

NEW YORKERS CRITICAL OF GIULIANI HOMELESS POLICY

Independent Research Survey Shows Broad Support for Sheltering the Homeless and Permanent Housing

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's policies on homelessness – including proposed new rules that would deny shelter and other emergency help to homeless families and individuals – elicit strong criticism from a majority of New York City residents, according to a recently conducted independent research survey.

In the survey, New Yorkers see the issue of homelessness as an urgent problem in which proven solutions need to be implemented. Solutions receiving high marks in the survey include providing supportive housing for homeless people living with mental illness, and providing rental assistance to help the homeless move into their own apartments. New Yorkers also voice strong support for sheltering homeless families and individuals.

The survey, conducted in January 1999 by Global Strategy Group, Inc., found that:

⇒ **New Yorkers are Critical of Mayor Giuliani's Policies on Homelessness**

- Up to 75 percent of those surveyed expressed "very serious" or "serious" concerns about policies advanced by Mayor Giuliani, including forcing homeless people out of shelters after short stays (69 percent), expelling mentally ill and disabled people from shelters for breaking minor rules (68 percent), and forcing domestic violence victims to prove that they are in danger before providing them shelter (75 percent).

⇒ **New Yorkers Believe Giuliani is Not Doing a Good Job Addressing Homelessness**

- 70 percent of those surveyed believe that Mayor Giuliani is doing only a "fair" or "poor" job addressing the homeless situation.

⇒ **New Yorkers Consider Homelessness an Urgent Problem**

- 78 percent of those surveyed believe that it is "extremely urgent" or "very urgent" to address the issue of homelessness.

⇒ **New Yorkers Support Sheltering the Homeless**

- 68 percent of those surveyed believe that it is an "excellent idea" or a "good idea" to provide shelters and beds for homeless families and individuals.

⇒ **New Yorkers Support Spending Tax Dollars on Effective Solutions to Homelessness**

- 77 percent of those surveyed favor providing rental assistance to help low-income families and individuals pay for rent and heat.

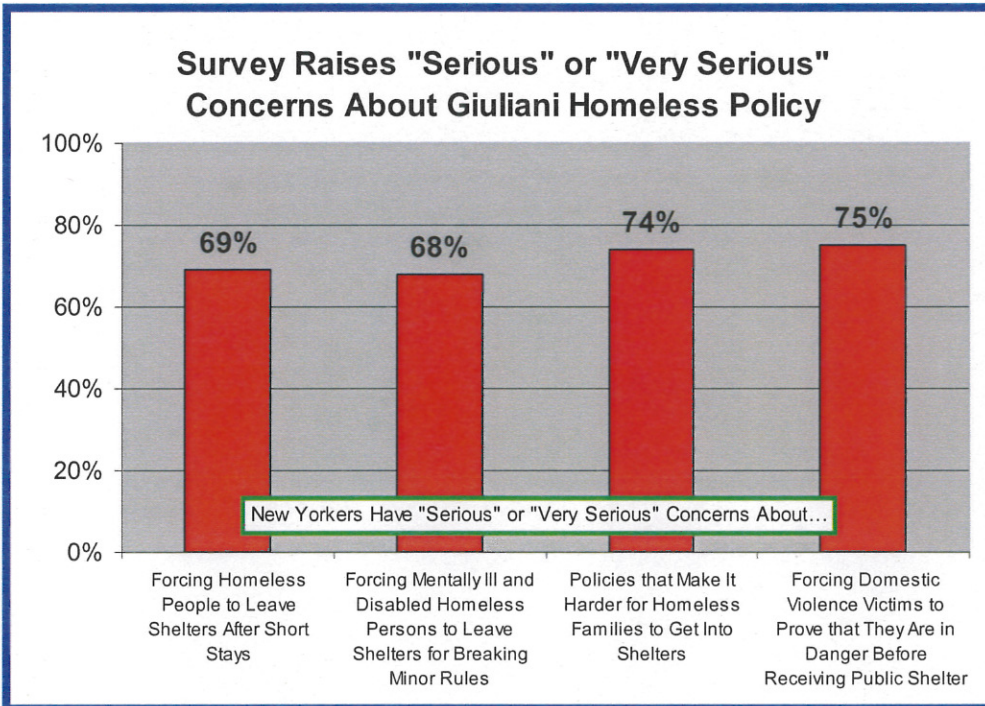
⇒ **New Yorkers Support Mayor Giuliani's Decision to Build Supportive Housing**

- 86 percent of those surveyed support Mayor Giuliani's decision to allocate \$85 million for housing with support services for the homeless mentally ill, and 53 percent said that they "strongly support" the Mayor's plan.

The research survey was conducted by Global Strategy Group, Inc., from January 17-21, 1999, among 415 registered voters in New York City (margin of error \pm 4.8% at the 95% confidence level). The survey was stratified by region to represent the five boroughs of New York City.

New Yorkers Voice Strong Concerns About Mayor Giuliani's Policies on Homelessness

The survey found that New Yorkers believe that Mayor Giuliani is not doing a good job addressing the issue of homelessness.

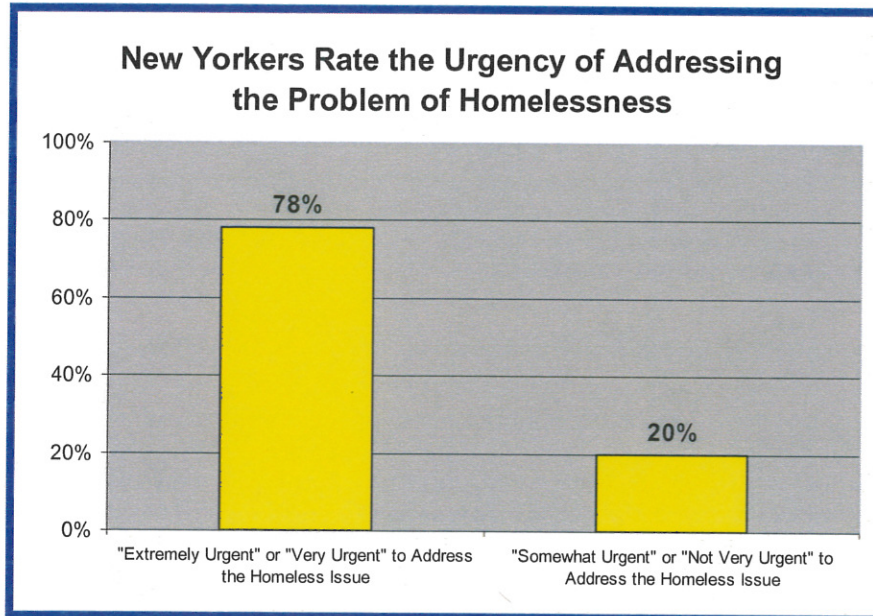


While New Yorkers voiced support for solutions, they also expressed strong concerns about Giuliani Administration policies that make it difficult for homeless New Yorkers to access shelter and other emergency help.

- ❑ **69 percent of New Yorkers voiced strong concerns about Giuliani Administration proposals that would force homeless people to leave shelters after short stays.**
- ❑ **68 percent of New Yorkers have strong concerns about Giuliani Administration policies that would force mentally ill and other disabled people out of shelters for breaking minor rules.** Mayor Giuliani has announced new rules that would force homeless families and individuals out of shelters for a minimum of thirty days for minor reasons. Parents that are expelled from shelters under the new rules could lose their children to foster care.
- ❑ **74 percent of New Yorkers have "serious" or "very serious" concerns about Giuliani Administration policies that make it harder for homeless families to get into homeless shelters.** In 1994, before the new rules were implemented, New York City shelters turned away three families. Since the Giuliani Administration changed the rules, the City has turned away thousands of homeless families. In 1998 alone, 14,041 families were turned away from homeless shelters, according to the *Mayor's Management Report*.
- ❑ **75 percent of New Yorkers voiced strong concerns about Giuliani Administration policies that force domestic violence victims to prove that they are in danger before they can stay in public shelters.**

New Yorkers Believe It Is “Urgent” to Address the Issue of Homelessness

The survey found that nearly four of every five New York City residents believe that it is “extremely urgent” or “very urgent” to address the issue of homelessness.

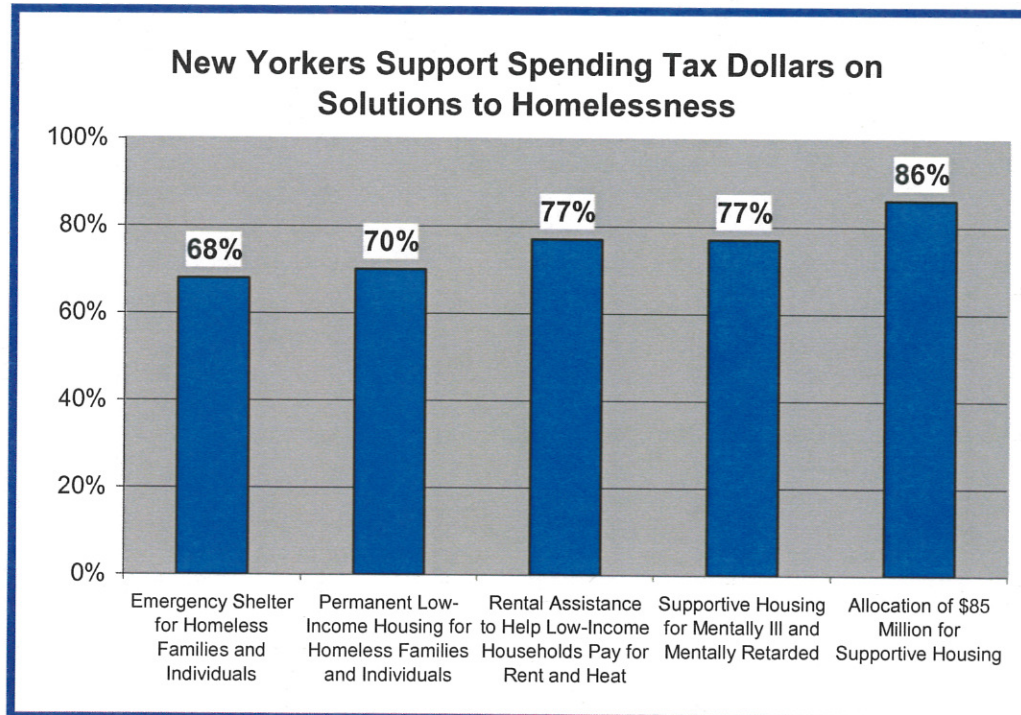


And while a plurality of New Yorkers – 35 percent – believe that the problem has not changed much over the last five years, another 27 percent believe that the problem has gotten worse over that period.

In short, a sizable majority of New Yorkers believe that the problem of homelessness has not improved over the past five years, and that New York City needs to address the problem urgently.

Strong Support Exists for Solving Homelessness

The survey asked New York City residents to evaluate a wide range of policies addressing the problem of homelessness.



New York City residents overwhelmingly expressed support both for short-term, emergency help and long-term housing solutions to address the problem of homelessness.

- ❑ **68 percent of New Yorkers responded that it was an “excellent idea” or “good idea” to provide shelters and beds for homeless people. Only 14 percent responded that it is a “poor idea” to provide shelter to the homeless.**
- ❑ **70 percent of New Yorkers believe that government should provide permanent low-income housing for single homeless people and homeless families.** Since 1995, New York City has cut production of new apartments for homeless people by 86 percent.
- ❑ **77 percent of New Yorkers also support providing rental assistance to help low-income families and individuals pay for rent and heat.** Last year, after the City Council included funding for a citywide rental assistance program for the homeless in the City budget, Mayor Giuliani vetoed the new funding.
- ❑ **77 percent of New Yorkers favor providing free permanent housing and support services for homeless people who are mentally ill or mentally retarded.**
- ❑ **86 percent of New Yorkers support Mayor Giuliani’s decision to allocate \$85 million for supportive housing for mentally ill and other homeless individuals.** Most of this money is for a proposed second New York/New York Agreement, for which Mayor Giuliani has voiced strong public support. The first Agreement provided permanent housing and support services to over 9,000 mentally ill homeless persons. Negotiations between Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki for a second agreement have been stalled for over a year.

New Yorkers Back Effective Solutions and Reject Punitive Policies

The research survey demonstrates that New York City residents care about their homeless neighbors, and are looking to their elected representatives to enact effective solutions. Most important, New Yorkers overwhelmingly reject the most punitive policies advanced by Mayor Giuliani.

New Yorkers instead agree that providing shelter and emergency help to the homeless is the cornerstone of effective homeless policy. New York City residents also strongly support spending tax dollars to build permanent housing and other long-term solutions to the problem of homelessness.

Basic Facts About Homelessness in New York City

- ✓ *Each year 85,000 different homeless men, women, and children utilize the New York City municipal shelter system.*
- ✓ *Thousands more sleep outdoors or in subway trains, often receiving little more than a meal at a soup kitchen.*

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