Coalition for the Homeless
State of the Homeless 2008

Running in Place:
The Bloomberg Administration’s Failure to Change Course Amidst Rising Homelessness

March 27, 2008

- Last year, 102,187 different New Yorkers slept in homeless shelters, 5.8 percent more than the previous year and 23.4 percent more than six years ago.

- The NYC homeless shelter population remained at near-record levels, with around 35,000 people in shelters each night.

- 2007 was the worst year for family homelessness in modern history, with more than 9,000 families in shelters each night.
Part II: Highlights of the Year in Homelessness

♦ More NYC families seeking shelter, fewer homeless families moved to permanent housing.

♦ Bloomberg administration finally abandons “Housing Stability Plus” program – but replaces it with flawed “Work Advantage” program and still denies Federal housing aid to homeless families and individuals.

♦ City increases use of illegal boarding houses to shelter homeless adults, including many living with mental illness.
Part III: Three Immediate Steps to Reduce Homelessness

1. Restore priority for Federal housing aid – including Section 8 vouchers and public housing – to homeless New Yorkers.

2. Accelerate the development of permanent supportive housing for homeless people living with mental illness and other special needs.

3. Halt referrals of mentally-ill and disabled homeless New Yorkers to unsafe, illegal boarding houses.
State of the Homeless 2008
Part I: The Numbers

NYC Homelessness in 2007:

>> More New Yorkers experienced homelessness

>> Homelessness continues at near-record levels

>> 2007: Worst year for NYC family homelessness since the Great Depression
More New Yorkers Became Homeless

23.4 Percent More New Yorkers Experienced Homelessness During Past Six Years; 5.8 Percent More than Last Year

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Homeless Shelter Population Still High

NYC Nightly Homeless Shelter Population
Remained at Near-Record Levels

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Worst Year for Family Homelessness

2007 Was the Worst Year in Modern NYC History for Family Homelessness

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
State of the Homeless 2008
More Homeless NYC Children

Number of Homeless Children in NYC
Continued to Increase

End-of-Month Number of Homeless Children Residing in Municipal Shelters

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
State of the Homeless 2008

Majority of Homeless New Yorkers in Families

Families Make Up Four of Every Five Homeless People in NYC Shelters

- **14,219** Homeless Adults in Families
- **6,994** Homeless Single Adults
- **13,581** Homeless Children

January 31, 2008:
Total NYC Shelter Population 34,794 People

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Declines in Adult Homelessness

Number of Homeless Single Adults in Shelters Declines for Third Year

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
NYC Homelessness Nearing Record Levels

NYC Homeless Shelter Population Once Again at 35,000 Children and Adults

Average Number of Homeless People Residing in Municipal Shelters Each Night

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Four Mayors and NYC Homelessness

More Homeless New Yorkers During Current Administration

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
Highlights of 2007:

>> More NYC families seeking shelter, fewer homeless families moved to permanent housing.

>> Bloomberg administration abandons failed “Housing Stability Plus” program, but maintains other deeply flawed policies.

>> City increases use of illegal boarding houses to shelter homeless adults
Perfect Storm in 2007:

>> 10.7 percent more NYC families entered the municipal shelter system.

>> 6.9 percent fewer homeless families were relocated from shelter to permanent housing.
More Homeless Families, Less Housing Aid

More Families Entering Shelter, Fewer Families Moved to Housing, FY 2006-FY 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in Number of Homeless Families Entering the Shelter System</th>
<th>Change in Number of Homeless Families Moved to Permanent Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>-6.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mayor's Management Reports
More NYC Families Entering Shelters

Rising Number of Homeless Families Seeking Shelter -- Up 10.7 Percent Over Previous Year

Source: Mayor's Management Reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Fewer Homeless Families Moved to Housing

Number of Families Moved to Housing Declines for Fourth Year -- Down 6.9 Percent Last Year

Source: Mayor's Management Reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Part II: Highlights of the Past Year

Cutting Off the Homeless from Federal Housing Aid:

>> In late 2004, the Bloomberg administration dramatically changed City homeless policy – cutting off homeless from priority for Federal housing programs including Section 8 vouchers and public housing.

>> Bloomberg administration officials claimed “cut-off” policy would lead to fewer families seeking shelter – but more families have entered the shelter system each year.
Sharp Drop in Homeless Families Moved to Housing Using Federal Housing Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Families Relocated</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2003</td>
<td>4,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2004</td>
<td>6,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2005</td>
<td>3,674</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2006</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2007</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports
State of the Homeless 2008
Part II: Highlights of the Past Year

Less Housing Aid for Homeless Families Has Led to More City Taxpayer Dollars Spent on Emergency Shelter:

>> City now builds fewer City-funded apartments for homeless people than any time since the 1980s.

>> Over the past decade, total annual City expenditures on homeless shelter and services have doubled to more than $735 million.
Fewer New Apartments Created for the Homeless

Lowest Number of New City-Funded Apartments Created for Homeless Households Since 1980s

Source: Mayor's Management Reports
State of the Homeless 2008
More Taxpayer Dollars Spent on Shelter

Soaring City Expenditures on Homeless Shelter and Services (in $ Millions)

Fiscal Year Expenditures for the NYC Department of Homeless Services ($ Millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Expenditures ($)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 1996</td>
<td>$347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 1997</td>
<td>$390</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2006</td>
<td>$725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2007</td>
<td>$735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NYC Office of Management and Budget
City Increases Use of Illegal Boarding Houses to Shelter Homeless Adults:

>> City has referred hundreds of homeless adults – including many living with mental illness – to more than 65 unsafe, illegal boarding houses.

>> City housing and buildings inspectors have issued vacate orders to at least 11 illegal boarding houses due to health and safety risks.
State of the Homeless 2008
Homeless Adults Sent to Illegal Dwellings

Number of Homeless Adults Referred by City to Illegal Boarding Houses or "Independent Living"

- FY 2004: 3,457
- FY 2005: 4,440
- FY 2006: 5,172
- FY 2007: 6,666

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports
New City Policy Denied Shelter to Homeless Families:

>> In October 2007, City began denying emergency shelter to re-applicant homeless families – many children and adults forced to sleep in subways, parks, hospital emergency rooms, or other public spaces.

>> City data show high error rate on applications – last year 33 percent of all homeless families deemed “eligible” for shelter were forced to apply two or more times.
State of the Homeless 2008
City Mistakes on Shelter Requests

One-Third of Homeless Families Deemed "Eligible" for Shelter by City Forced to Submit Multiple Applications

Total Number of Homeless Families Deemed "Eligible" for Shelter in FY 2007:
11,792 Families

- 7,901 Families found "eligible" on first application
- 2,476 Families found "eligible" on second application
- 825 Families found "eligible" on third application
- 591 Families found "eligible" on four or more applications

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports
Three Immediate Steps to Reduce NYC Homelessness

1. Restore priority for Federal housing aid – including Section 8 vouchers and public housing – to homeless New Yorkers.

2. Accelerate the development of permanent supportive housing for homeless people living with mental illness and other special needs.

3. Halt referrals of homeless New Yorkers to unsafe, illegal boarding houses.
Facing Economic Downturn, City Must Act Now:

>> During the last two economic recessions (1990-1991 and 2001), New York City experienced significant increases in homelessness.

>> City officials can implement immediate reforms to help homeless families and individuals move rapidly from shelters to secure, safe, permanent housing.
NYC Homelessness Worsened During the Last Two Economic Recessions

Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, shelter census reports
1. Target Federal Housing Aid to the Homeless:

>> In late 2004, the Bloomberg administration cut off homeless from longstanding priority for Federal housing programs, including Section 8 vouchers and public housing.

>> In January 2007, Mayor Bloomberg announced that the City will give out 22,000 new Section 8 vouchers – none to the homeless.

>> Reversing the City’s misguided policy will move thousands of homeless families to permanent housing – and will save City taxpayer dollars spent on emergency shelter.
2. Accelerate Construction of Supportive Housing:

>> In 2005, the City and State signed a ten-year agreement to provide supportive housing for homeless people living with mental illness and other special needs.

>> However, more than half of the newly-constructed supportive housing – 3,276 units of the planned 6,250 new units – will not be built until at least 2011.

>> City and State officials should accelerate the development of supportive housing for homeless people with special needs.
3. Halt Referrals of Homeless Adults to Illegal Dwellings:

>> City has referred hundreds of homeless adults – including many living with mental illness – to more than 65 unsafe, illegal boarding houses.

>> City inspectors have issued vacate orders to at least 11 illegal boarding houses due to health and fire safety risks – forcing the residents to return to shelters or the streets.

>> City officials should halt referrals of homeless adults living with mental illness or other disabilities to illegal boarding houses.
Data Sources

All data used in this report is from the NYC Department of Homeless Services (including “Critical Activities Reports” and shelter census reports); the “Mayor’s Management Reports” for various years; and the NYC Office of Management and Budget.

Acknowledgments


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