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# **Coalition for the Homeless**

## **State of the Homeless 2006**

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**Part I:**  
**Homelessness in the New Century:**  
**The Worst Decade Since the Great Depression**

**Part II:**  
**Reform the Flawed “Housing Stability Plus” Program**

January 24, 2006

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# State of the Homeless 2006

## Overview of the Report

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### Part I: At Halfway Point, the Worst Decade for Homelessness Since the Great Depression

- ◆ **Number of Homeless New Yorkers 44 Percent Higher than 1990s**
- ◆ **Number of Homeless Children 55 Percent Higher than Last Decade**
- ◆ **Long Shelter Stays for Homeless Children and Families**
- ◆ **City Creates Fewer Apartments for Homeless New Yorkers**

*> Detailed on Pages 4-13*



# State of the Homeless 2006

## Overview of the Report

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### Part II: Reform the Flawed “Housing Stability Plus” Program

- ◆ **Reduces Rental Assistance 20 Percent Annually**
- ◆ **Requires Families to Stay on Welfare – Blocks Transition from Welfare to Work**
- ◆ **Endangers Many Families – Gives Taxpayer Dollars to Slumlords**
- ◆ **Allows Unscrupulous Brokers and Landlords to Demand Illegal Side Payments from Vulnerable Families**

*> Detailed on Pages 14-22*



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## Part I: Homelessness in the New Century

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### At Halfway Point, the Worst Decade for Homelessness Since the Great Depression

- ◆ At the midpoint of the decade, the number of homeless New Yorkers in shelters is 44 percent higher than in the 1990s.
- ◆ Despite recent moderate declines, since June the New York City homeless shelter population has leveled off at nearly 32,000 people per night.
- ◆ Homeless families still make up three-quarters of the shelter population, and families now stay in shelters for nearly a year.
- ◆ Amidst cutbacks in Federal housing programs and soaring rents citywide, further declines in homelessness are doubtful absent dramatic policy reforms by Mayor Bloomberg.

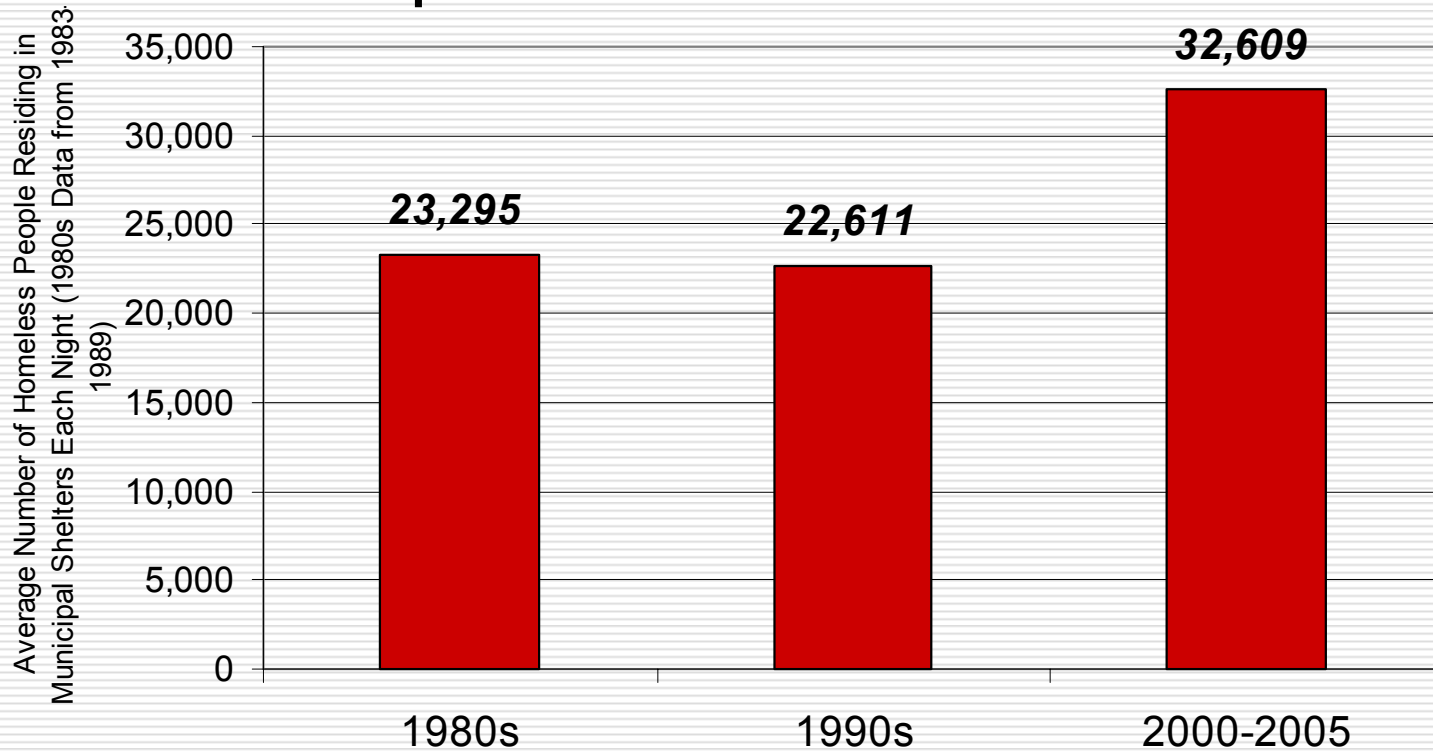


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## Current Decade's Homelessness Crisis

### Halfway Through the Decade, Homelessness Up 44 Percent from the 1990s

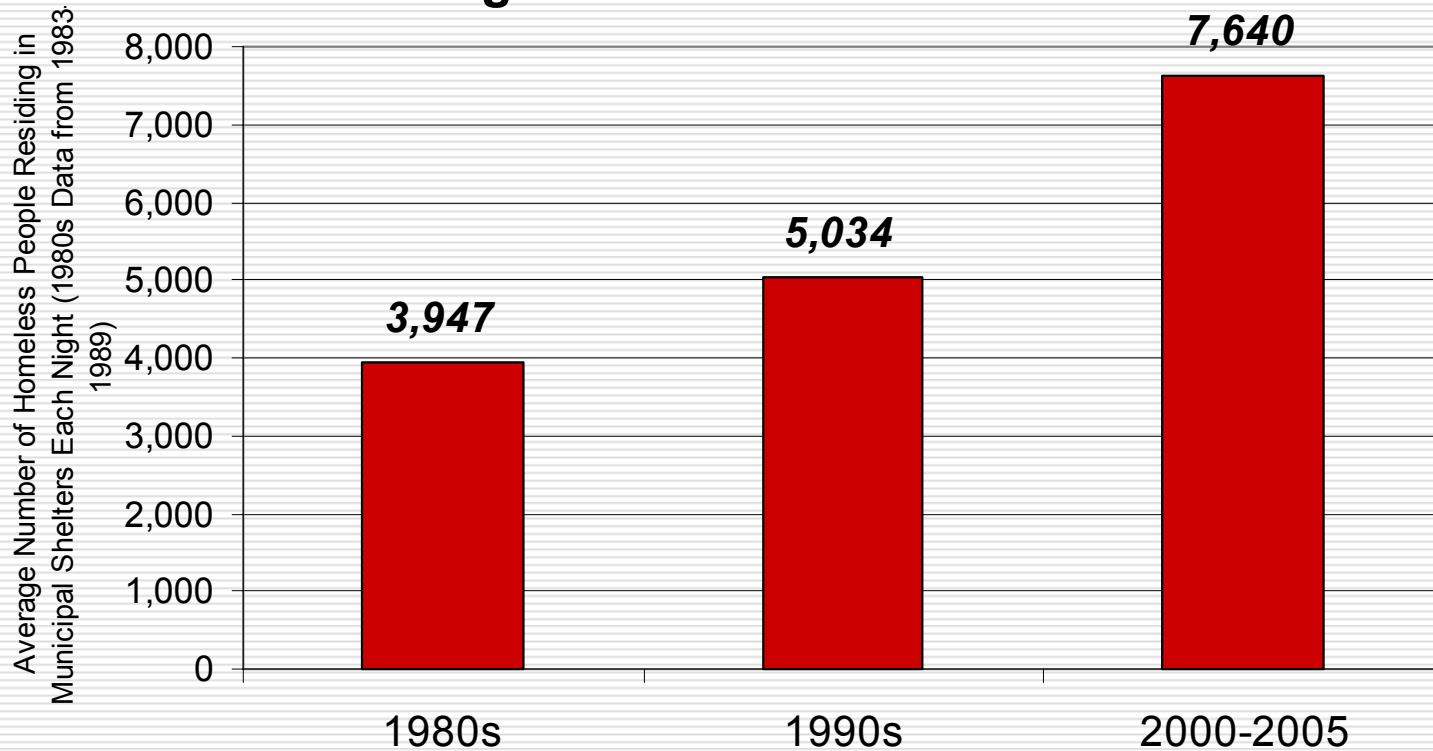




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## Family Homelessness Dramatically Higher

### Number of Homeless Families 52 Percent Higher than Last Decade

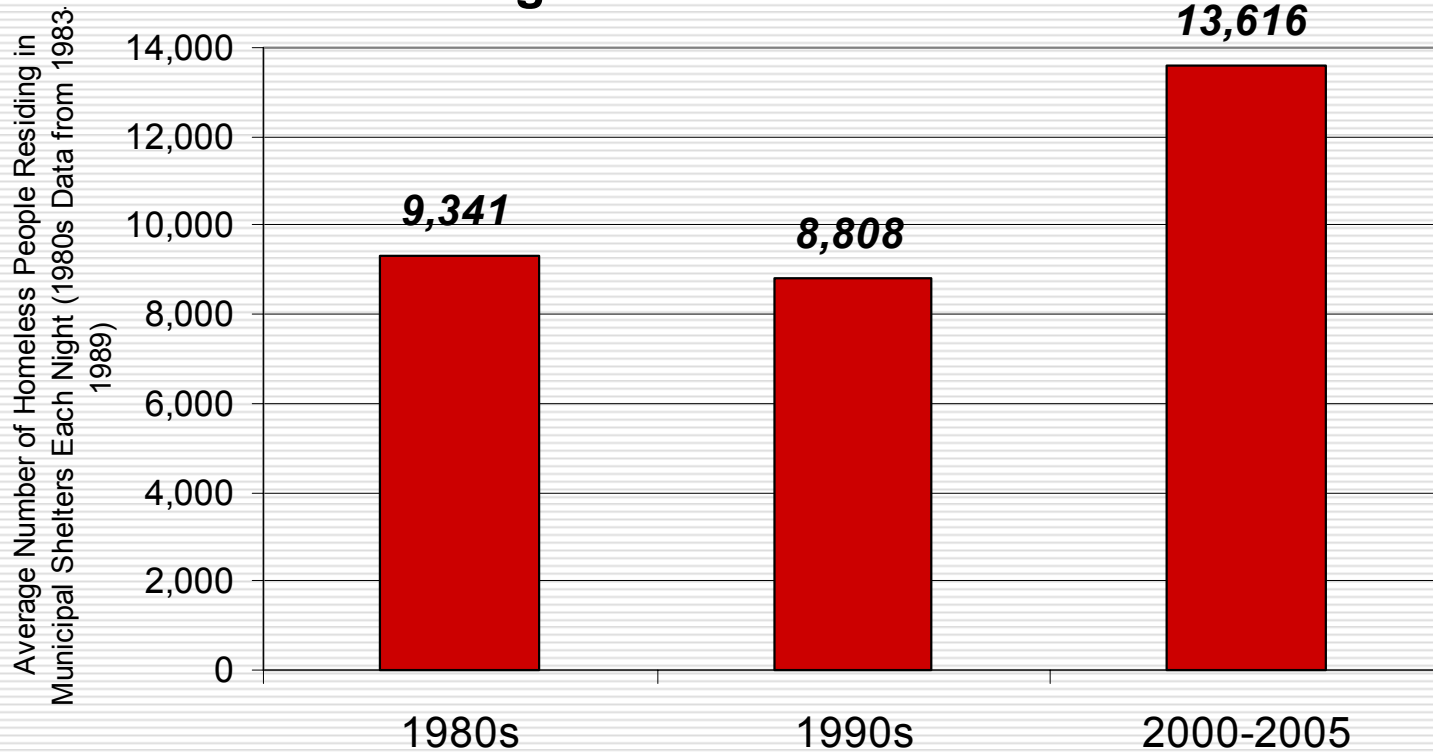




# State of the Homeless 2006

## More Homeless Children in New York City

### Number of Homeless Children 55 Percent Higher than the 1990s

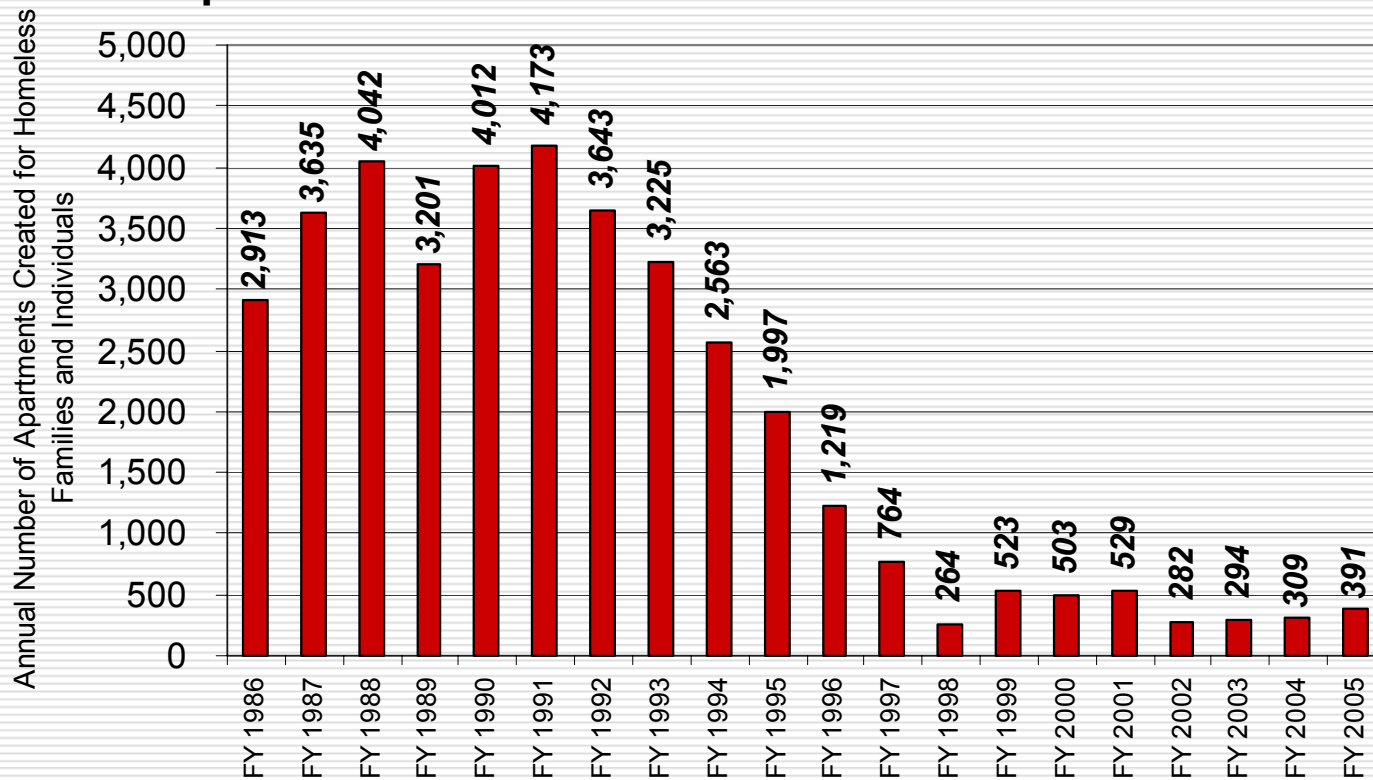




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## Fewer New Apartments Created for the Homeless

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





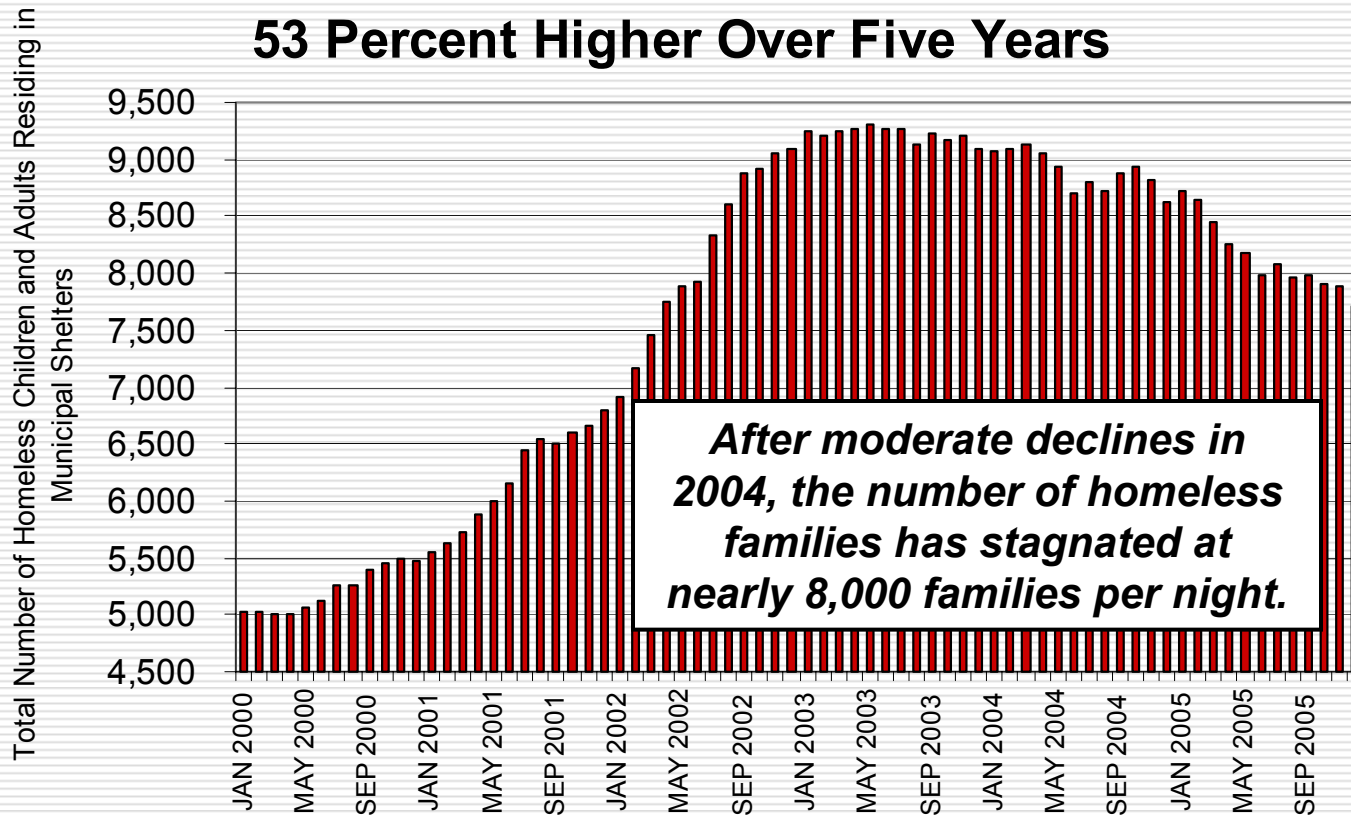




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## Family Homelessness in the New Century

### Number of Homeless Families 53 Percent Higher Over Five Years

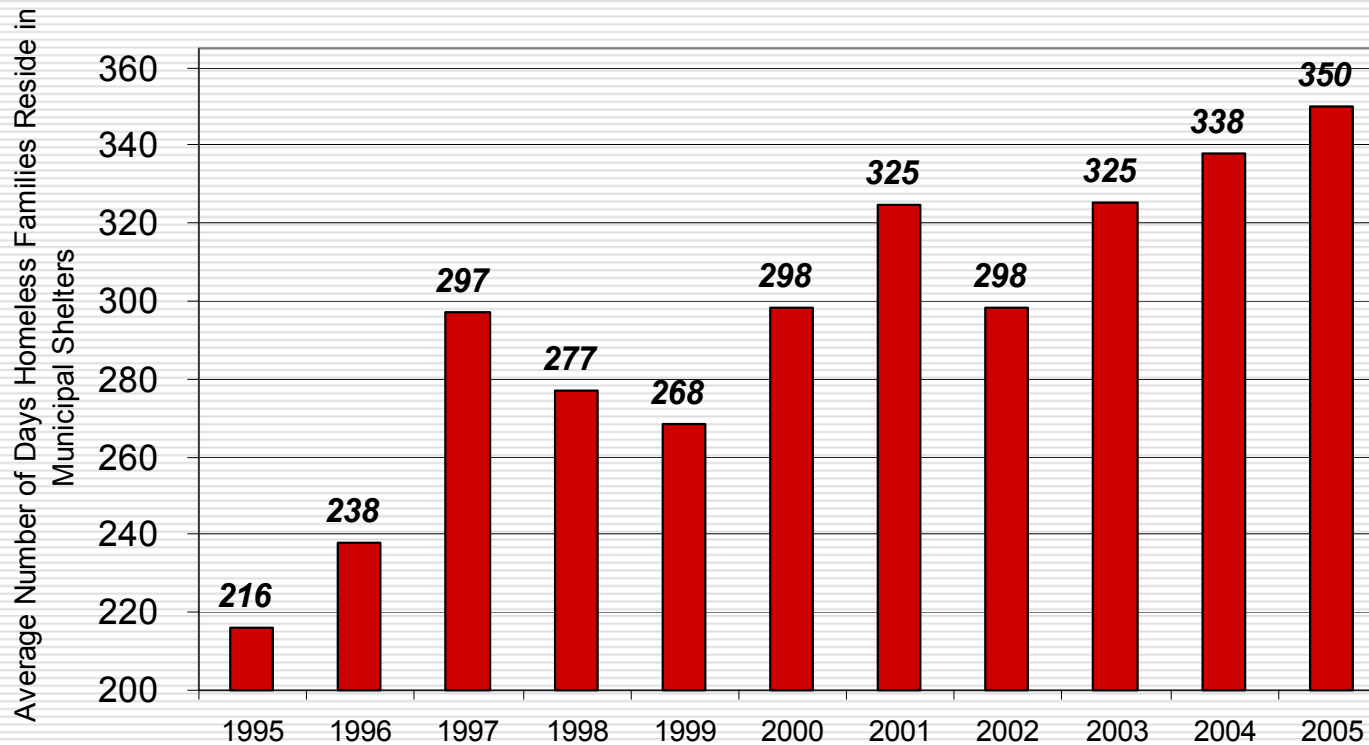




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## Long Shelter Stays for Homeless Families

### Homeless Children and Families Now Stay in Shelters for Nearly One Year



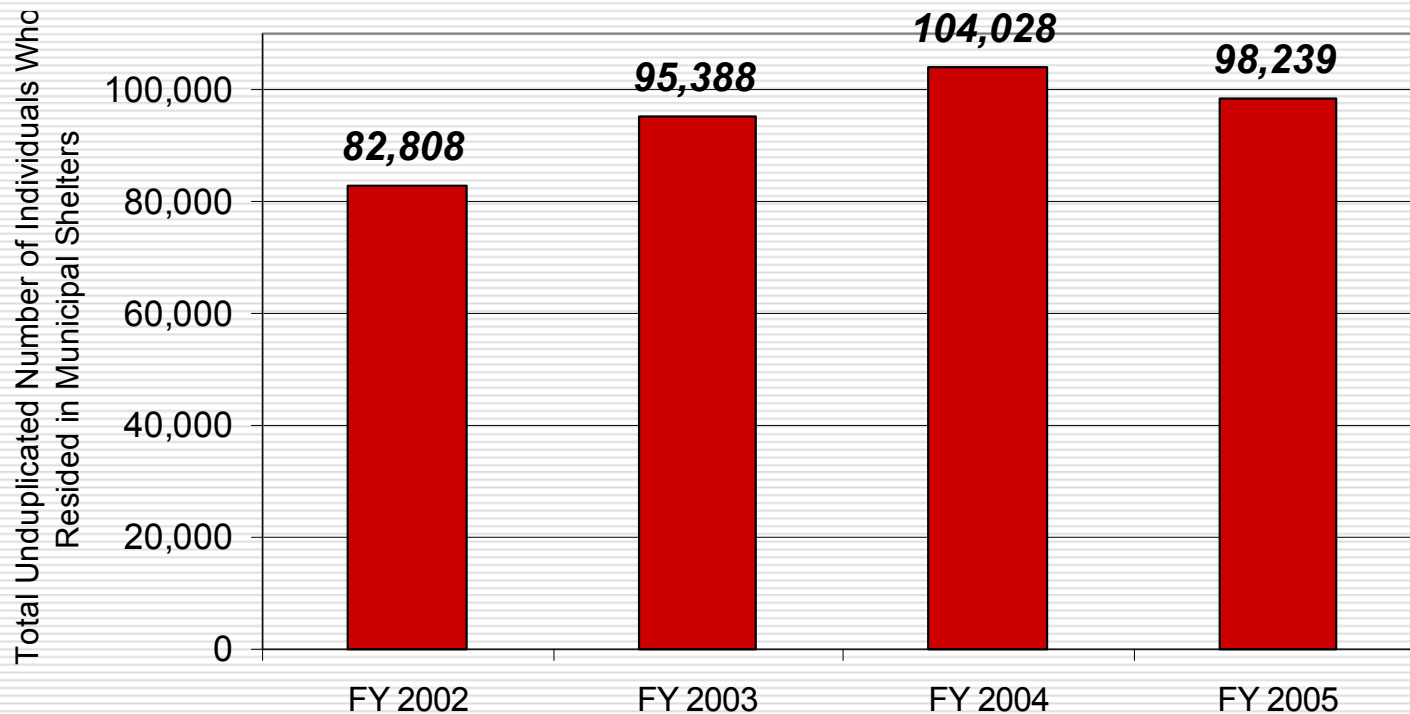


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## More New Yorkers Turn to Shelters

### 16 Percent More New Yorkers Experienced Homelessness During Past Four Years

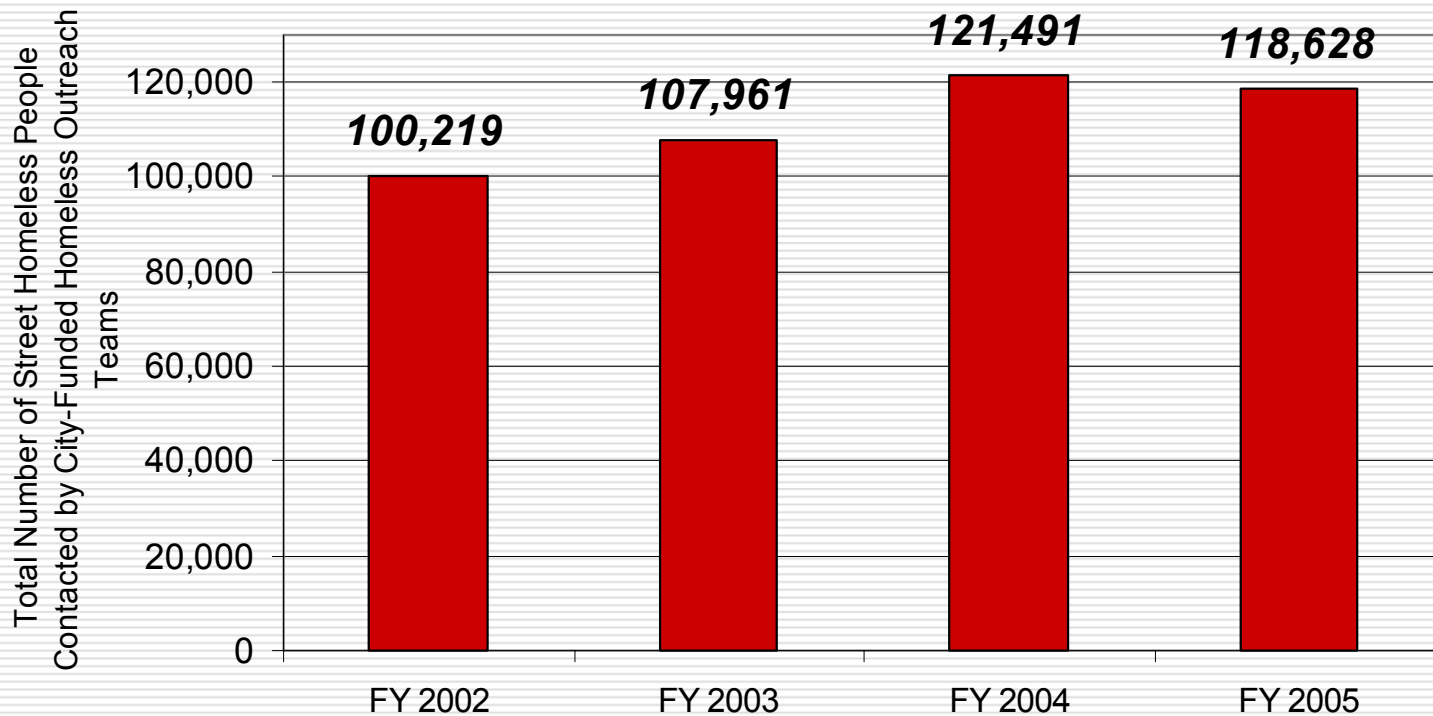




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## More Street Homelessness

### Outreach Teams Contacted 18 Percent More Street Homeless People Over Four Years





# State of the Homeless 2006

## Part II: Reform “Housing Stability Plus”

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### Overview of “Housing Stability Plus”: A Flawed Program in Need of Reform

- ◆ Since June the New York City homeless shelter population has leveled off at nearly 32,000 people per night. Reductions in homelessness in 2004 and early 2005 were due to the City’s use of Federal housing programs, such as Section 8 vouchers, which have been cut back by the Bush Administration.
- ◆ In the past year, the City has failed to meet its own targets for housing placements through “Housing Stability Plus.” Many reputable landlords are wary of participating in a program that cuts housing assistance for families every year.
- ◆ Without reforms, “Housing Stability Plus” creates a revolving door to homelessness for thousands of poor families.



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## Major Flaws in “Housing Stability Plus”

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### **“Housing Stability Plus”: The Major Flaws in Need of Reform**

- 1. Reduces Rental Assistance 20 Percent Annually**
- 2. Requires Families to Stay on Welfare**
- 3. Endangers Many Families, and Gives Taxpayer Dollars to Slumlords**
- 4. Allows Unscrupulous Brokers and Landlords to Demand Illegal Side Payments from Vulnerable Families**



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## HSP Flaws: Shrinking Housing Assistance

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### 1. Shrinking Housing Assistance for Needy Families

- ◆ **The “Housing Stability Plus” program reduces families’ rent supplements by 20 percent every year, and then ends it after five years.**
- ◆ **Most families will be unable to shoulder this annual “rent hike.”**
- ◆ **Many families will be forced to return to the shelter system, creating a “revolving door.”**

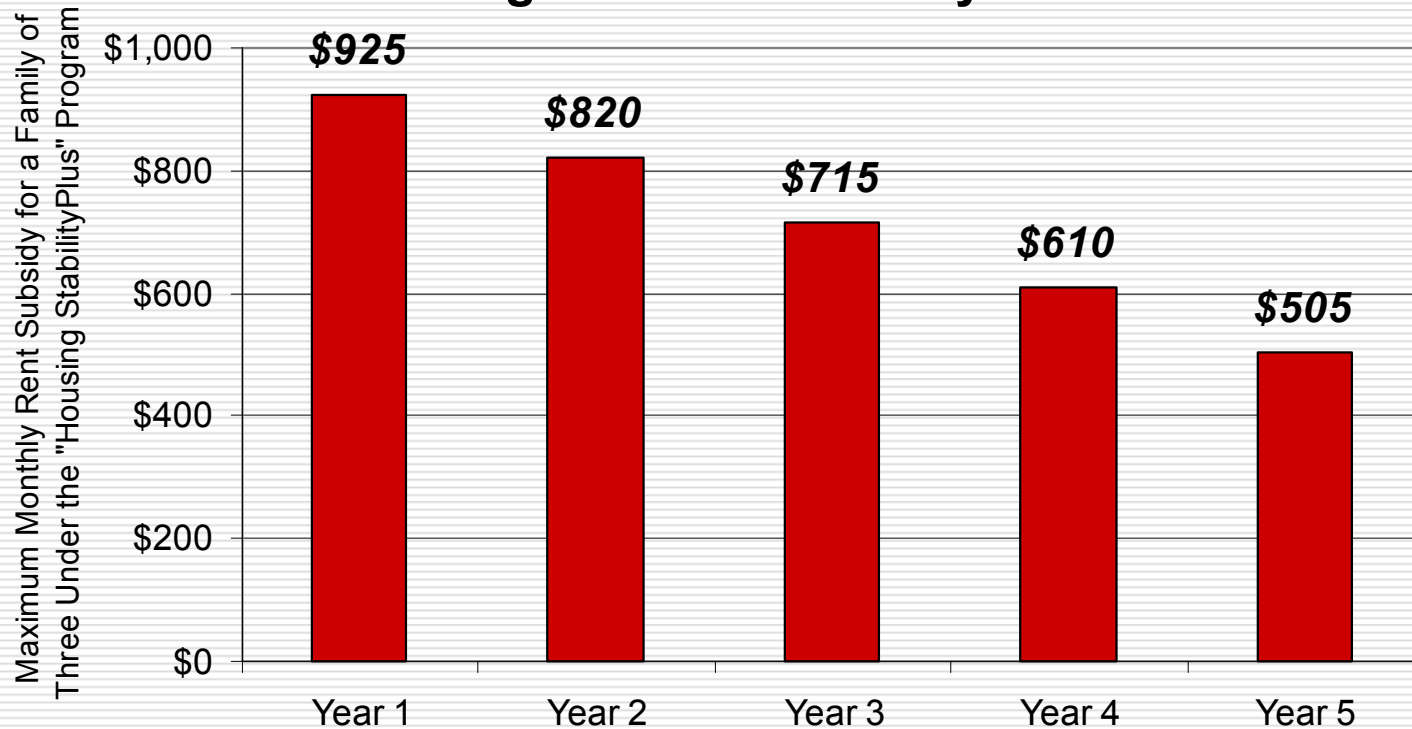




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## HSP Flaws: Declining Rental Assistance

### "Housing Stability Plus" Program Reduces Housing Assistance Every Year





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## HSP Flaws: Welfare Rules Block Employment

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### 2. Requires Families to Stay on Welfare

- ◆ **“Housing Stability Plus” requires families to stay on welfare.**
- ◆ **Under HSP rules, families lose their rental assistance if they secure employment.**
- ◆ **City and State officials have refused to create a “work support” component for HSP, harming families striving for self-sufficiency.**
- ◆ **HSP rules also exclude people with Social Security, disability and veterans benefits.**



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## HSP Flaws: Endangering Vulnerable Families

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### 3. Endangers Families and Subsidizes Slumlords

- ◆ **“Housing Stability Plus” subsidies are paid to many landlords already cited by the City for dangerous housing code violations.**
- ◆ **In a recent survey, 41 percent of HSP buildings met the City’s own criteria for an “unsatisfactory” building.**
- ◆ **City officials have so far refused to require repairs and re-inspections before homeless families move into HSP apartments.**
- ◆ **Dangerous housing conditions are a major cause of homelessness.**

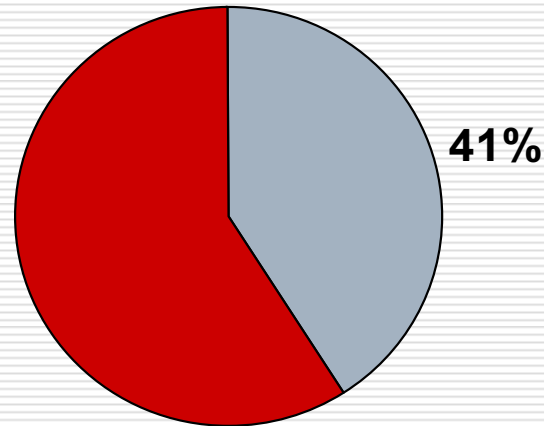


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## HSP Flaws: Subsidies to Slumlords

### 41 Percent of "Housing Stability Plus" Subsidies Go to "Unsatisfactory" Buildings



Source: NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, violations database. Based on a Housing Here & Now survey of 274 HSP buildings. According to the City, "unsatisfactory" buildings have three class "C" or "B" violations per housing unit.



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## HSP Flaws: Endangering Vulnerable Families

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### 4. Illegal “Side Deals” Demanded of Poor Families

- ◆ Many “Housing Stability Plus” families have been forced to pay illegal “side deals” – payments over the legal rent – by landlords and brokers.
- ◆ Some illegal “side deals” amount to hundreds of dollars each month from NYC’s poorest families.
- ◆ City and State officials have so far refused to crack down on “side deals.”



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## The “Housing Stability Plus” Reform Plan

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### “Housing Stability Plus”: A Reform Plan for the Mayor

- 1. Eliminate the Annual 20 Percent Reduction in the Value of the Rent Supplement**
- 2. Allow “Housing Stability Plus” Recipients to Work**
- 3. Prohibit Substandard Housing from Receiving Subsidies**
- 4. Ban Illegal “Side Deals” and Brokers/Landlords Who Engage in Them**

*For details on the “Housing Stability Plus” reform plan, visit  
[www.coalitionforthehomeless.org](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org).*



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## Data Sources and Acknowledgments

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### Data Sources

**Homelessness data:** NYC Department of Homeless Services.

**Housing data:** Mayor's Management Report, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Housing Here & Now.

### Acknowledgments

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

For more information, please visit [www.coalitionforthehomeless.org](http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org).