

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

Steven Banks, Commissioner
Joslyn Carter, Administrator



WHAT WE DO

The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) works to prevent homelessness before it occurs, address unsheltered homelessness, and assist New Yorkers experiencing homelessness 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 economic 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, including prisons and jails. 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, the Mayor and 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. 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.

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.

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

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

HOW WE PERFORMED

- During the first four months of Fiscal 2021, the average number of families with children and adult families in shelter per day both declined by over 14 percent compared to the same period of Fiscal 2020. The number families with children was trending down pre-COVID-19 due to investments in prevention and rehousing programs, including rental assistance, and the COVID-19 eviction moratorium contributed to further reductions in the family shelter census. At the same time, the average number of single adults in shelters per day rose by 8.8 percent, primarily due to increases in length of stay and fewer housing placements during the COVID-19 pandemic. DHS continues to focus on addressing the housing and service needs of those longest in shelter, including targeted interventions for elderly clients and clients with disabilities.
- In order to minimize health and safety risks during the COVID-19 pandemic, DHS modified placement procedures to reduce the movement of families in shelter. While this led to a decline in the agency's ability to place families according to the youngest school age child's borough at initial placement, DHS continued to ensure that the majority of families in shelter, over 77 percent, reside in the borough of their youngest child's school, an increase of 1.1 percentage points compared to the same period last year.
- With the City's shift to remote learning during the pandemic, school attendance Citywide declined, including among families with children experiencing homelessness. The average school attendance rate for children in the DHS shelter services system declined to 71.4 percent compared to 86.7 percent during the same period last year.
- COVID-19-related incidents, such as clients diagnosed or exposed to COVID-19, continue to be responsible for increases in serious incidents in the single adults and families with children shelter systems during this reporting period compared to the same period in the prior year. In the first four months of Fiscal 2021, serious violent incidents in single adult shelters were essentially flat and decreased in both adult family and families with children shelters compared to the same period in Fiscal 2020.
- Exits to permanent housing decreased for both families with children and single adults, by 13.5 percent and 37.4 percent respectively, while increasing slightly for adult families. While DHS remains committed to finding permanent housing for shelter residents, with New Yorkers at-large encouraged to remain inside as much as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, the housing placement process has been challenging for both providers and shelter residents.
- During the first four months of Fiscal 2021, returns to shelter within one year declined for all populations, with a decline of 2.6 percentage points for single adults, a decline of 2.2 percentage points for adult families, and a decline of 1.6 percentage points for families with children. DHS's success in minimizing re-entries reflects the City's investment in subsidized housing that generates sustained and permanent placements within communities.
- The average length of stay is up across systems, 8.9 percent for single adults, 18.7 percent for adult families, and 12.5 percent for families with children. In addition to shelter-in-place recommendations and the challenges of conducting housing searches during the pandemic, the economic effects of COVID-19, including the resulting lack of employment opportunities also make it difficult for people to leave the shelter system.
- The number of HOME-STAT clients referred to placement into permanent housing, transitional housing, and other settings was 2,053 clients in the first four months of Fiscal 2021, an increase of 48 percent compared to the number placed in the prior period. 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 to placement during the reporting period. The EOL initiative was created to help unsheltered individuals who would otherwise have been displaced due to the unprecedented nightly subway systemwide closures for pandemic-related cleaning.

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.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
★ Average number of adult families in shelters per day	2,475	2,510	2,455	↓	↓	2,508	2,155
★ Average number of families with children in shelters per day	12,619	12,415	11,719	↓	↓	12,083	10,347
★ Average number of single adults in shelters per day	14,847	16,094	16,866	↓	↓	16,309	17,741
★ Adult families entering the DHS shelter services system	1,469	1,433	1,118	↓	↓	460	188
★ Families with children entering the DHS shelter services system	12,151	11,965	10,087	↓	↓	4,404	2,302
★ Single adults entering the DHS shelter services system	21,177	21,122	20,296	↓	↓	7,378	5,881
Families with children receiving public assistance (average) (%)	80.9%	80.3%	80.9%	85.0%	85.0%	79.0%	87.1%
Average school attendance rate for children in the DHS shelter services system (%)	82.3%	83.9%	85.0%	*	*	86.7%	71.4%
Families initially placed in shelter in the borough of their youngest school-aged child's school address (%)	49.8%	52.9%	55.4%	85.0%	85.0%	61.2%	53.9%
Families in shelter living in the borough of their youngest child's school (%)	NA	73.1%	76.1%	*	*	76.2%	77.3%
★ Critical 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.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
★ Adult shelter inspections with safety, maintenance or cleanliness deficiencies per 1,000 beds	0.00	0.00	0.00	*	*	NA	NA
★ Serious incidents in the adult shelter system, per 1,000 residents	NA	20.6	26.6	↓	↓	24.3	30.9
Serious violent incidents in the adult shelter system, per 1,000 residents	1.6	2.0	2.2	*	*	2.1	2.2
★ Serious incidents in the adult family shelter system, per 1,000 residents	NA	10.5	13.8	↓	↓	14.7	12.3
Serious violent incidents in the adult family shelter system, per 1,000 residents	1.6	1.4	1.4	*	*	1.9	1.3
★ Serious incidents in the families with children shelter system, per 1,000 residents	NA	5.6	7.5	↓	↓	7.2	8.5
Serious violent incidents in the families with children shelter system, per 1,000 residents	0.3	0.8	0.9	*	*	1.0	0.9
Cost per day for shelter facilities - Single adult facilities (\$) (annual)	\$117.43	\$124.38	\$130.63	*	*	NA	NA
Cost per day for shelter facilities - Family facilities (\$) (annual)	\$187.46	\$196.23	\$198.67	*	*	NA	NA
- Adult families	\$147.49	\$158.71	\$171.40	*	*	NA	NA
- Families with children	\$192.10	\$201.60	\$202.69	*	*	NA	NA
★ Critical 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.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
Single adults exiting to permanent housing	8,593	8,912	7,890	*	*	3,193	2,000
– subsidized	4,157	5,001	4,824	*	*	1,953	1,300
– unsubsidized	4,436	3,911	3,066	*	*	1,240	700
Adult families exiting to permanent housing	513	543	465	*	*	173	183
– subsidized	331	439	379	*	*	147	137
– unsubsidized	182	104	86	*	*	26	46
Families with children exiting to permanent housing	8,933	9,137	7,992	*	*	2,763	2,389
– subsidized	6,446	6,872	6,142	*	*	2,132	1,756
– unsubsidized	2,487	2,265	1,850	*	*	631	633
★ Average length of stay for single adults in shelter (days)	401	414	431	↓	↓	425	463
★ Average length of stay for adult families in shelter (days)	561	580	630	↓	↓	610	724
★ Average length of stay for families with children in shelter (days)	438	446	443	↓	↓	440	495
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↑↓ Directional Target	* None			

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

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
★ Single adults who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	17.5%	17.3%	14.2%	20.0%	20.0%	15.0%	12.4%
★ – subsidized exits (%)	6.9%	6.5%	5.8%	↓	↓	6.3%	5.9%
★ – unsubsidized exits (%)	26.3%	27.2%	24.8%	↓	↓	24.4%	22.9%
★ Adult families who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	8.0%	5.6%	1.7%	12.5%	12.5%	2.7%	0.5%
★ – subsidized exits (%)	1.4%	1.0%	0.0%	↓	↓	0.0%	0.6%
★ – unsubsidized exits (%)	16.0%	13.2%	7.7%	↓	↓	9.1%	0.0%
★ Families with children who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	8.3%	7.0%	5.6%	12.5%	12.5%	5.8%	4.2%
★ – subsidized exits (%)	1.5%	1.3%	1.0%	↓	↓	0.9%	0.6%
★ – unsubsidized exits (%)	20.4%	21.6%	19.5%	↓	↓	17.9%	16.1%
★ Critical 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.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
★ 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	3,675	3,588	3,857	↓	↓	NA	NA
★ HOME-STAT clients referred to placement into permanent housing, transitional housing and other settings	2,849	2,753	5,909	↑	↑	1,387	2,053
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↑↓ Directional Target	* None			

AGENCY-WIDE MANAGEMENT

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
Collisions involving City vehicles	41	65	39	*	*	12	5
Workplace injuries reported	198	210	149	*	*	64	28
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY20	FY21
Customer Experience							
Completed requests for interpretation	16,644	15,957	18,660	*	*	NA	NA
Letters responded to in 14 days (%)	82%	88%	98%	*	*	95%	100%
E-mails responded to in 14 days (%)	65%	99%	99%	*	*	99%	96%
Average wait time to speak with a customer service agent (minutes)	5	4	1	*	*	NA	NA
CORE facility rating	100	NA	94	*	*	NA	NA
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual			Sept. 2020 MMR Plan	Updated Plan	Plan	4-Month Actual	
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY21 ¹	FY22 ¹	FY20	FY21
Expenditures (\$000,000) ²	\$2,146.0	\$2,184.1	\$2,369.2	\$2,059.8	\$2,393.9	\$2,052.5	\$1,572.6	\$1,904.5
Personnel	2,370	2,319	2,119	2,237	2,049	2,105	2,288	2,083
Overtime paid (\$000,000)	\$16.9	\$17.8	\$19.9	\$3.9	\$6.5	\$3.9	\$5.8	\$5.1
Capital commitments (\$000,000)	\$53.1	\$47.0	\$11.0	\$96.3	\$63.1	\$72.2	\$6.7	\$2.3
Human services contract budget (\$000,000)	\$1,762.0	\$1,851.5	\$2,029.8	\$1,756.7	\$1,942.6	\$1,758.2	\$740.6	\$818.0
¹ January 2021 Financial Plan. ² Expenditures include all funds "NA" - Not Available								

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)	January 2021 Financial Plan FY21 ² (\$000,000)	Applicable MMR Goals ³
Personal Services - Total	\$163.6	\$154.9	
100 - Shelter Intake and Program	\$144.8	\$113.0	All
101 - Administration	\$16.9	\$35.1	All
102 - Street Programs	\$1.9	\$6.7	3a
Other Than Personal Services - Total	\$2,205.6	\$2,239.1	All
200 - Shelter Intake and Program	\$2,205.6	\$2,117.0	All
201 - Administration	NA	\$18.4	All
202 - Street Programs	NA	\$103.6	3a
Agency Total	\$2,369.2	\$2,393.9	

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

NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

None.

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/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/the-journey-home-2019-print-web.pdf>

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