



# **Rising Family Homelessness in NYC: What the Next Mayor Can Do**

**Center for New York City Affairs  
Policy Forum**

November 20, 2013



# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

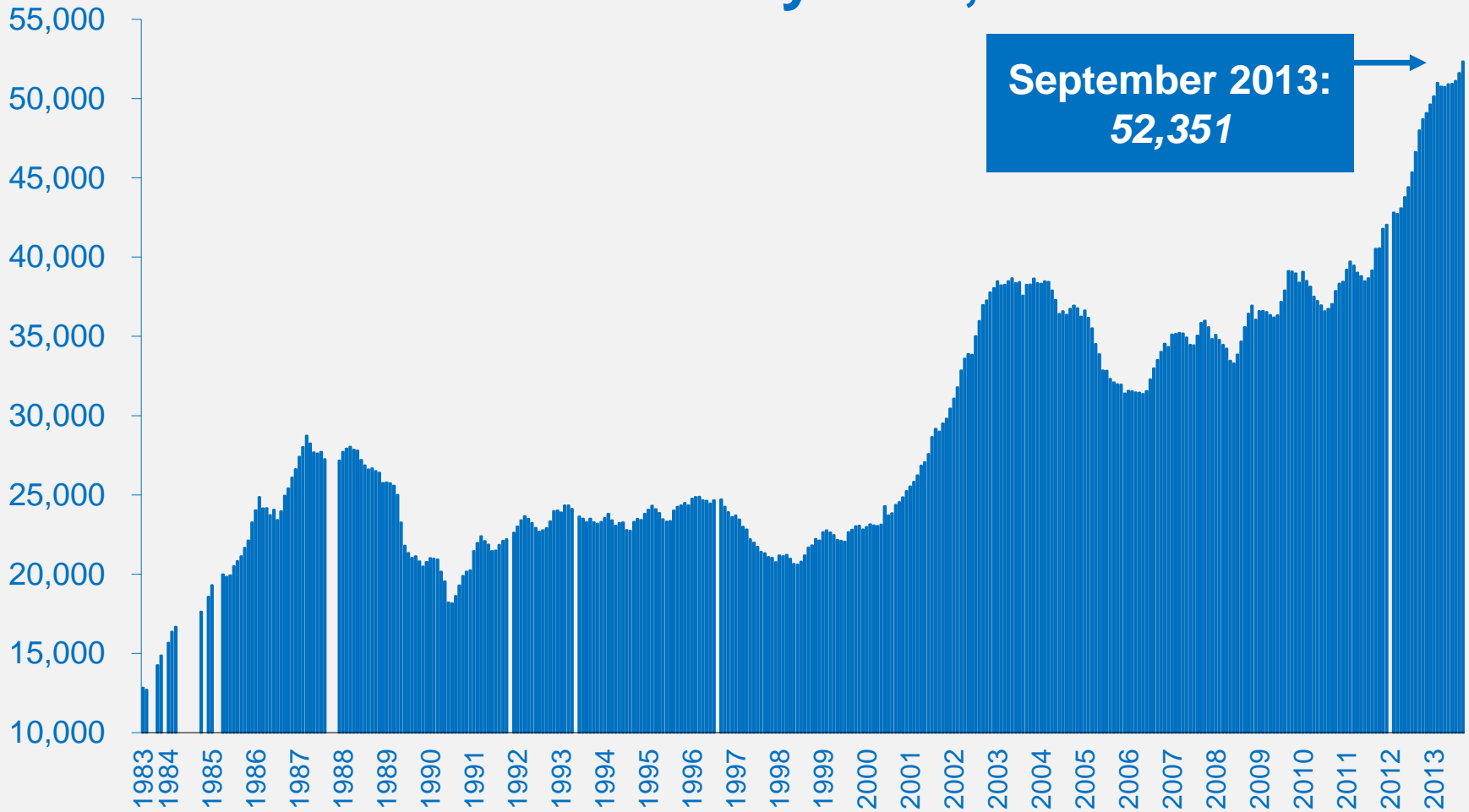
- In September, an average of **52,351 homeless people** slept each night in NYC shelter system – **up 69%** since current mayor took office.
- Includes **12,464 homeless families** – **up 80%** since mayor took office.
- Includes **22,136 homeless children** – **up 69%** since mayor took office.
- Homeless families & kids nearly **four-fifths (79%) of NYC shelter population**.



# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

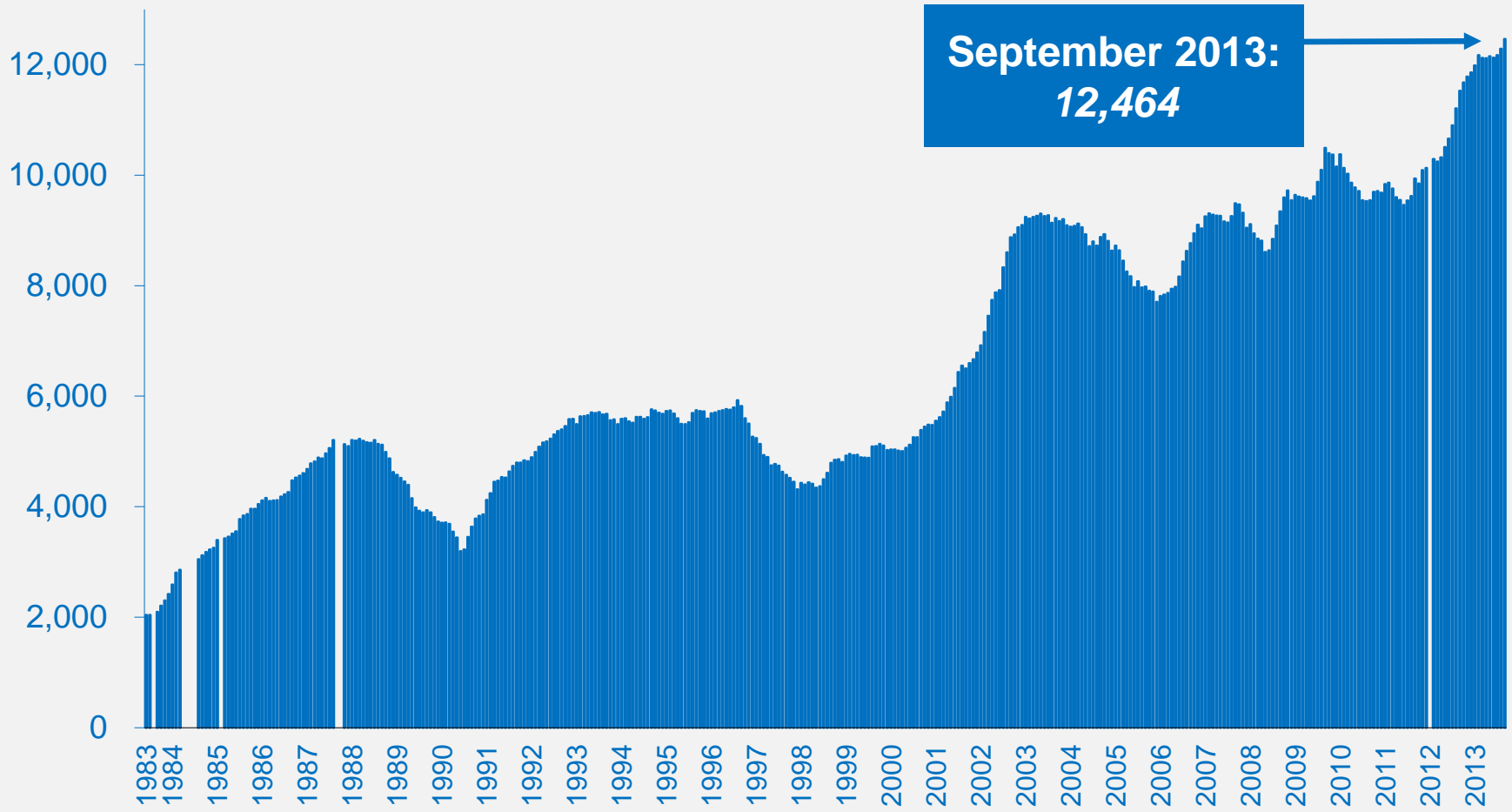
- Avg. shelter stays for families with kids now **13 ½ months (409 days)**.
- African-American and Latino New Yorkers disproportionately impacted by homelessness – **shelter residents 57% African-American, 31% Latino**.
- Research documents **harmful effects of homelessness on children's health and education** – avg. school attendance rate of homeless students in shelters **only 83%**.
- **28% of homeless families are working**, but in low-wage jobs.

# Number of Homeless People Each Night in the NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013



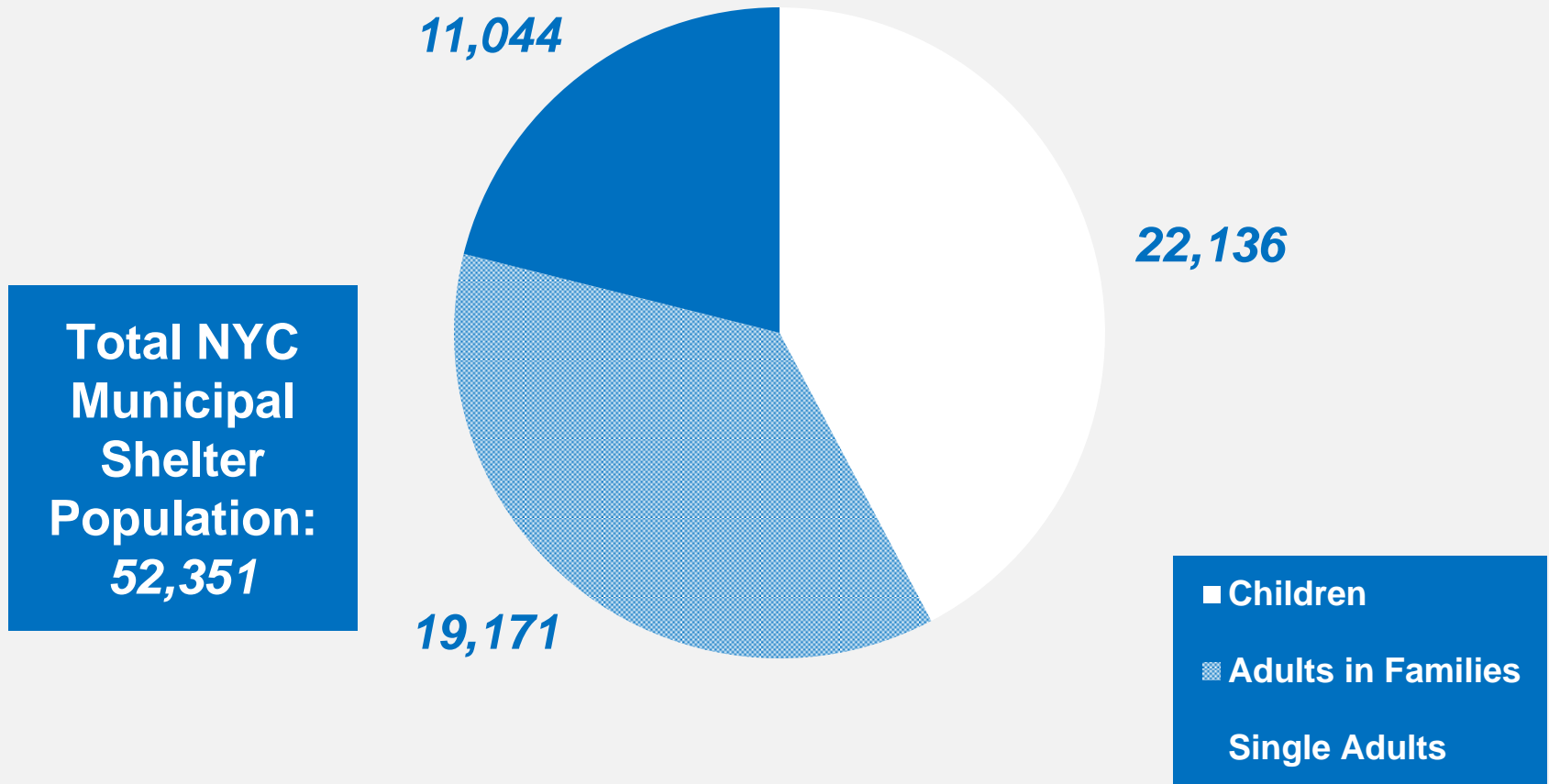
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYCStat, shelter census reports

# Number of Homeless Families Each Night in NYC Shelter System, 1983-2013

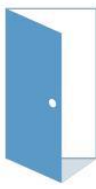


Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYC Stat, shelter census reports

# Number of Homeless People Each Night in the NYC Shelter System, September 2013



Source: City of New York, NYCStat



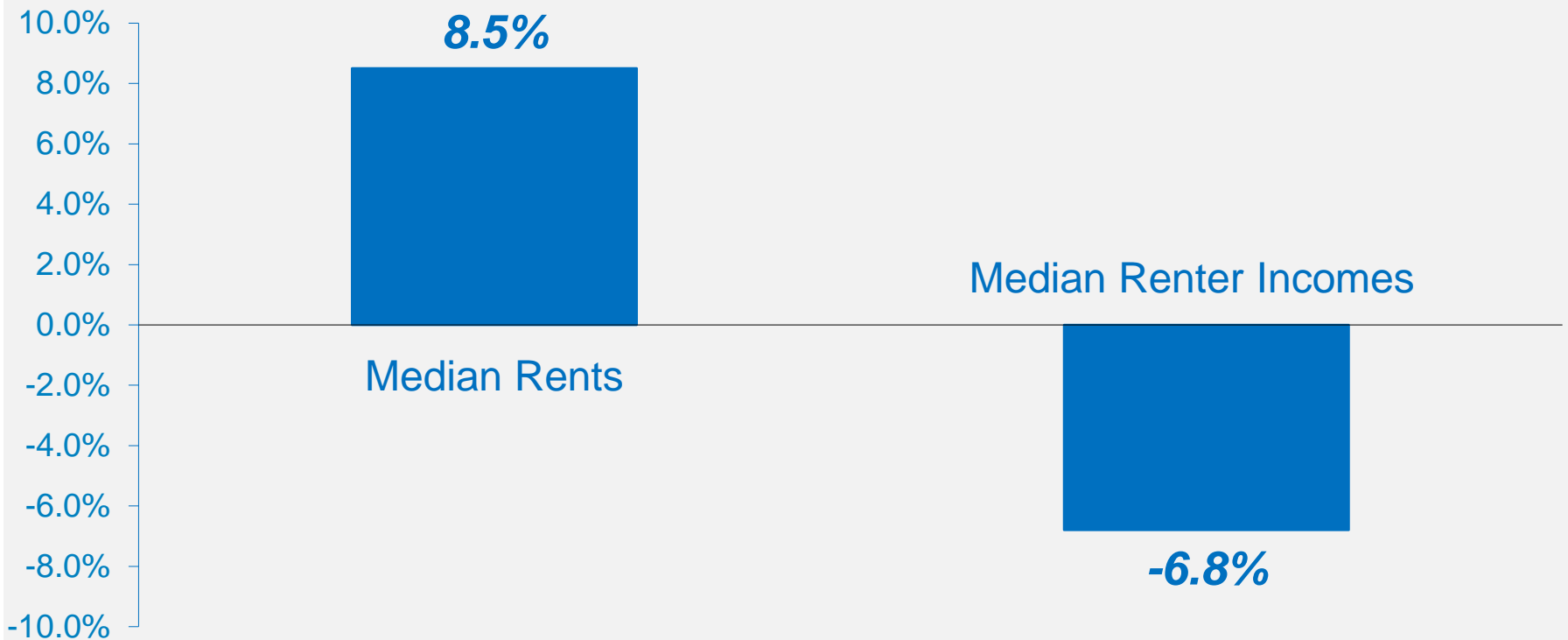
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# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

- ***NYC housing affordability gap growing wider.***
- ***Unemployment rate still high in NYC***, higher in Bronx and Brooklyn where most low-income New Yorkers live.
- From 2007-2011, during economic downturn, ***NYC median apartment rents went up 8.5% but median renter incomes fell 6.8%.***
- 78% of low-income renters have ***high rent burdens.***

# NYC's Widening Housing Affordability Gap, 2007-2011

(Percentage Change in Rents and Incomes)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau data from NYU Furman Center report (August 2013)



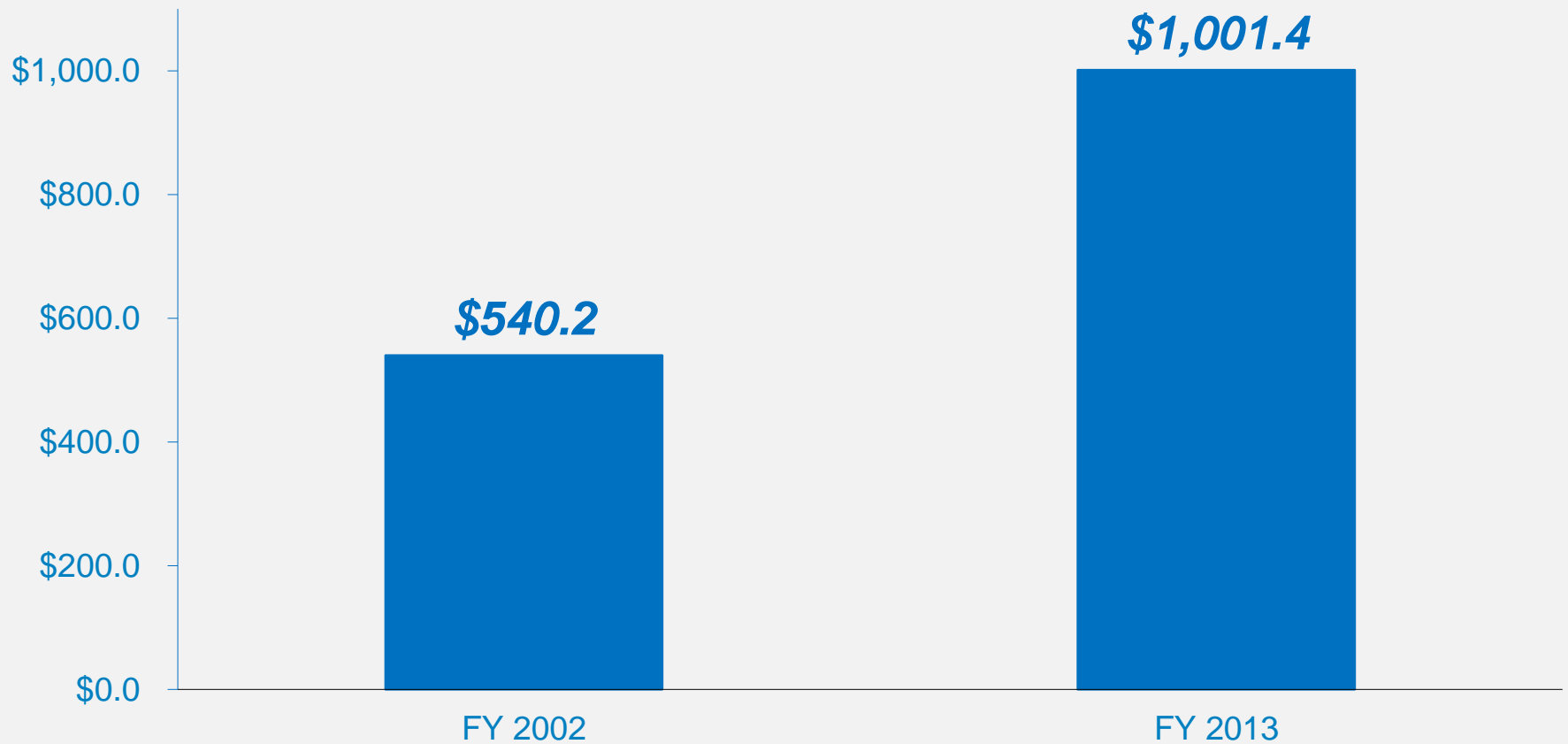


# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

- NYC now spends ***more than \$1 billion/year on homeless shelter and services*** – up 85% under current mayor.
- ***Avg. annual cost to shelter a homeless family is \$37,600*** – up 23% since mayor took office.
- ***More than half*** of all NYC homeless families now reside in ***for-profit shelter (hotels/motels & cluster-site units)***.
- ***1 of 6 homeless families in shelters nationwide is in NYC.***

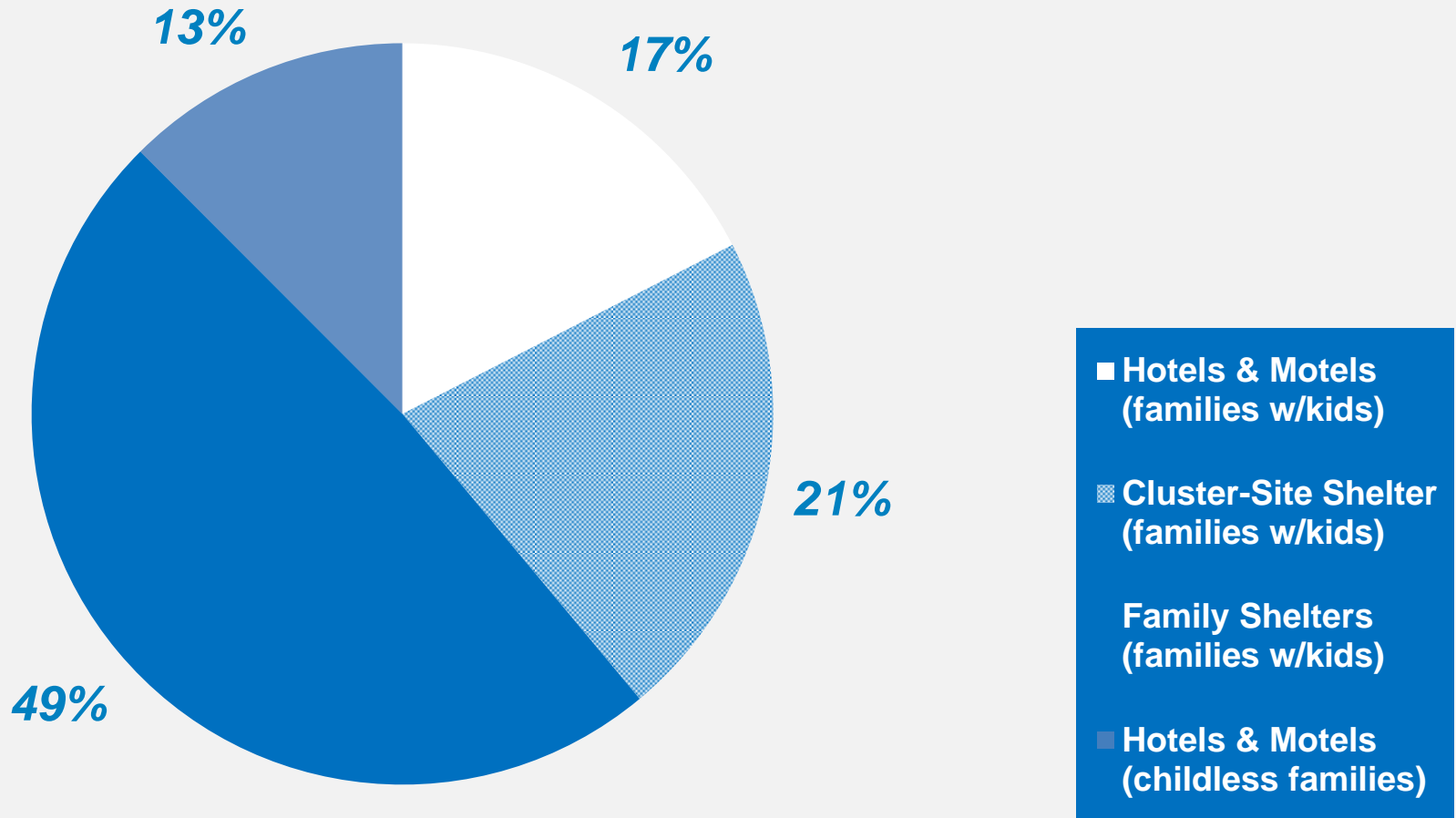
# 85% Increase in Homeless Services Expenditures Under Current Mayor

(NYC Department of Homeless Services Expenses in Millions)



Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget

# More NYC Homeless Families in For-Profit than Not-for-Profit Shelter, 2013



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services

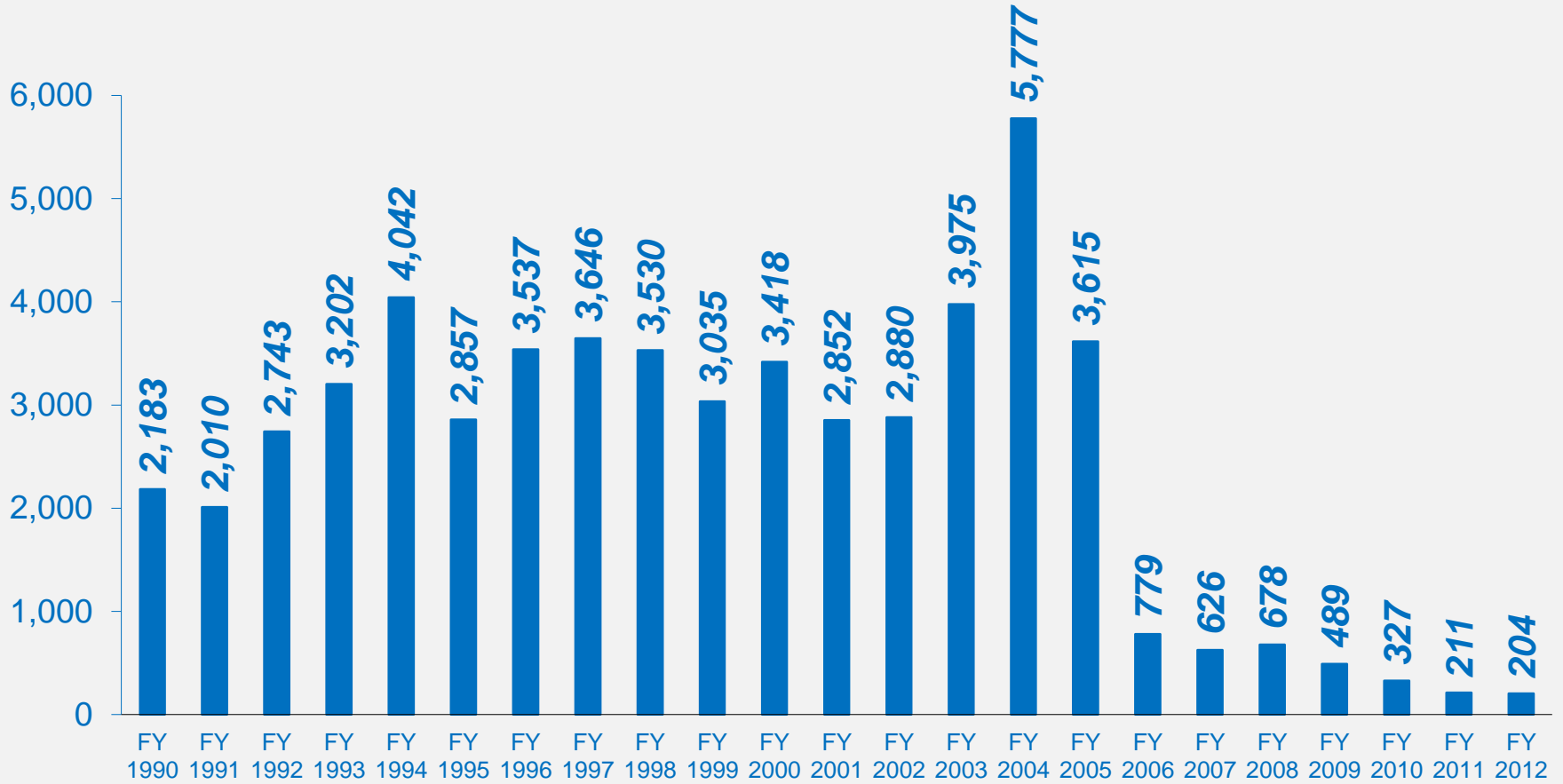


# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

- ***Recent policy failures a major cause of rising & record NYC homelessness.***
- Under Mayors Koch, Dinkins & Giuliani the City ***targeted Federal housing resources*** (e.g. public housing) to help homeless families get homes.
- Current administration ***ended that policy in 2005***, claimed that number of families entering shelters would decline.
- But the ***number of families entering shelter system increased significantly after 2005.***

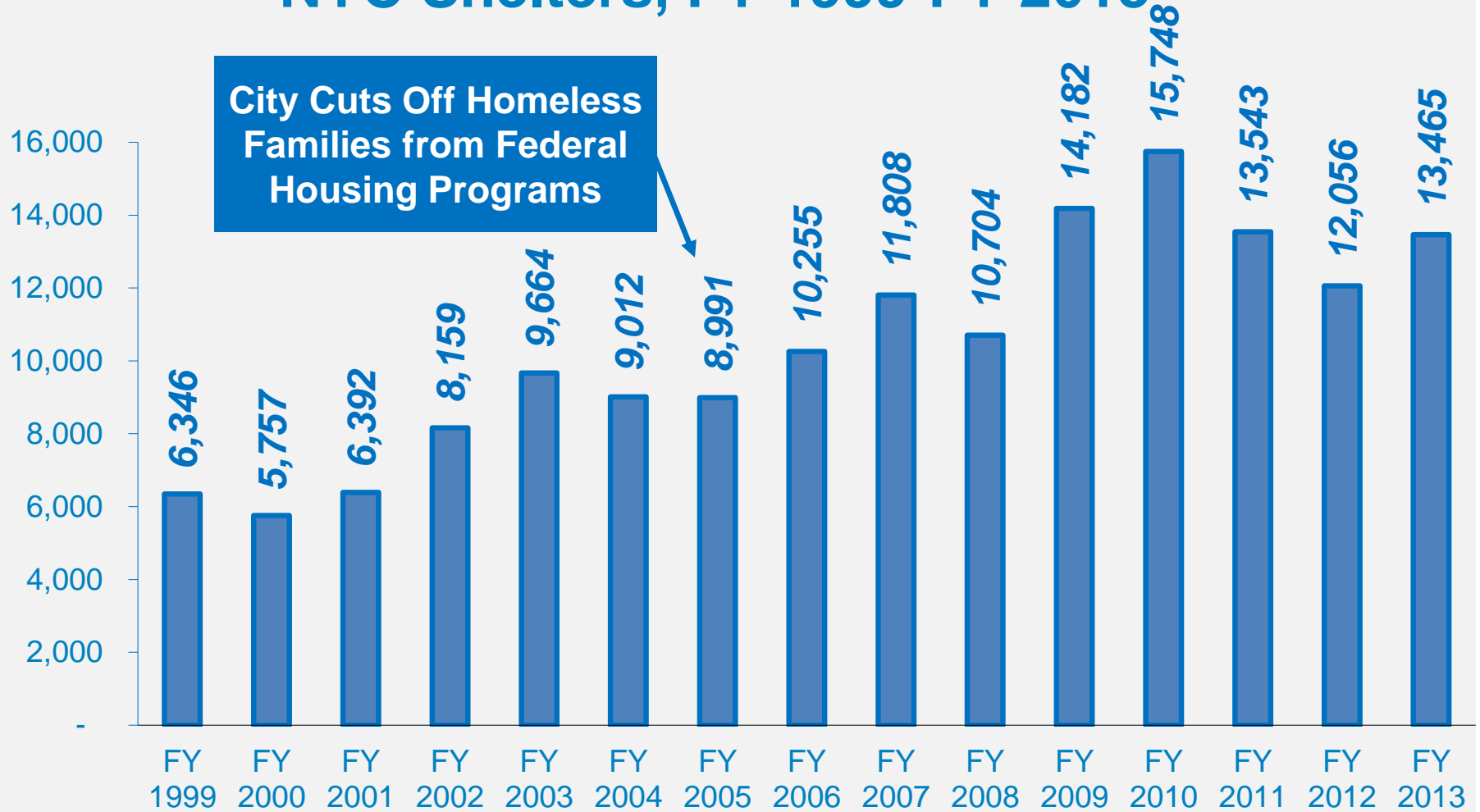
# Fewer Homeless Families Helped by Federal Housing Aid, FY 1990-FY 2012

(No. Moved from Shelters with Public Housing and Sect 8 Vouchers)



Source: Mayor's Management Report and NYC Department of Homeless Services

# Number of Homeless Families Entering NYC Shelters, FY 1999-FY 2013



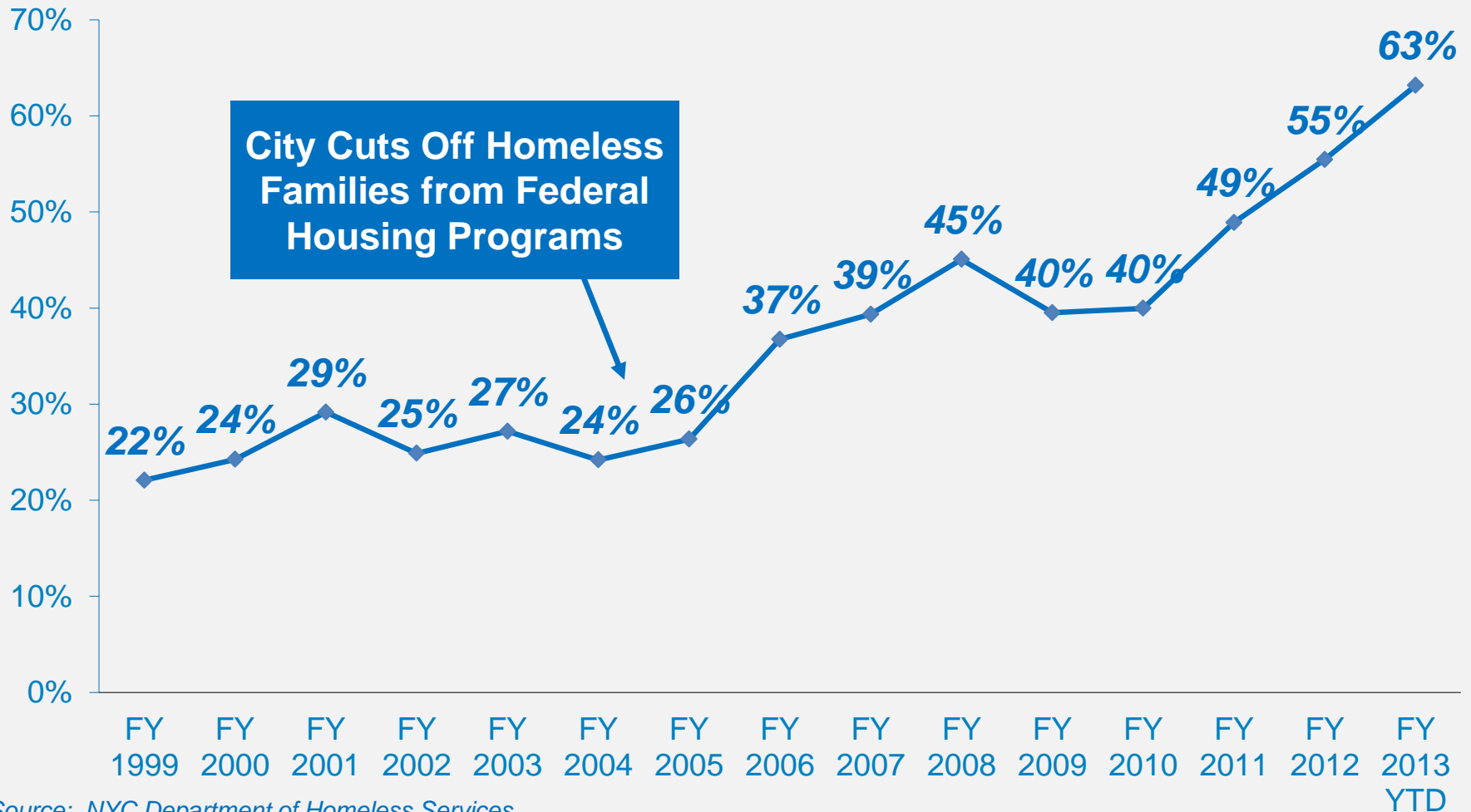
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services



# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

- Current mayor replaced Federal programs with ***temporary rent subsidies*** (HSP and Advantage) in 2005, then ***eliminated all housing aid in 2011***.
- Since 2005, more and more families entering shelters are ***formerly-homeless***.
- Before 2005, ***1 in 4 families entering shelter was formerly-homeless – now 63%***.
- ***8,500 former Advantage families with 18,000 children*** have returned to shelter system – half of all Advantage families without rent subsidies.

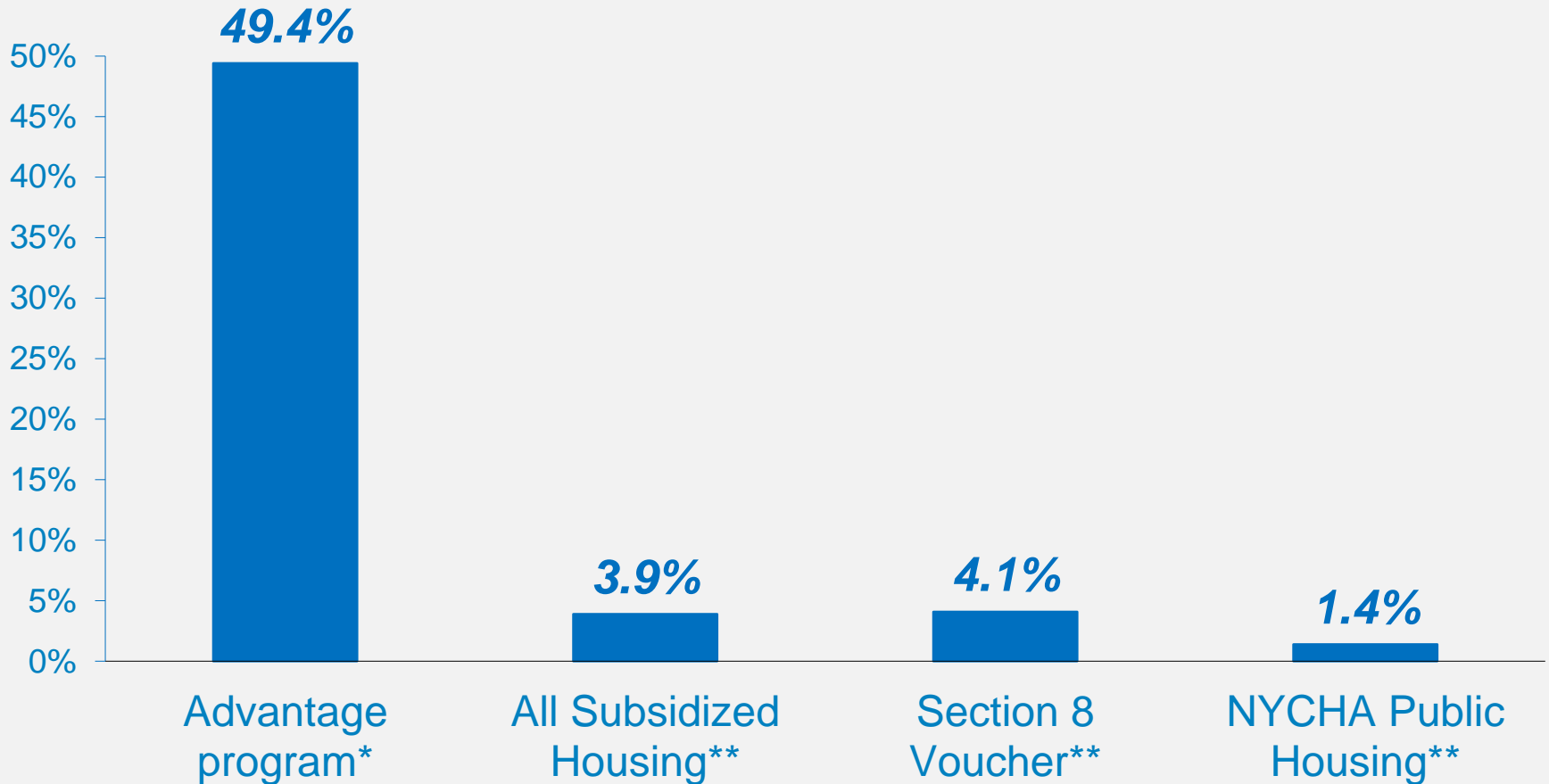
# Percentage of All Families Entering NYC Shelters Who Were Formerly-Homeless



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services



# Shelter Return Rates for Time-Limited and Non-Time-Limited Housing Aid



Source: \*NYC Department of Homeless Services (through Aug. 2013), \*\*Vera Institute, "Understanding Family Homelessness" (2005)

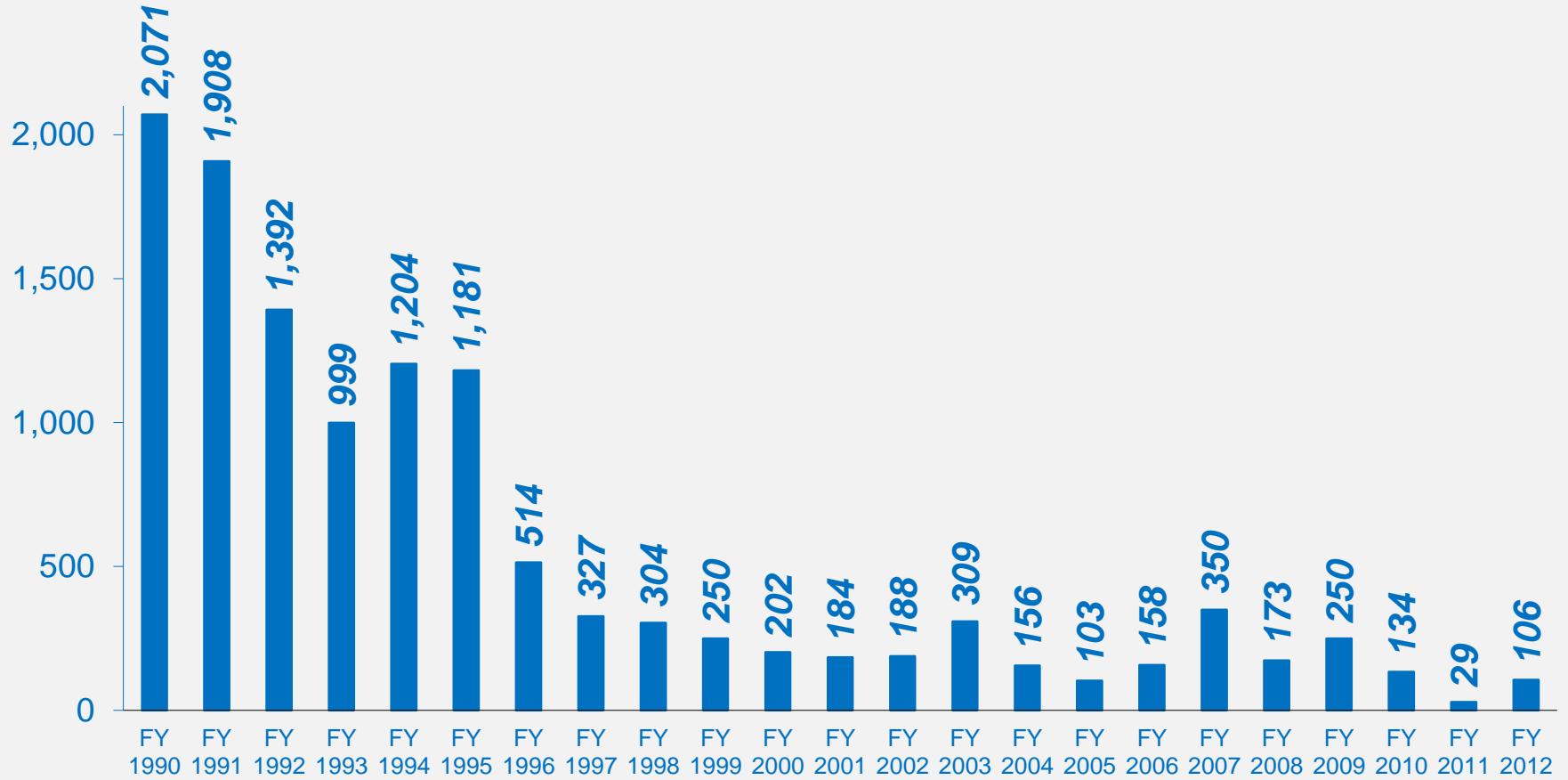


# Rising Family Homelessness in NYC

- Koch 10-year housing plan set aside **10% of apartments for homeless people** (15,700 apts.).
- Koch plan set aside **63% of apts. for very-low-income households.**
- Current mayor's 10-year housing plan set aside **only 4% of apartments for homeless people** (4,800 apts.).
- Current mayor's plan set aside **only 34% of apts. for very-low-income households.**

# Fewer Homeless Families Aided by City-Assisted Housing, FY 1990-FY 2012

(Number Moved from Shelters to City-Subsidized Apartments)

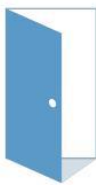


Source: Mayor's Management Report and NYC Department of Homeless Services



# Solutions to Homelessness in NYC

- Mayor-elect de Blasio and his new administration can build on ***proven housing-based solutions to the problem of homelessness.***
- Research & evidence overwhelmingly show that ***long-term subsidized housing reduces family homelessness.***
- Wealth of research & experience point to ***success and cost savings from permanent supportive housing*** for homeless people living with special needs.
- Solutions endorsed by ***United to End Homelessness*** coalition of 130 groups.



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homeless

# Solutions to Homelessness in NYC

## ***Housing-based solutions:***

1. Resume ***priority referrals of homeless families to public housing and Section 8 vouchers*** (at least 2,500 families/yr. to public housing).
2. Partner with State to create a ***new rental assistance program*** modelled on Section 8 vouchers.
3. Partner with State on a ***“New York/New York IV Agreement” to create permanent supportive housing.***
4. New ***NYC housing plan should set aside at least 10% of apartments for homeless New Yorkers.***



# Solutions to Homelessness in NYC

## ***Eliminate barriers to shelter and punitive policies:***

- 1. Eliminate bureaucratic barriers to shelter for homeless families*** at intake centers.
- 2. Rescind proposed shelter-denial rules for homeless adults.***
- 3. Reform shelter sanction termination rules*** to protect families, children, and people living with disabilities.

## ***Reform shelter system:***

- Phase out use of ***apartment buildings as temporary shelter*** and use of ***commercial hotels & motels.***



# Solutions to Homelessness in NYC

## ***Expand homelessness prevention:***

1. Enhance funding for ***homelessness prevention programs***, including legal services and eviction prevention services.
2. Expand access to ***prevention rent subsidy programs*** (e.g., FEPS program).
3. Enhance ***rent-increase exemption programs to assist seniors and tenants living with disabilities*** (SCRIE and DRIE programs).