City	3,892	3,675	3,588	3,857	2,376	↓	↓	Down	Down
★ HOME-STAT clients referred to placement into permanent housing, transitional housing and other settings	2,146	2,849	2,753	5,909	5,454	↑	↑	Up	Up
★ Critical Indicator	● Equity Indicator	“NA” Not Available	↑↓ Directional Target	* None					

AGENCY-WIDE MANAGEMENT

In Fiscal 2021, the number of workplace injuries reported decreased by 30.2 percent, from 149 in Fiscal 2020 to 104 in Fiscal 2021. This is due in part to the implementation of a telework policy instituted in March 2020 for many staff, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure continuity of services. Permitting employees in non-direct service sites to work from home has resulted in fewer employees having to report to an agency work site, which contributed to the decrease in workplace injuries as well as collisions involving City vehicles.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
Collisions involving City vehicles	46	41	65	39	15	*	*	Down	Down
Workplace injuries reported	189	198	210	149	104	*	*	Down	Down
★ Critical Indicator	● Equity Indicator	“NA” Not Available	↑↓ Directional Target	* None					

AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

In Fiscal 2021, the rate of letters responded to in 14 days increased by 2.0 percentage points to 100.0 percent compared to Fiscal 2020. DHS and DSS continued the processes implemented in Fiscal 2020, which included a dedicated team to follow up on and send reminder alerts to responsible programs if they have not responded within the required timeframe. Additionally, the DSS correspondence system, Intranet Quorum (IQ), auto generates daily reports with all letters that still have outstanding responses; the reports are monitored daily by DSS managers. This contributed greatly to the increase in the response rate.

Completed requests for interpretation increased by 40.0 percent from 18,660 in Fiscal 2020, to 26,123 in Fiscal 2021. This increase is largely due to DHS giving shelter providers access to Agency interpretation services in Fiscal 2020. The agency also increased training for staff on language access and, due to the pandemic, increased the use of telephonic interpretation services.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Trend	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	5-Year	Desired Direction
Customer Experience									
Completed requests for interpretation	13,357	16,644	15,957	18,660	26,123	*	*	Up	*
Letters responded to in 14 days (%)	NA	82%	88%	98%	100%	*	*	NA	Up
E-mails responded to in 14 days (%)	NA	65%	99%	99%	99%	*	*	NA	Up
Average wait time to speak with a customer service agent (minutes)	6	5	4	50	55	*	*	Up	Down
CORE facility rating	92	100	NA	94	100	*	*	NA	Up
★ Critical Indicator ● Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ↑↓ Directional Target * None									

AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual ¹					Plan ²		5yr Trend
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21	FY22	
Expenditures (\$000,000) ³	\$1,823.7	\$2,146.0	\$2,184.1	\$2,369.2	\$2,881.4	\$2,393.9	\$2,211.0	Up
Personnel	2,349	2,370	2,319	2,119	2,005	2,049	2,417	Down
Overtime paid (\$000,000)	\$13.8	\$16.9	\$17.8	\$19.9	\$6.5	\$6.5	\$3.9	Down
Capital commitments (\$000,000)	\$28.5	\$53.1	\$47.0	\$11.0	\$19.7	\$63.1	\$54.6	Down
Human services contract budget (\$000,000)	\$1,468.1	\$1,762.0	\$1,851.5	\$2,029.8	\$2,594.2	\$1,942.6	\$1,880.1	Up
¹ Actual financial amounts for the current fiscal year are not yet final. Final fiscal year actuals, from the Comptroller's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, will be reported in the next PMMR. Refer to the "Indicator Definitions" at nyc.gov/mmr for details. ² Authorized Budget Level ³ Expenditures include all funds "NA" - Not Available * None								

SPENDING AND BUDGET INFORMATION

Where possible, the relationship between an agency's goals and its expenditures and planned resources, by budgetary unit of appropriation (UA), is shown in the 'Applicable MMR Goals' column. Each relationship is not necessarily exhaustive or exclusive. Any one goal may be connected to multiple UAs, and any UA may be connected to multiple goals.

Unit of Appropriation	Expenditures FY20 ¹ (\$000,000)	Modified Budget FY21 ² (\$000,000)	Applicable MMR Goals ³
Personal Services - Total	\$163.6	\$157.6	
100 - Shelter Intake and Program	\$144.8	\$122.6	All
101 - Administration	\$16.9	\$30.5	All
102 - Street Programs	\$1.9	\$4.6	3a
Other Than Personal Services - Total	\$2,205.6	\$2,723.8	All
200 - Shelter Intake and Program	\$2,205.6	\$2,564.7	All
201 - Administration	NA	\$25.3	All
202 - Street Programs	NA	\$133.8	3a
Agency Total	\$2,369.2	\$2,881.4	

¹Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2020. Includes all funds. ²City of New York Adopted Budget for Fiscal 2021, as of June 2021. Includes all funds. ³Refer to agency goals listed at front of chapter. "NA" Not Available * None

NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

- Average school attendance rate for children in the DHS shelter services system for the 2020-21 school year will be reported in the Fiscal 2022 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.
- A change was made to the methodology of counting serious incidents to address situations in which a resident is in possession of a knife, but the knife is not involved in the incident. Beginning in January 2021, any incident where there was a knife present was automatically characterized in the most serious category regardless of whether the knife was used during the incident.
- DHS updated the methodology for capturing the "Average customer in-person wait time (minutes)" and adjusted previously reported figures from Fiscal 2019 through Fiscal 2021. Previously, this indicator measured only the time that it took for a client's case to get transferred to the proper service queue after arriving at PATH. However, once the client's case is transferred to that service queue there is an additional wait time before the client speaks to a customer service agent. This additional time was not captured in the previous methodology. The methodology for fiscal years 2019, 2020, and 2021, the years for which data is available, has been updated to reflect total client wait time from when they arrive at PATH to when they speak to a customer service agent.
- 'Families living in shelter who received biopsychosocial screenings from mental health clinicians (%).'
- Equity NYC indicators are identified with a burst (●). These indicators are also reported in the Social Indicators and Equity Report (SIER) and explore the economic, social, environmental, and physical health of New York City across race/ethnicity, gender, location, and income.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information go to:

- Stats & Reports:
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/about/stats-and-reports.page>
- DHS daily report, including census & intake statistics:
<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>
- Fiscal Year 2016 Comprehensive Homeless Services Plan:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/reports/2016/90-day-homeless-services-review.pdf>
- Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City:
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/about/tide.page>
- The Journey Home Action Plan to End Long-Term Street Homelessness
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/about/journey-home.page>
- The Social Indicators and Equity Report, EquityNYC:
<http://equity.nyc.gov/>

For more information on the agency, please visit: www.nyc.gov/dhs.