



coalition
for the
homeless

Coalition for the Homeless

State of the Homeless 2004

Part I: Overview of a Worsening Crisis

Part II: A Midterm Report Card on Mayor Bloomberg's Homeless Policy

February 2004

Coalition for the Homeless 129 Fulton Street New York NY 10038 212-964-5900
www.coalitionforthehomeless.org



State of the Homeless 2004

Overview of the Report (1)

Part I: Highlights of the Year 2003 in Homelessness

- ◆ **Record Homelessness**
- ◆ **Longer Shelter Stays for Homeless Children and Families**
- ◆ **Rising Street Homelessness**
- ◆ **Greatest Number of Homeless Single Adults in Shelters Since 1990**

> Detailed on Pages 4-10



State of the Homeless 2004

Overview of the Report (2)

Part II: Mayor Bloomberg's Midterm Homeless Policy Grades

Homeless Families – Grade: **C+** ♦ Homeless Single Adults – Grade: **D-**

- ♦ **Homelessness Prevention – Grade: C-**
- ♦ **Creating Homes for Homeless New Yorkers – Grade: C+**
 - 1) Targeting Federal Housing Resources – Grade: **B+**
 - 2) Building Affordable Housing – Grade: **D**
 - 3) Providing Supportive Housing for Mentally-Ill Homeless Individuals – Grade: **D-**
- ♦ **Making the Shelter System More Accessible to the Street Homeless – Grade: F**
 - 1) Rising Street Homelessness – Grade: **D-**
 - 2) Investing in Low-Threshold Entry Shelters – Grade: **F**
 - 3) Developing Specialized Shelters for Hard-to-Serve Homeless Individuals – Grade: **F**
- ♦ **Shelter and Services for the Homeless – Grade: D-**
 - 1) Reducing Funds for Rental Assistance – Grade: **D-**
 - 2) Expanding the Use of No-Contract Welfare Hotels and For-Profit Shelter – Grade: **D-**

> Detailed on Pages 11-27



State of the Homeless 2004

Part I: Highlights of the Year 2003

Highlights of the Year 2003 in Homelessness

In 2003, the number of New Yorkers sleeping each night in homeless shelters reached the highest levels since the Great Depression – the third consecutive year that NYC’s homeless shelter population has broken modern records.

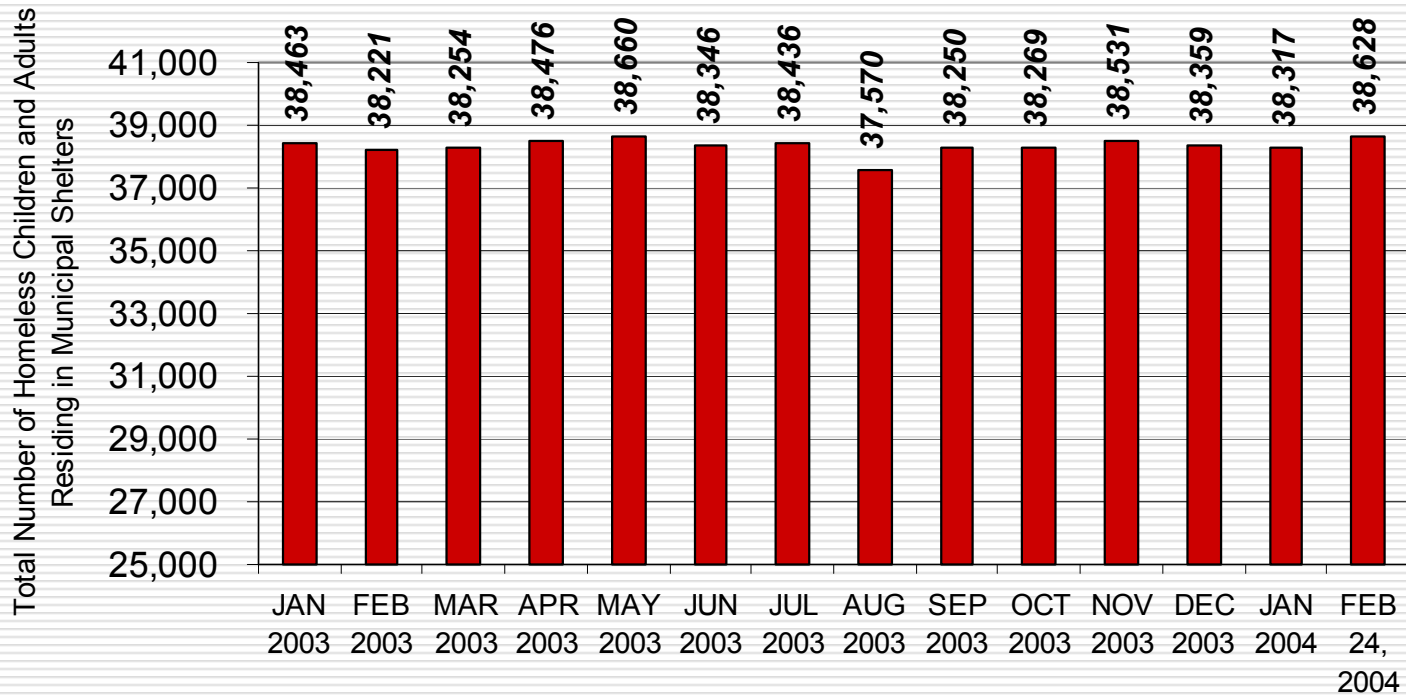
- ◆ **Record NYC Homeless Shelter Population** > *See Charts on Pages 5-7*
- ◆ **Rising Street Homelessness**
- ◆ **Longer Shelter Stays for Homeless Children and Families** > *See Chart on Page 8*
- ◆ **Greatest Number of Homeless Single Adults in Shelters Since 1990**
> *See Chart on Page 9*
- ◆ **Number of Homeless Single Women in Shelters at Highest Point in NYC History**
> *See Chart on Page 10*



State of the Homeless 2004

Record Homeless Shelter Population

2003: NYC Homeless Shelter Population Remains at Record Levels

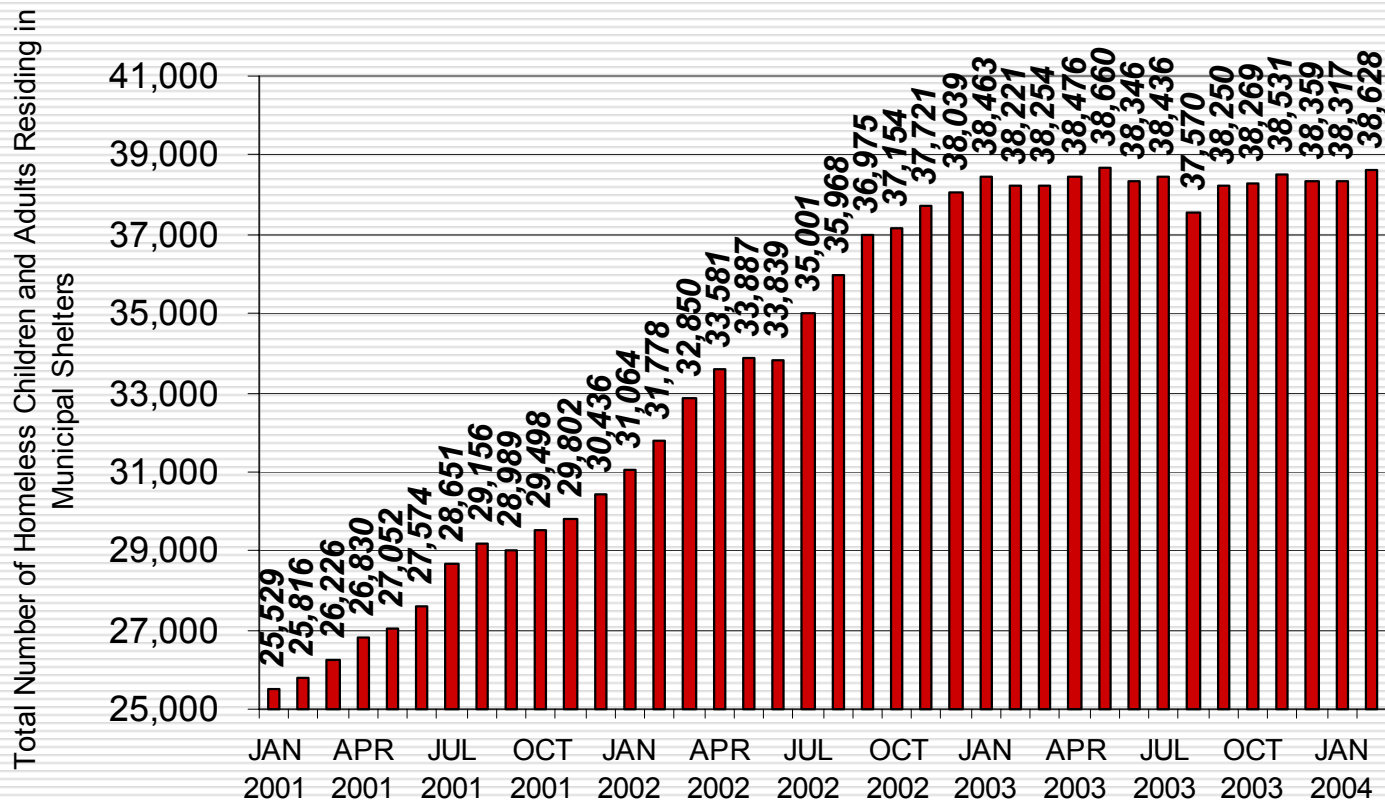




State of the Homeless 2004

Third Year of Record Homelessness

More Homeless New Yorkers Year After Year



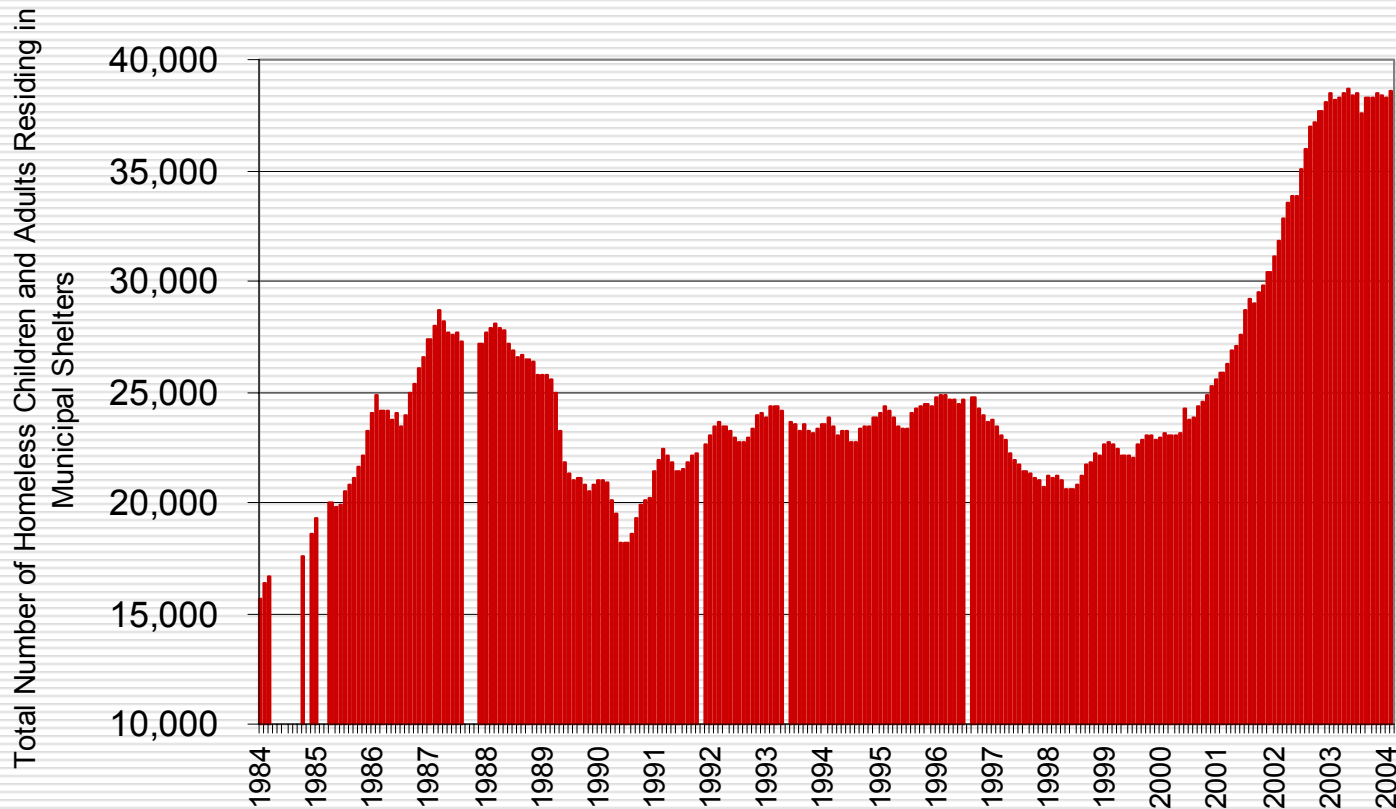


coalition
for the
homeless

State of the Homeless 2004

All-Time Record Shelter Population

All-Time Record NYC Homeless Shelter Population

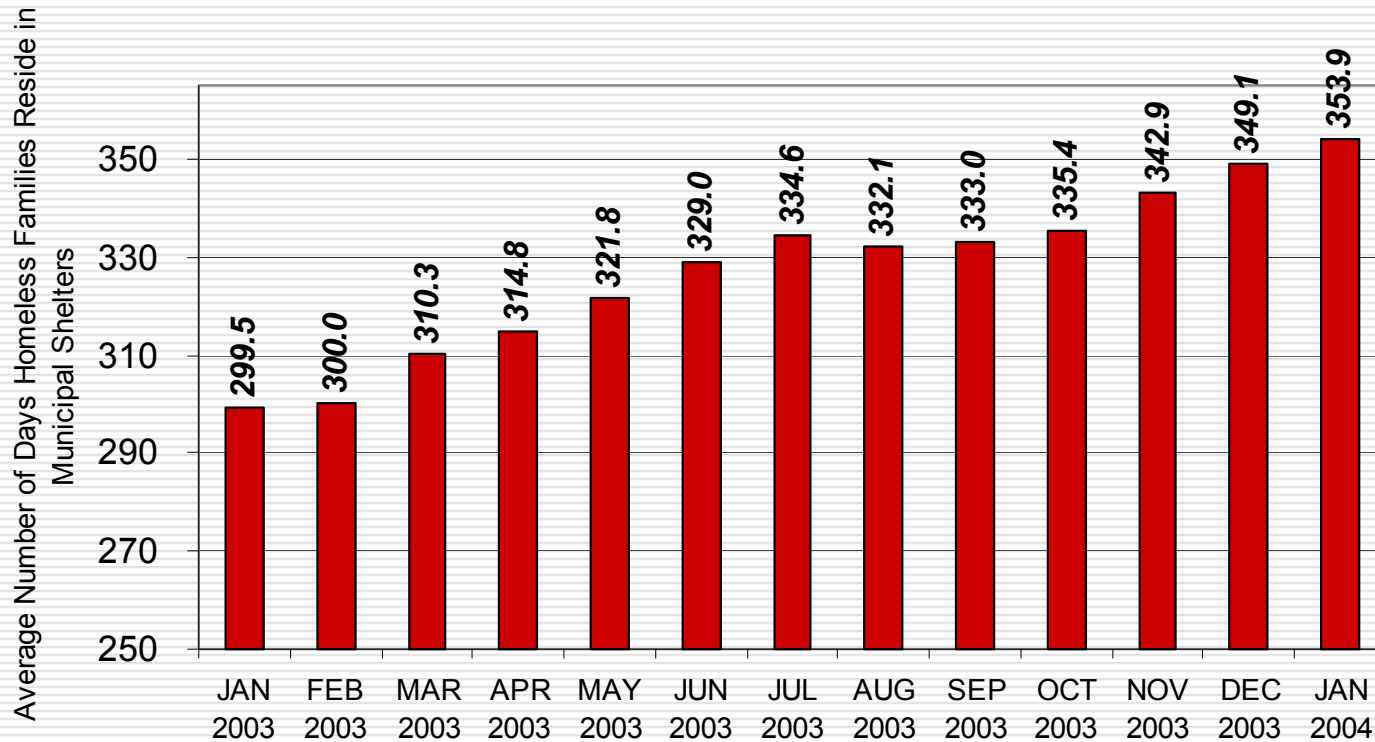




State of the Homeless 2004

Longer Shelter Stays for Families

Shelter Stays for Homeless Families Rise from Ten Months to Nearly One Year

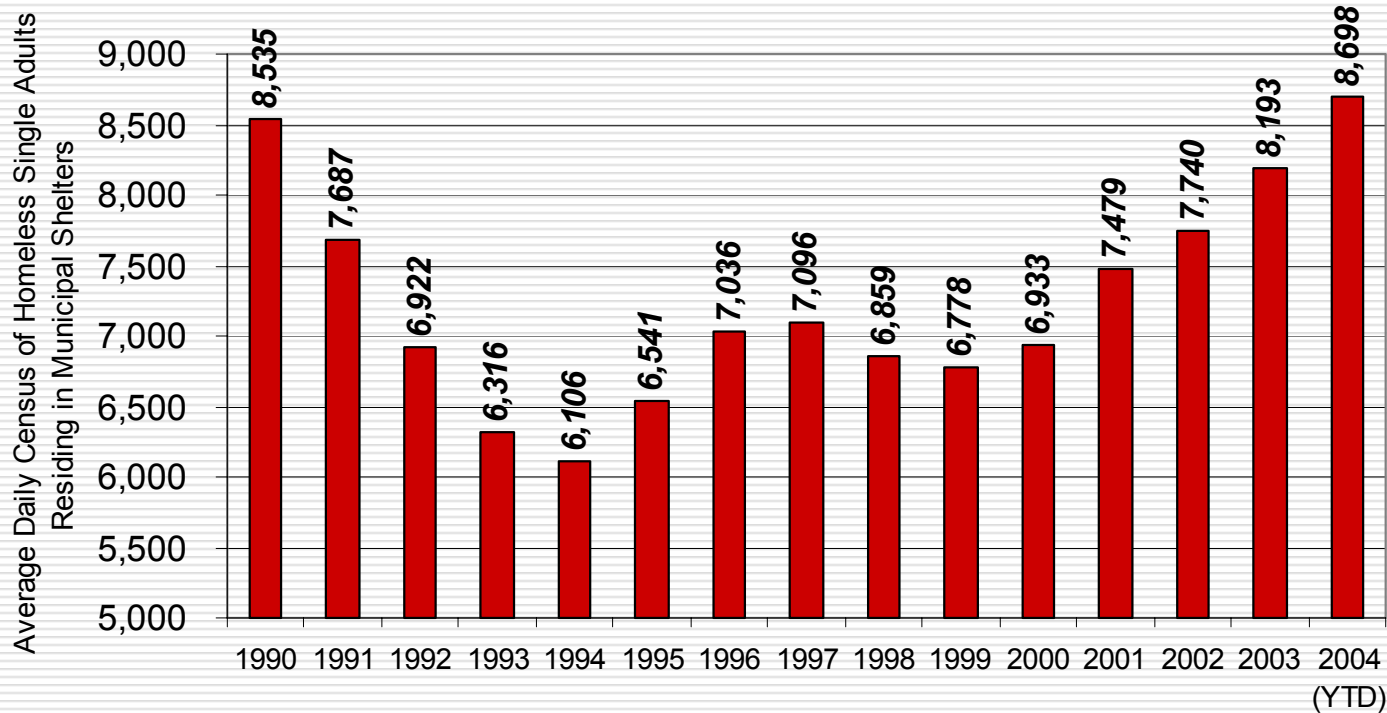




State of the Homeless 2004

More Homeless Individuals in Shelters

Number of Homeless Single Adults in Shelters Reaches Highest Point Since 1990

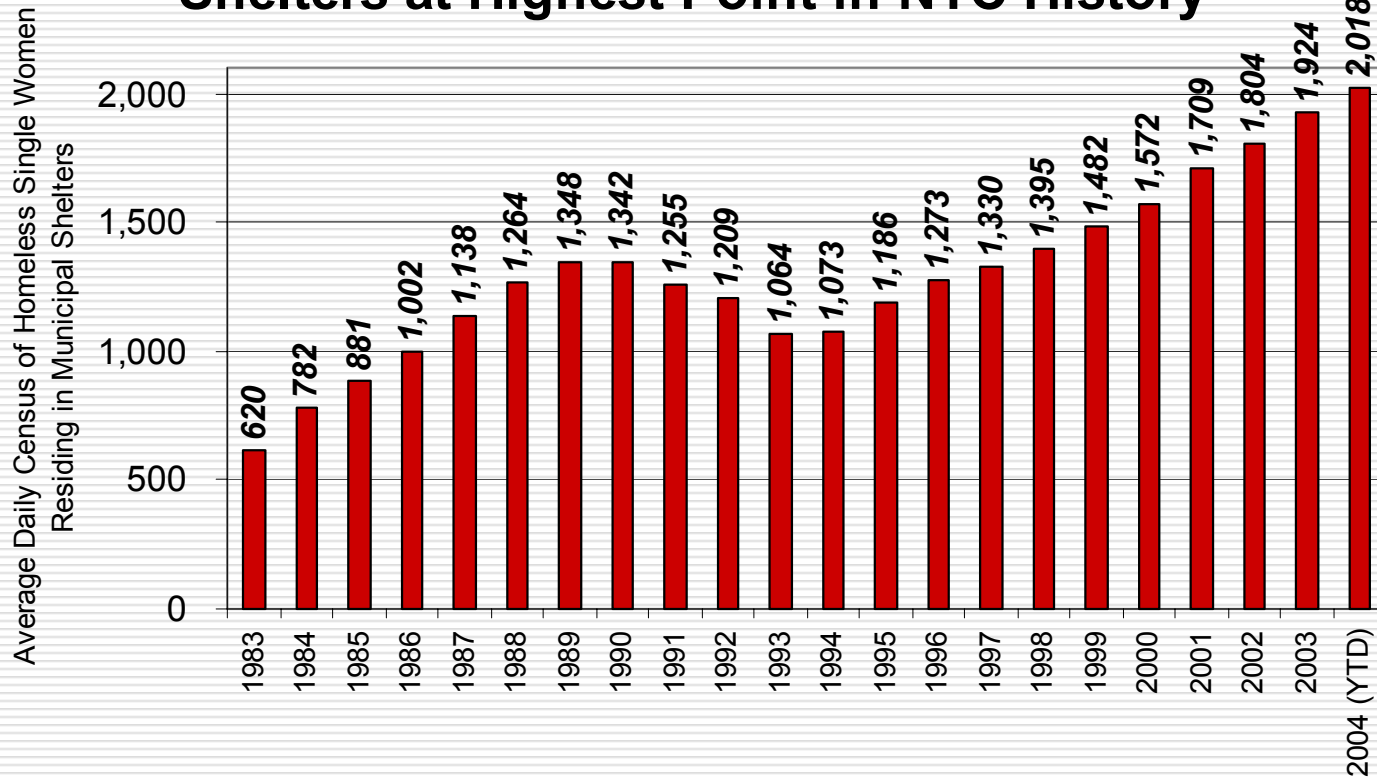




State of the Homeless 2004

Record Number of Homeless Women

Number of Homeless Single Women in Shelters at Highest Point in NYC History





State of the Homeless 2004

Part II: Midterm Report Card

Mayor Bloomberg's Midterm Homeless Policy Report Card

Homeless Families – Grade: C+ ♦ Homeless Single Adults – Grade: D-

♦ **Homelessness Prevention – Grade: C-**

♦ **Creating Homes for Homeless New Yorkers – Grade: C+**

1) Targeting Federal Housing Resources – Grade: **B+**

2) Building Affordable Housing – Grade: **D**

3) Providing Supportive Housing for Mentally-Ill Homeless Individuals – Grade: **D-**

♦ **Making the Shelter System More Accessible to the Street Homeless – Grade: F**

1) Rising Street Homelessness – Grade: **D-**

2) Investing in Low-Threshold Entry Shelters – Grade: **F**

3) Developing Specialized Shelters for Hard-to-Serve Homeless Individuals – Grade: **F**

♦ **Shelter and Services for the Homeless – Grade: D-**

1) Reducing Funds for Rental Assistance – Grade: **D-**

2) Expanding the Use of No-Contract Welfare Hotels and For-Profit Shelter – Grade: **D-**



State of the Homeless 2004

Bloomberg Midterm Report Card

Mayor Bloomberg's Homeless Policy Midterm Report Card Highlights:

In December 2001, the month before Mayor Bloomberg took office, there were 30,400 homeless people sleeping each night in municipal shelters. In February 2004 there were more than 38,600 homeless New Yorkers sleeping in shelters, a ***27 percent increase***.

Over the same period the number of ***homeless children*** in shelters has increased from 10,000 to 16,300 children, a ***63 percent increase***.

During the same period the number of ***homeless single adults*** in shelters has risen from 7,700 to 8,700 individuals per night, a ***13 percent increase***, while homeless service providers report ***rising street homelessness***.



State of the Homeless 2004

Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness Prevention – Grade: **C-**

Mayor Bloomberg has kept funding for homelessness prevention stagnant, while expenditures on homeless shelters have increased dramatically.

◆ A NYC Independent Budget Office study found that, from FY 2001 to FY 2003 – while shelter expenditures rose by more than \$150 million – homeless prevention spending rose from only \$157 million to \$160 million.

Every Bloomberg budget has included cutbacks in homelessness prevention programs.

◆ Every budget presented by Mayor Bloomberg has included dramatic cuts in funding for homelessness prevention programs. Mayor Bloomberg's FY 2005 budget plan cuts \$5 million in homelessness prevention legal services.

◆ The Bloomberg Administration's recent proposal to add \$12 million for community-based prevention services is a welcome first step, but fails to provide critical funding for rent subsidies, emergency grants, and anti-eviction legal services.

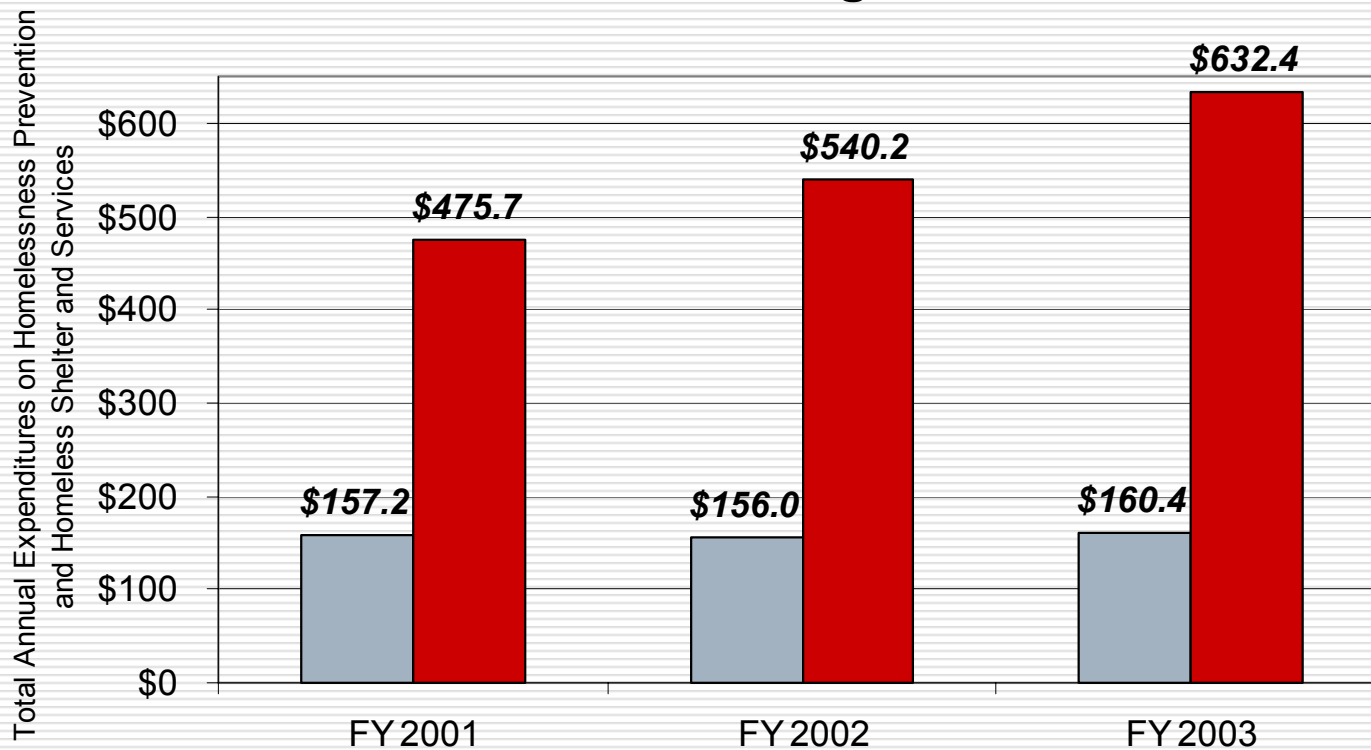
> See Chart on Page 14



State of the Homeless 2004

Failure to Invest in Homelessness Prevention

Spending on Shelter Soars While Spending on Prevention Stagnates





State of the Homeless 2004

Creating New Homes for the Homeless (1)

Creating New Homes for Homeless New Yorkers:

Overall Grade: **C+**

1) Targeting Federal Housing Resources to Homeless Families: **B+**

For FY 2003, the Bloomberg Administration committed to providing permanent housing to 6,000 homeless families, largely by using re-allocated Federal housing resources.

Ultimately, 5,289 homeless families (88 percent of the goal) were relocated to permanent housing, the largest number of homeless families moved to permanent housing since FY 1994.

This policy change by the Bloomberg Administration – reversing years of cutbacks in homeless housing assistance by the Giuliani Administration – was by far the most successful homeless policy initiative enacted by Mayor Bloomberg.

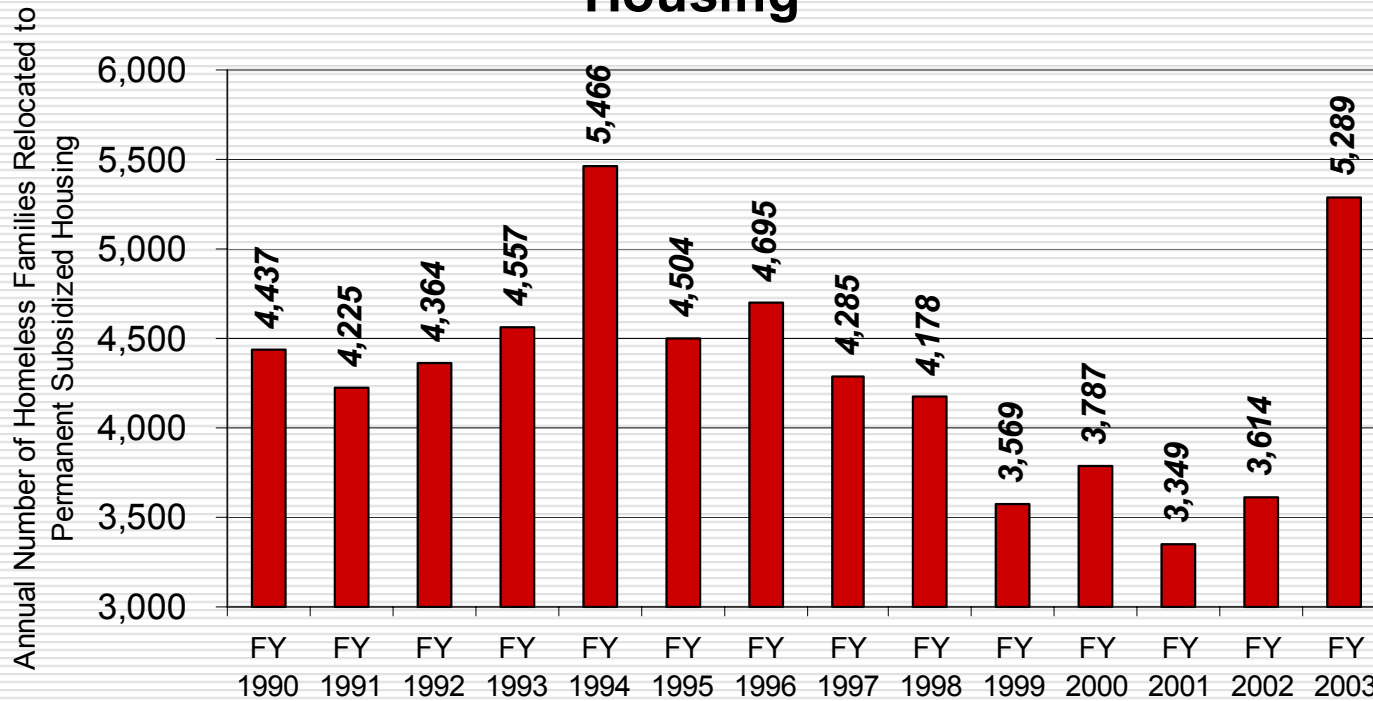
> See Chart on Page 16



State of the Homeless 2004

Federal Housing Resources for Homeless Families

Increase in Number of Homeless Families Relocated to Permanent Subsidized Housing





State of the Homeless 2004

Creating New Homes for the Homeless (2)

Creating New Homes for Homeless New Yorkers:

Overall Grade: **C+**

2) Building Affordable Homes for Homeless and Poor Families: **D**

Mayor Bloomberg's five-year housing plan ("The New Housing Marketplace") will create fewer than 600 new apartments annually for homeless families and individuals, less than 4 percent of the total commitment.

In contrast, the Koch Administration's ten-year housing plan created 15,000 apartments for homeless New Yorkers, fully 10 percent of the total plan. As a result of the Koch Administration's housing investments, the number of homeless families in shelters declined by 39 percent between 1988 and 1990.

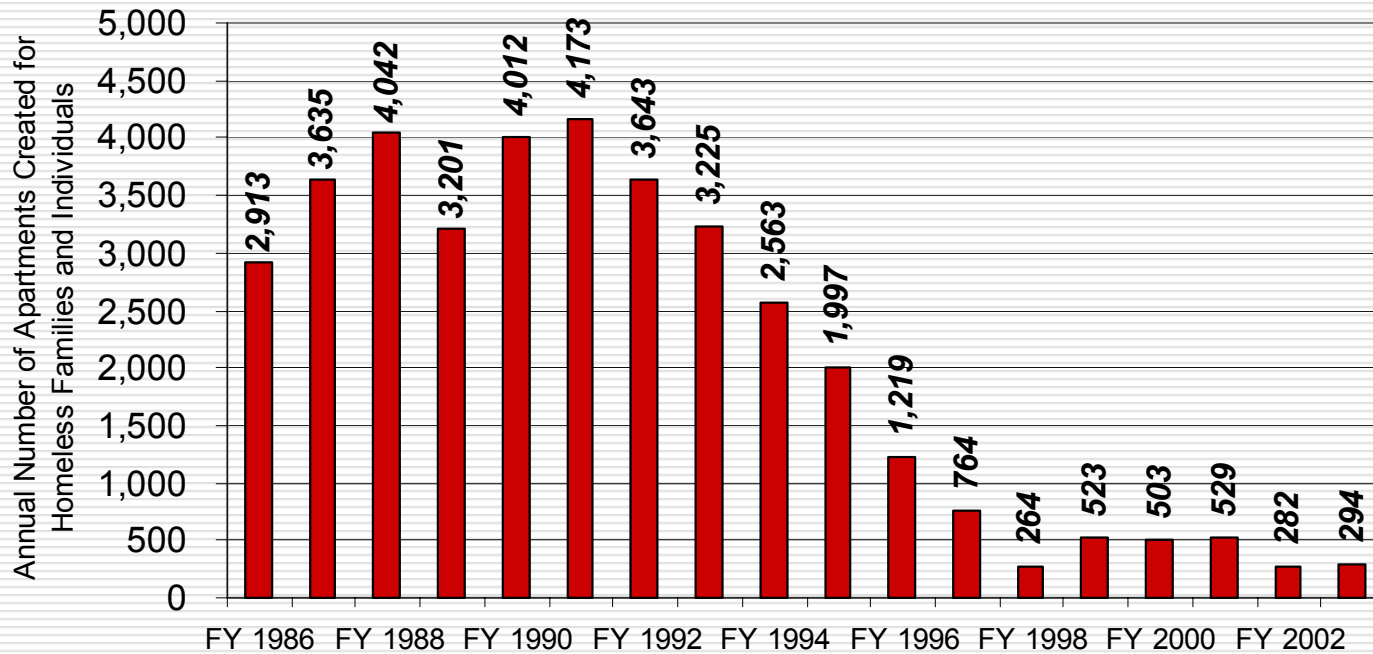
> See Chart on Page 18



State of the Homeless 2004

Fewer New Apartments Created for the Homeless

Dramatic Reduction in the Number of New Apartments Created for Homeless Households





State of the Homeless 2004

Creating New Homes for the Homeless (3)

Creating New Homes for Homeless New Yorkers:

Overall Grade: **C+**

3) Building Supportive Housing for Mentally Ill Homeless Adults: D-

Mayor Bloomberg has failed to negotiate a renewed “New York/New York Agreement” to provide supportive housing for homeless individuals living with mental illness.

Vacancy rates in New York/New York housing have fallen below 2 percent, while the number of mentally ill adults sleeping on the streets and in shelters has risen steadily.

Studies show that supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective solution to the problem of homelessness: The cost of a supportive housing apartment is the same as the cost of shelter and emergency care for a homeless individual living with mental illness.

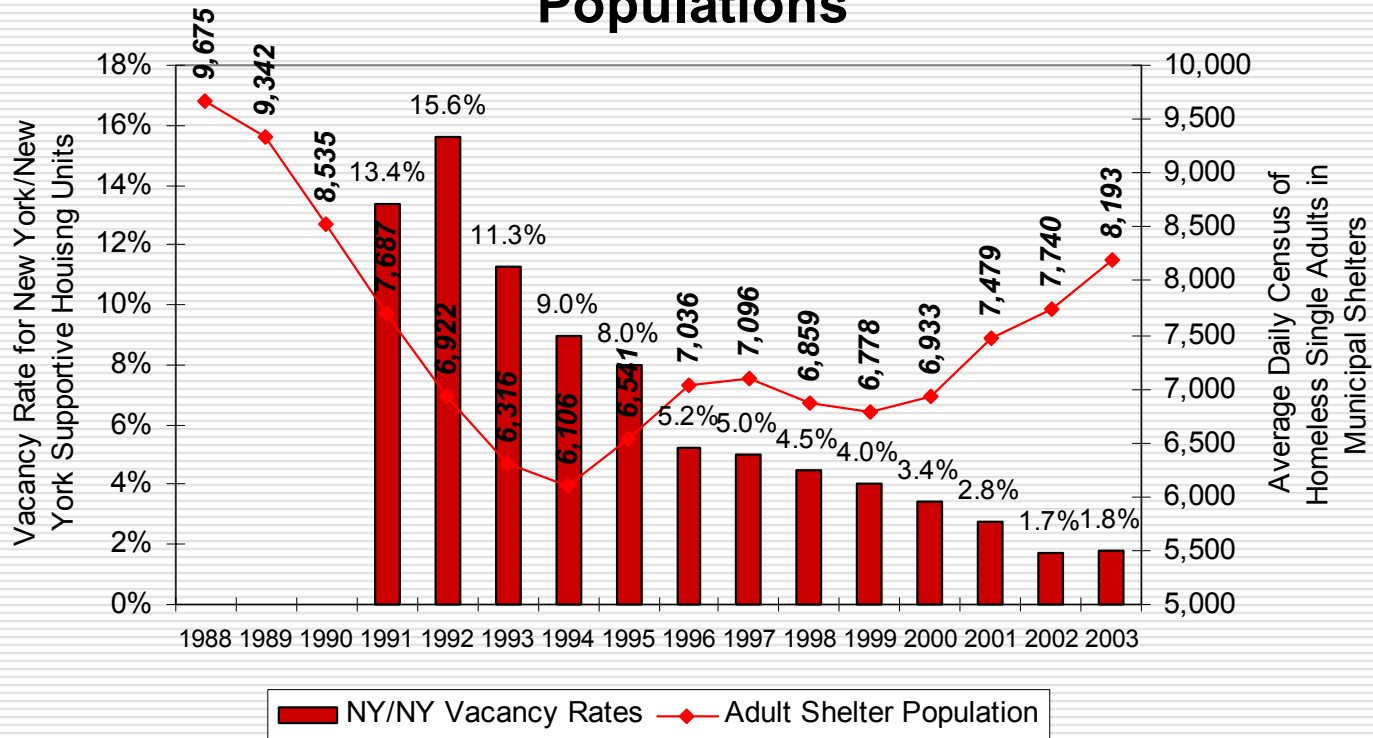
> See Chart on Page 20



State of the Homeless 2004

Failure to Create Supportive Housing for the Homeless

Falling Vacancy Rates for "New York/New York" Housing Lead to Rising Shelter Populations





coalition
for the
homeless

State of the Homeless 2004

Helping the Street Homeless (1)

Making the Shelter System More Accessible to the Street Homeless: Overall Grade: **F**

1) Rising Street Homelessness: **D-**

The rising number of homeless people sleeping on New York City streets has become more visible over the past two years.

Soup kitchens and other emergency food programs report rising demand for help from street homeless individuals.

Outreach teams have seen larger numbers of homeless people on city streets, in subway trains, and in other public spaces. Drop-in centers have been forced to exceed capacity limits.

Despite abundant evidence of rising street homelessness, Mayor Bloomberg and administration officials have publicly denied that street homelessness is on the rise.



State of the Homeless 2004

Helping the Street Homeless (2)

Making the Shelter System More Accessible to the Street Homeless: Overall Grade: **F**

2) Investing in Low-Threshold Entry Shelters : **F**

The Department of Homeless Services continues to warehouse homeless individuals seeking shelter in large, congregate, chaotically-managed facilities.

Homeless service providers have urged the City to create smaller, low-threshold entry shelters to address the needs of the street homeless. Studies document that 75 percent of the street homeless suffer from severe and persistent mental illness.

Hundreds of homeless women seeking shelter have been denied stable shelter placements. Currently dozens of homeless women are shuttled by bus in the middle of the night to one-night shelter placements, getting only a few hours of sleep. Many homeless women have returned to the streets due to lack of sleep and denial of basic services.

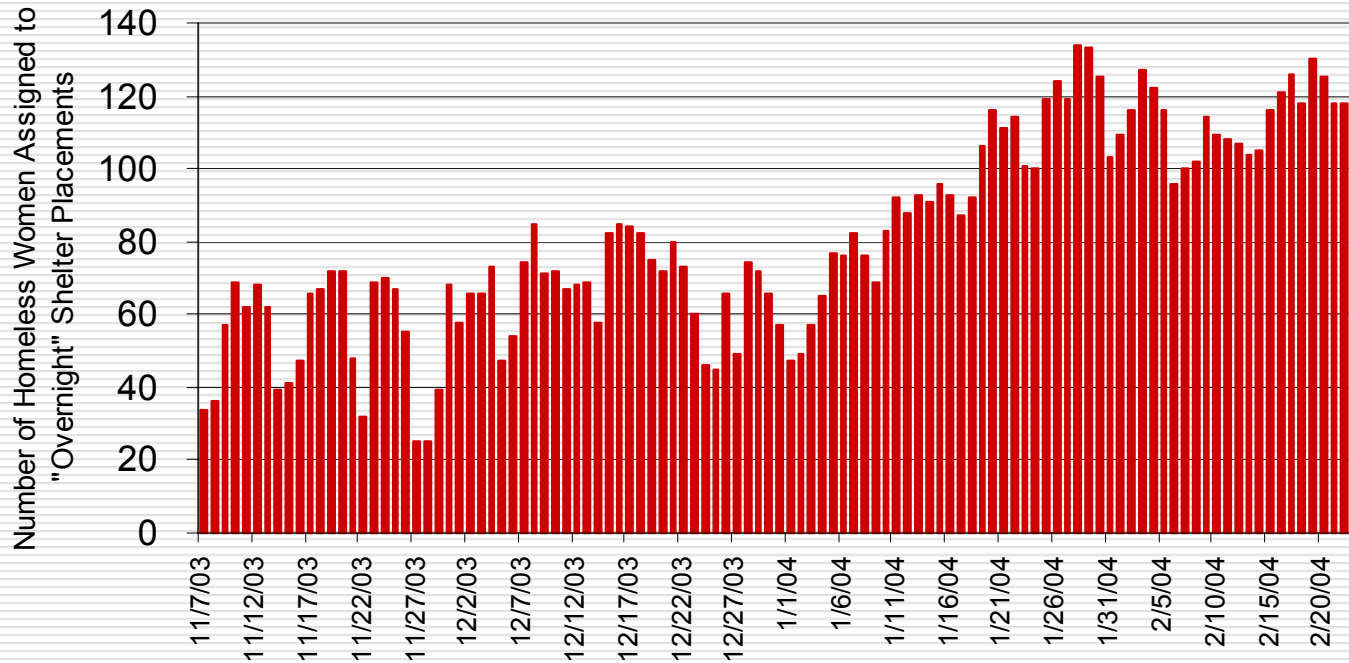
> See Chart on Page 23



State of the Homeless 2004

More Homeless Women Denied Stable Shelter

Number of Homeless Women Denied Stable Shelter and Sent to One-Night Shelter Placements





State of the Homeless 2004

Helping the Street Homeless (3)

**Making the Shelter System More Accessible to the Street Homeless:
Overall Grade: **F****

3) Developing Specialized Shelters for Hard-to-Serve Homeless Individuals: **F**

The Bloomberg Administration rejected offers from shelter providers to develop specialized shelters for hard-to-serve homeless individuals.

Instead, Mayor Bloomberg reversed a 22-year-old City agreement to ensure that vulnerable homeless individuals can receive shelter. Under the Mayor's new plan, homeless individuals who miss appointments with social workers or miss curfew can be ejected from shelters to the streets for 30 days or more.

Mayor Bloomberg rejected appeals from religious leaders and shelter providers to ensure the same protections for homeless individuals that homeless families are guaranteed.



State of the Homeless 2004

Shelter and Services for the Homeless (1)

Shelter and Services for the Homeless:

Overall Grade: D

1) Reducing Funding for Rental Assistance: D-

Mayor Bloomberg continued to expand the shelter system while cutting back on cost-effective housing programs. The Bloomberg Administration oversaw the fastest expansion of the homeless shelter system since the 1980s, adding 7,500 shelter beds in a two-year period.

At the same time, Mayor Bloomberg has consistently cut funding for the Rental Assistance Program, which provides temporary rent subsidies for employed homeless people. Rental Assistance is a proven cost-effective way to reduce homelessness. Compared to the \$3,000/month cost of sheltering a homeless family or \$1,800/month cost of sheltering a homeless adult, Rental Assistance with support services costs only \$750/month.



State of the Homeless 2004

Shelter and Services for the Homeless (2)

Shelter and Services for the Homeless:

Overall Grade: D

2) Expanding the Use of No-Contract Hotels and For-Profit Shelter : D-

The Bloomberg Administration has increased the use of commercial welfare hotels and “scattered-site” units to shelter homeless families, which cost nearly \$100 per night.

Since December 2001, the month before Mayor Bloomberg took office, the use of welfare hotels has increased 55 percent while the use of “scattered-site” units has increased 46 percent. Despite promises to the contrary, during the past year the number of shelter units operated without contracts by for-profit shelter operators has remained stable at around 4,000 units.

Despite promises by Bloomberg Administration officials, no contracts have been issued to welfare hotels and for-profit shelter operators.

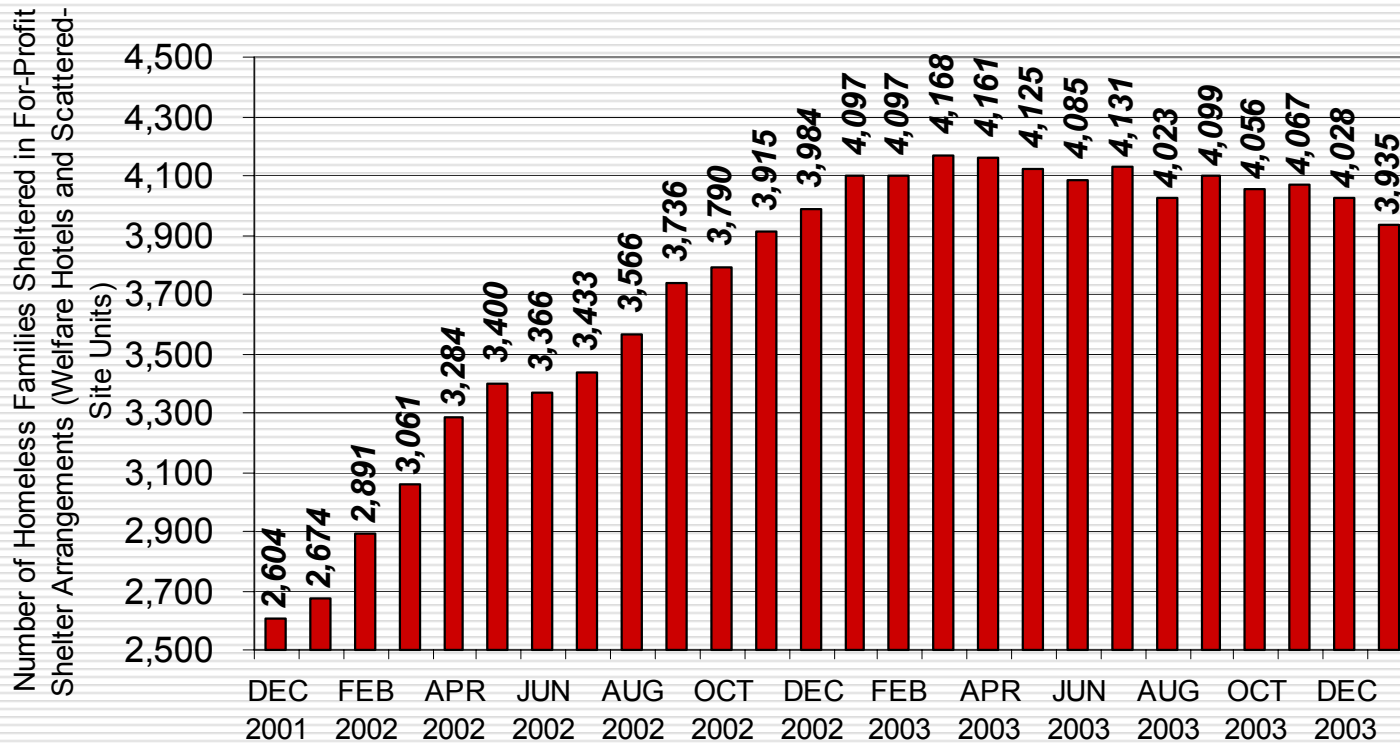
> See Chart on Page 27



State of the Homeless 2004

Expanding Use of Expensive For-Profit Shelter

Increasing Use of \$100-Per-Night For-Profit Shelter Units Operated Without Contracts





State of the Homeless 2004

Data Sources and Acknowledgments

Data Sources

Shelter population data: Department of Homeless Services shelter census reports.

Housing data: Mayor's Management Report, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Center for Urban Community Services.

Budget data: NYC Independent Budget Office.

Acknowledgments

Report prepared by Patrick Markee, Senior Policy Analyst, Coalition for the Homeless.

For more information, please visit www.coalitionforthehomeless.org.