



State of the Homeless 2012

If Not Now, When?

New Record High in NYC Homelessness

Mayor Bloomberg Has a Final Chance to Help
Homeless Kids and Families Escape the Shelter System

June 8, 2012

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Coalition for the Homeless State of the Homeless 2012

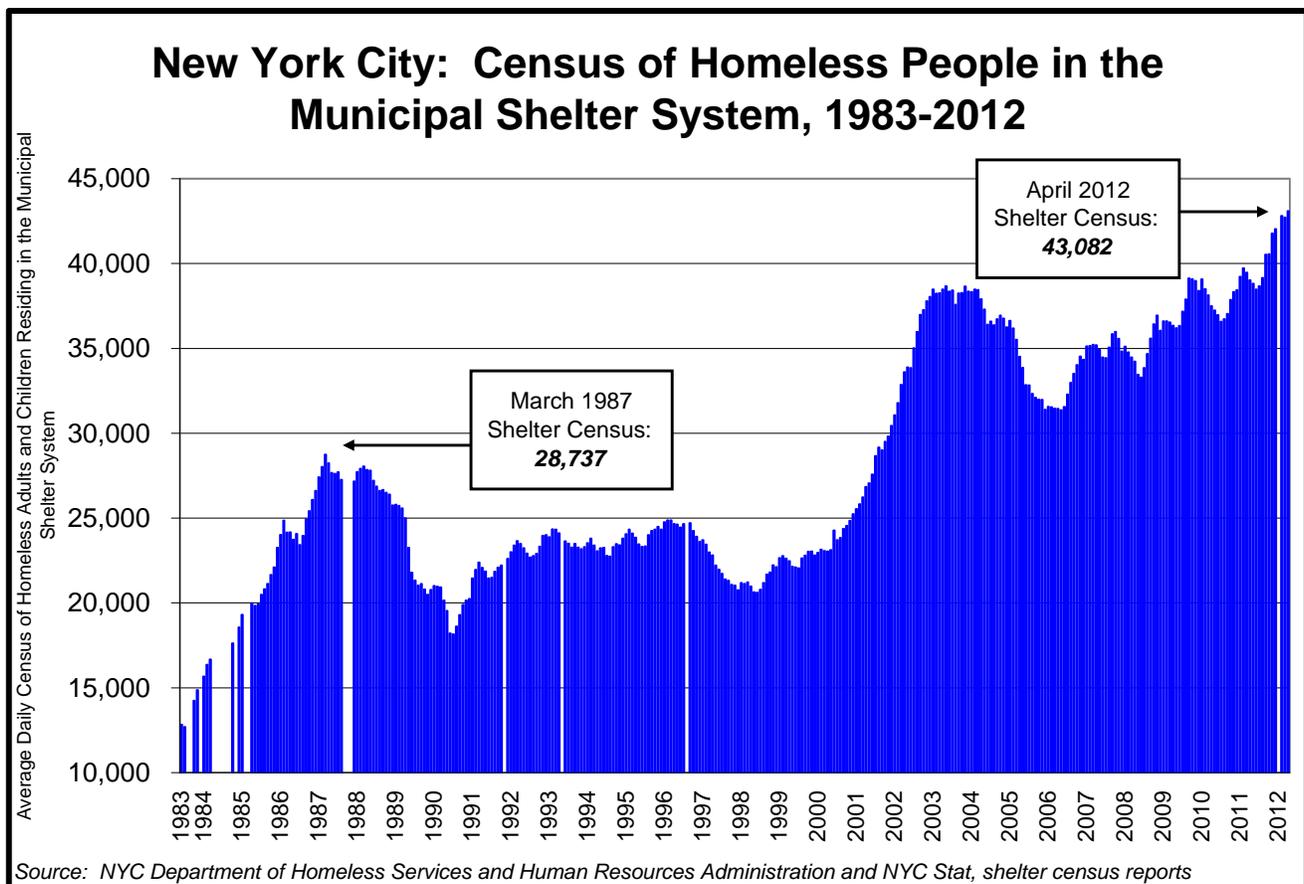
Over the past year, New York City's homeless shelter population soared to its highest levels ever, with more than 43,000 homeless New Yorkers – including a record 17,000 children – bedding down each night in municipal shelters. Indeed, by any measure, last year was the worst for New York City homelessness since the Great Depression. And one of the major reasons is that, for the first time since modern homelessness began, the City provides no housing assistance to help homeless children and adults move from shelters to permanent housing.

But even in the midst of this worsening crisis, Mayor Bloomberg still has a chance to reverse course. As he completes his next-to-last City budget, the Mayor can embrace proven solutions that will actually reduce New York City's homeless population; save taxpayer dollars spent on the expensive emergency shelter; and most important, help thousands of children and families escape the hardships of homelessness.

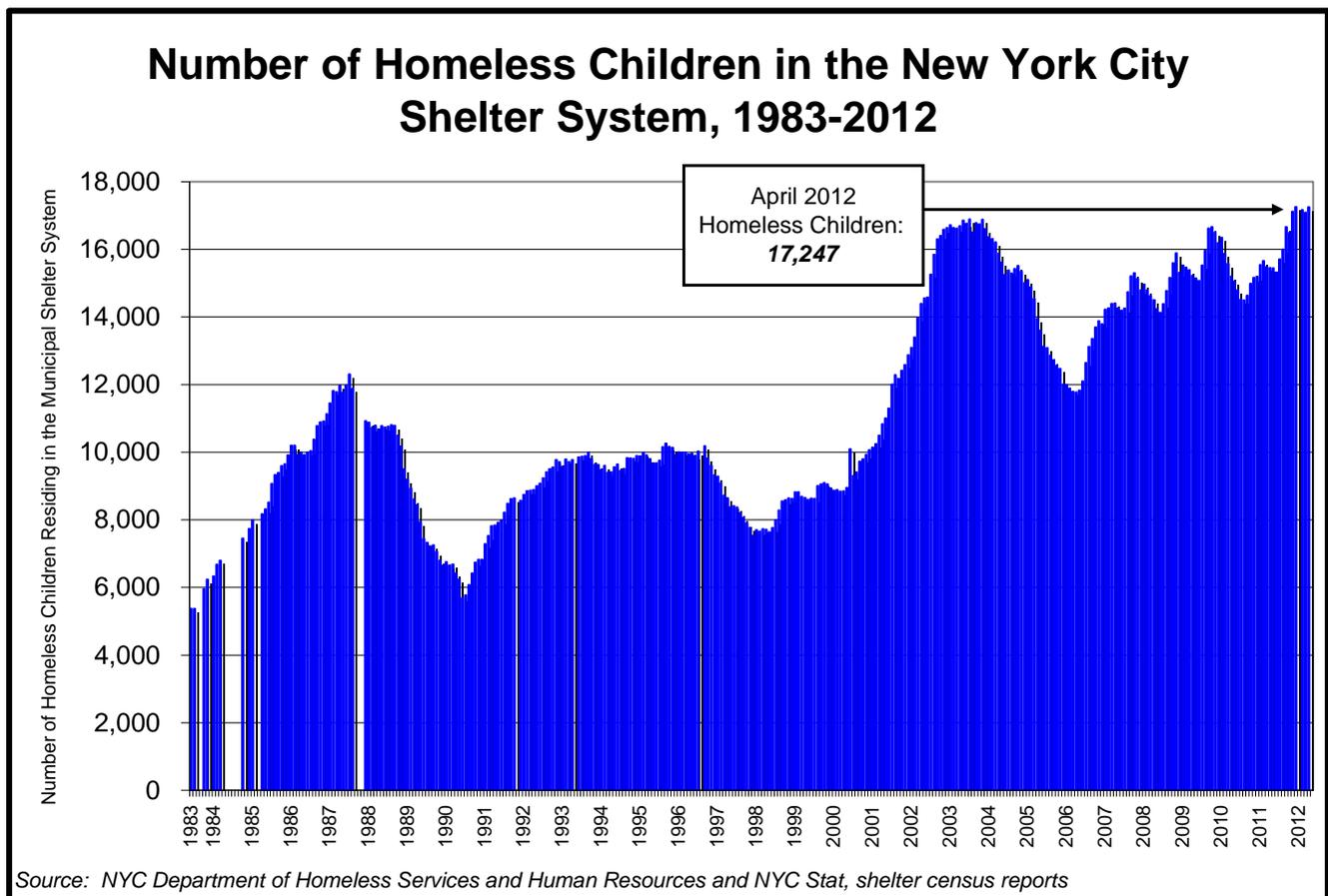
The Coalition for the Homeless urges Mayor Bloomberg to partner with New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn to enact her plan to restore priority use of Federal housing programs for homeless New Yorkers, as well as to create a new rental assistance program modeled on proven Federal rental vouchers. The Speaker's plan is designed to help thousands of homeless children and families move from the shelter system into permanent housing each year.

The Coalition's State of the Homeless 2012 report spotlights alarming new City data documenting yet another all-time record homeless shelter population, and shows how the proposed City Council plan would finally stem the tide of rising homelessness. Following are highlights of the report:

- **Homeless shelter population at all-time record high:** More than 43,000 homeless people – including more than 17,000 children – slept each night in municipal shelters in April 2012.



- ***Dramatic increase in homelessness:*** The New York City shelter population is 10 percent higher than the previous year, and is fully 39 percent higher than ten years ago, when Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- ***Number of homeless children at record highs and rising:*** More than 17,000 homeless children slept each night in municipal shelters in April, an increase of 12 percent from the previous year and a 32 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- ***Family homelessness at crisis levels:*** More than 10,000 homeless families slept in shelters each night in April, an increase of 8 percent from the previous year and a 49 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- ***Families stay longer in shelter system:*** Over the past year, the average shelter stay for homeless families rose by 28 percent, from nine months to nearly twelve months.
- ***More homeless single adults in shelter than any time since the late 1980s:*** For the first time since the late 1980s, there are now more than 10,000 homeless single adults sleeping each night in the shelter system, 28 percent more than when Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- ***More New Yorkers experience homelessness:*** During FY 2011, nearly 113,000 New Yorkers slept in the municipal shelter system, a remarkable 36 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- ***More children experience homelessness:*** During FY 2011, more than 40,000 children slept in the municipal shelter system, a 30 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.

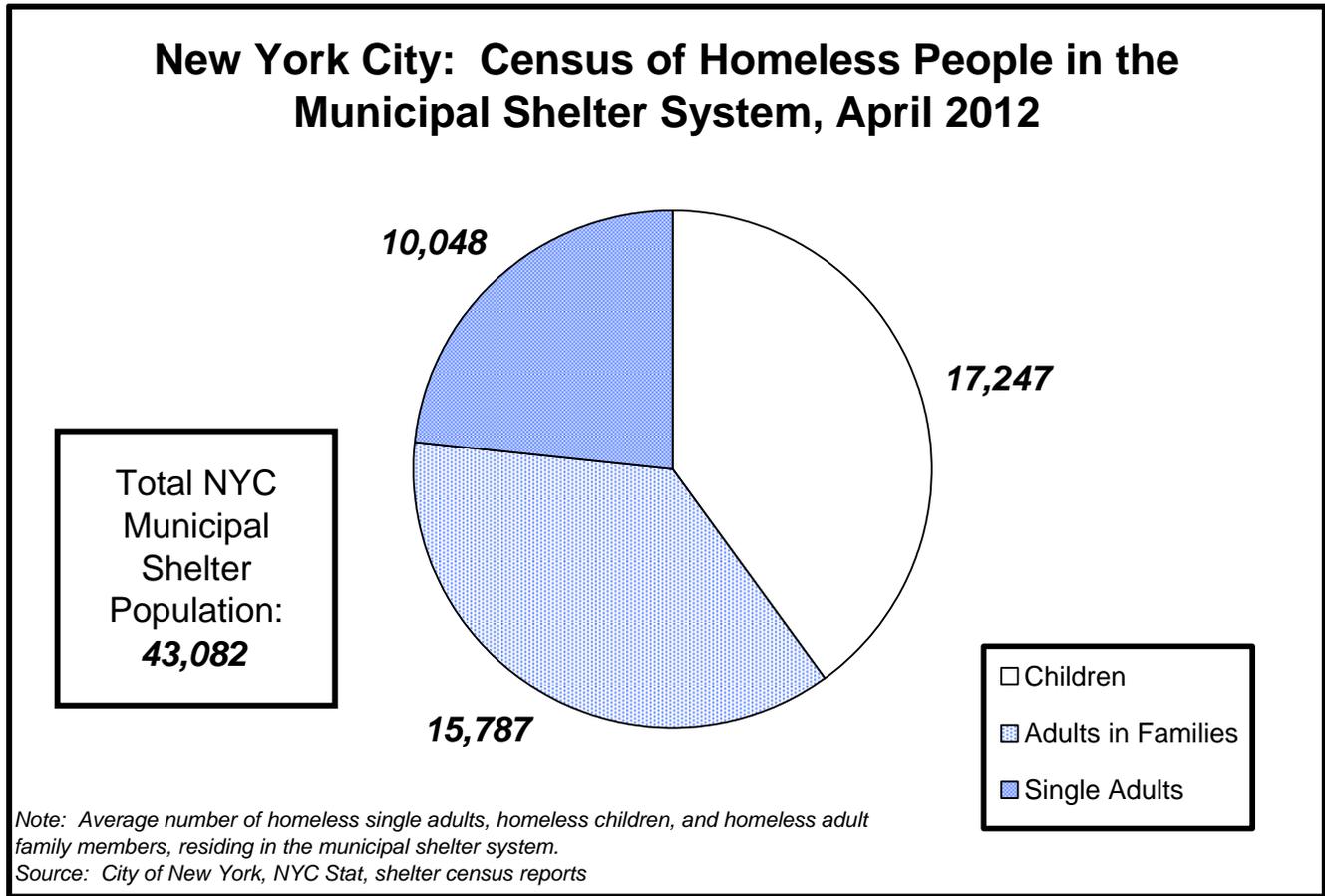


Part I

New York City's Homeless Shelter Population Soars to New All-Time Record High

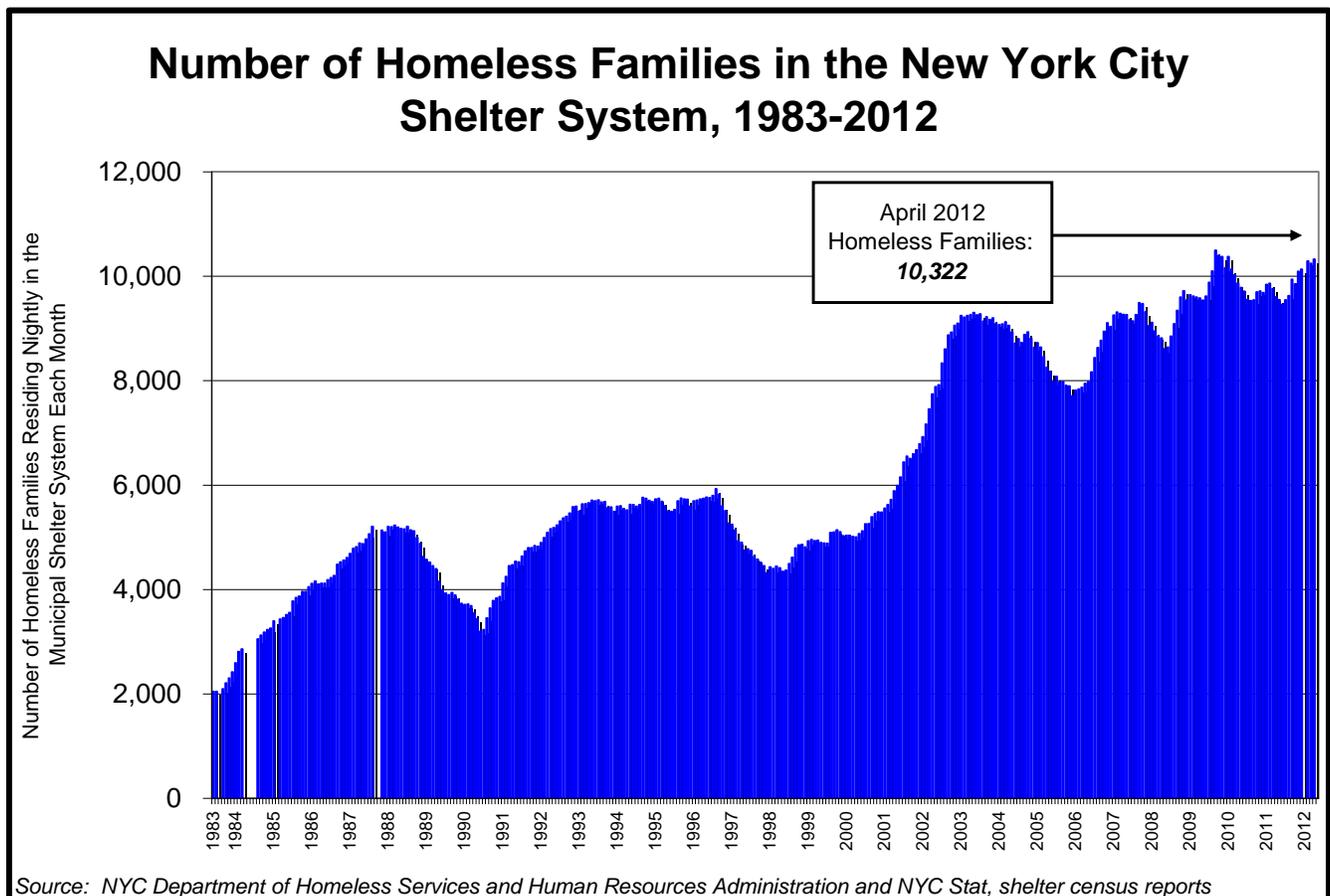
New York City's homeless shelter population has, during the past year, reached its highest levels ever, with more than 43,000 homeless New Yorkers – including a record 17,000 children – bedding down each night in municipal shelters.

By any measure, the past year was the worst for New York City homelessness since the Great Depression. Following is an overview of the past year:

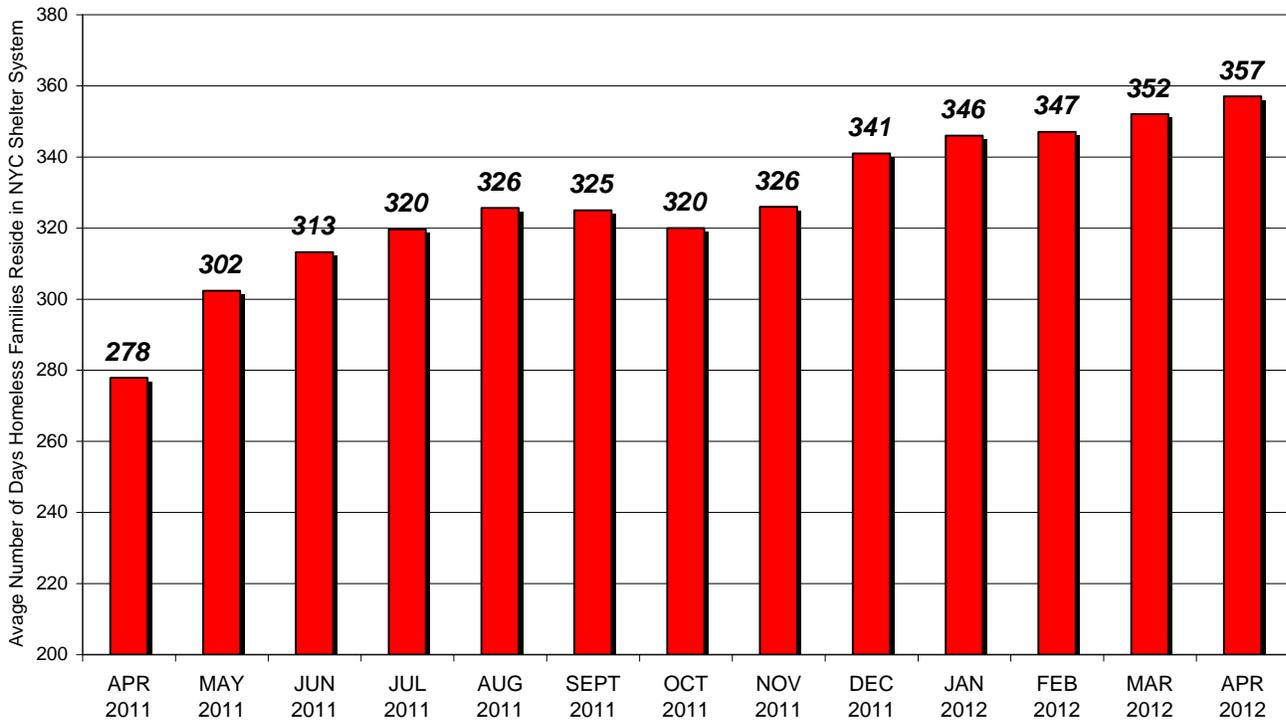


- In April 2012, the most recent month for which complete data is available, an average of 43,082 homeless people slept each night in the municipal shelter system.
- This represents a 10 percent increase from the previous year (April 2011), and is 39 percent higher than ten years ago, when Mayor Bloomberg took office (January 2002).
- In April 2012 an average of 17,247 homeless children slept each night in municipal shelters, and this year the number of homeless New York City children reached the highest level ever recorded.
- The number of homeless children in April, 17,247 kids, represents an increase of 12 percent from the previous year and a dramatic 32 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- In April 2012 an average of 10,322 homeless families slept in shelters each night, an increase of 8 percent from the previous year.
- The number of homeless families sleeping each night in shelters has risen by a remarkable 49 percent since Mayor Bloomberg took office.

- Over the past year (April 2011 to April 2012), the average shelter stay for homeless families rose by 28 percent, from nine months (278 days) to nearly twelve months (357 days).
- In April 2012, there were an average of 10,048 homeless single adults sleeping each night in municipal shelters, 28 percent more than when Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- For the first time since the late 1980s, there are now more than 10,000 homeless single adults sleeping each night in the shelter system.
- During FY 2011 (the last City fiscal year for which complete data is available), 112,689 New Yorkers slept in the municipal shelter system, a remarkable 36 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- The number of New Yorkers who slept in the shelter system in FY 2011 (112,689 people) declined slightly (less than 1 percent) from the previous fiscal year (113,553 people), but is still the second-highest number of New Yorkers using the shelter system since the City began keeping such records.
- During FY 2011, 40,238 children slept in the municipal shelter system, a 30 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.
- During FY 2011, 31,982 homeless single adults slept in the municipal shelter system, a 23 percent increase since Mayor Bloomberg took office.

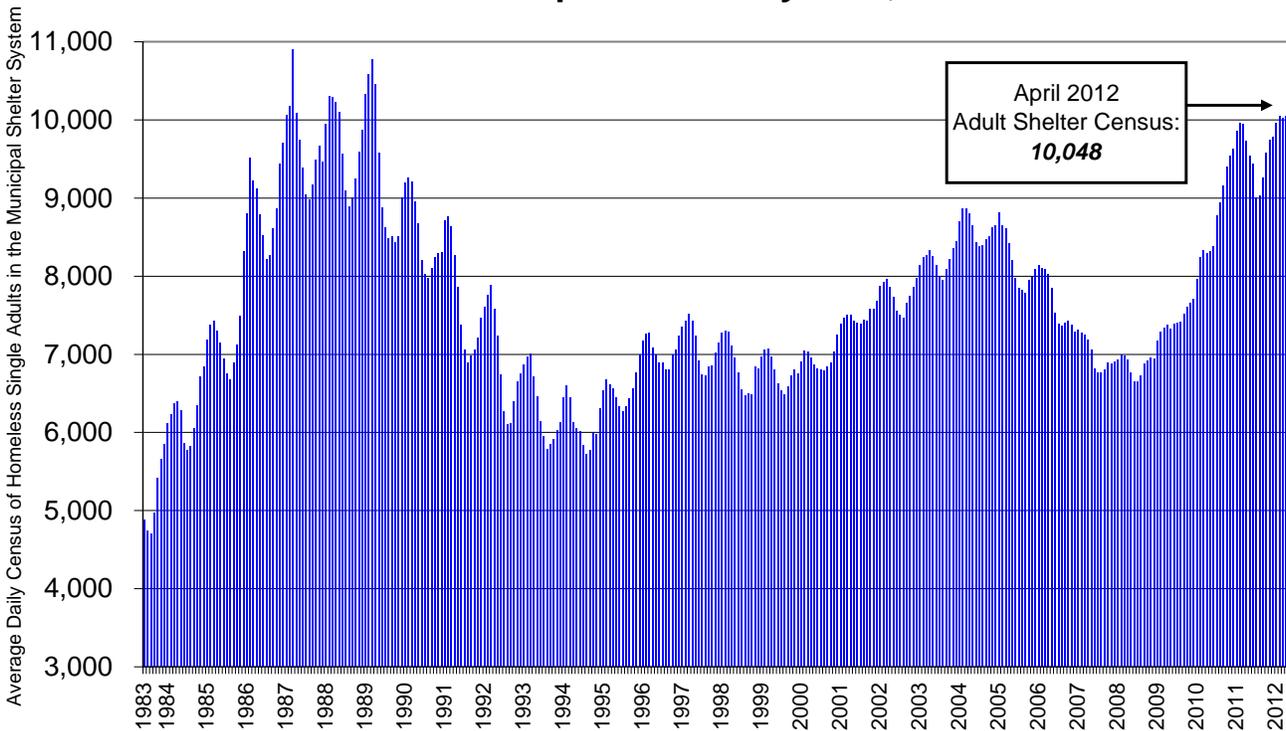


NYC Homeless Families Staying in Shelter Longer (Average Number of Days in Shelter System)



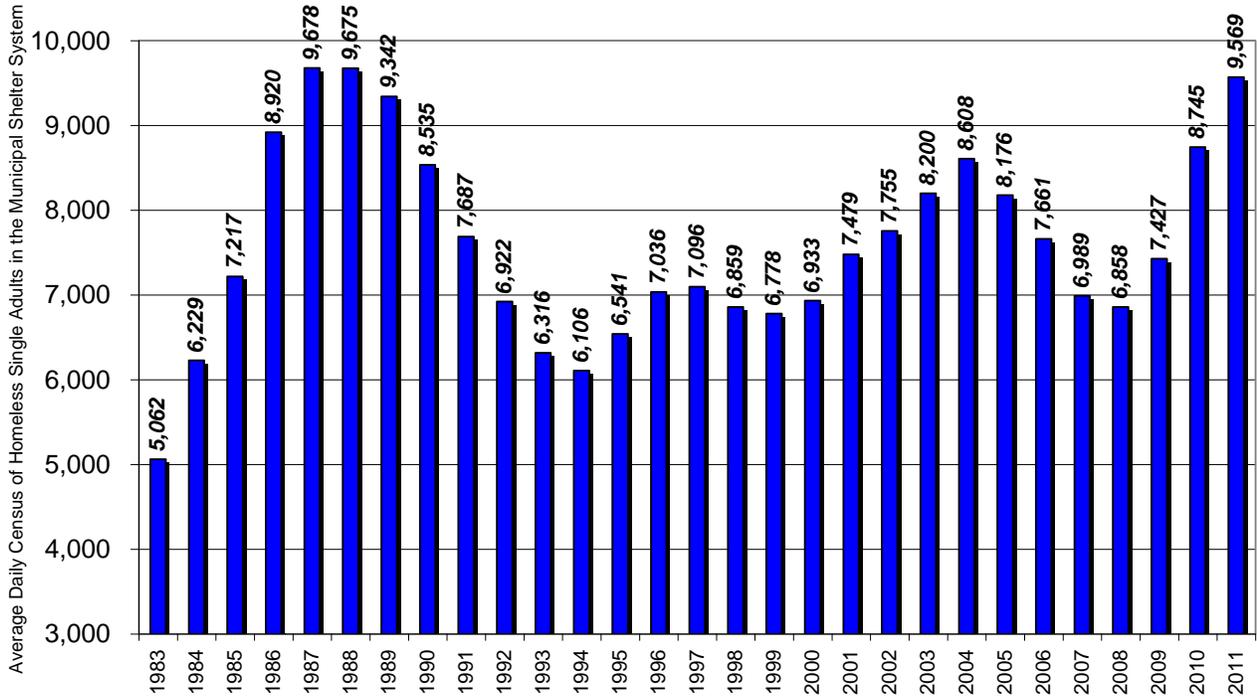
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, NYC Stat

New York City: Average Daily Census of Homeless Single Adults in the Municipal Shelter System, 1983-2012



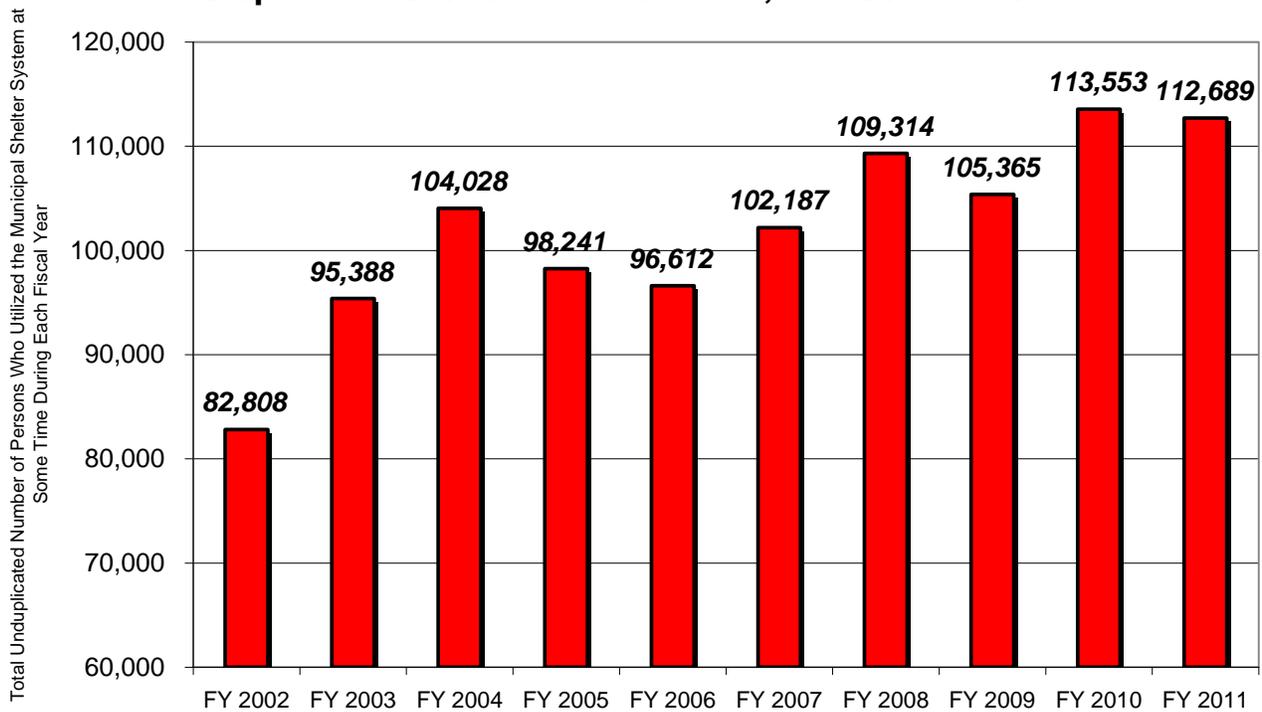
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYC Stat, shelter census reports

New York City: Average Daily Census of Homeless Single Adults in the Municipal Shelter System, 1983-2011



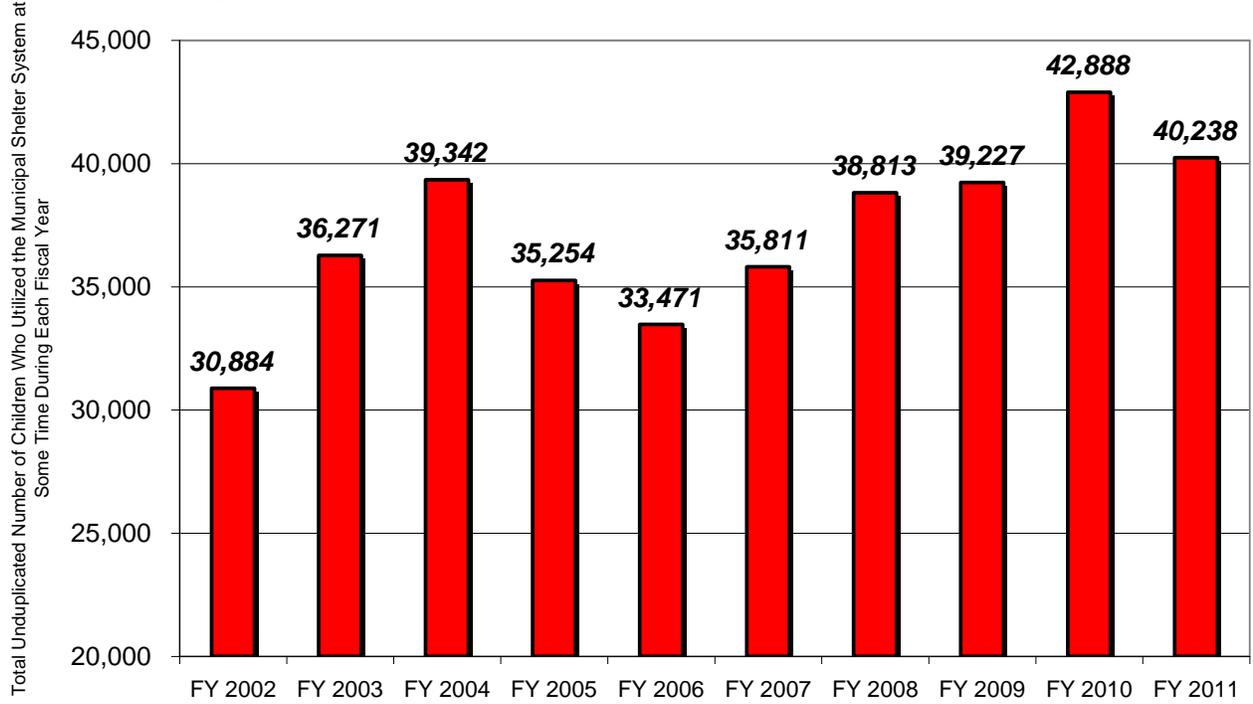
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYC Stat, shelter census reports

Number of Different Homeless Adults and Children Who Slept in NYC Shelters Each Year, FY 2002-FY 2011



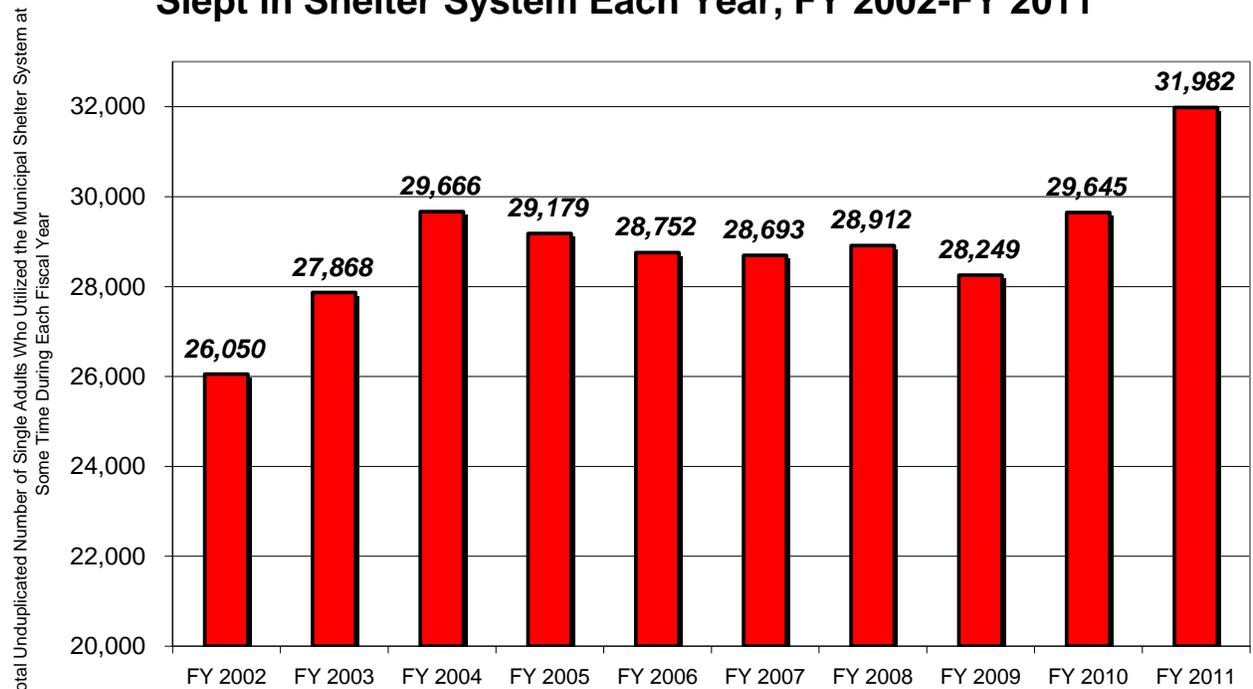
Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports

NYC: Number of Different Homeless Children Who Slept in Shelter System Each Year, FY 2002-FY 2011



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports

NYC: Number of Different Homeless Single Adults Who Slept in Shelter System Each Year, FY 2002-FY 2011



Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services, Critical Activities Reports

Note: FY 2008 through FY 2010 data do not include homeless adults residing in shelters for veterans and shelters for long-term street homeless individuals (i.e., "safe haven" shelters and "stabilization" beds), because DHS did not include this data in its reports.

Part II

If Not Now, When?

How Mayor Bloomberg Can Still Reverse Course and Help Reduce NYC Homelessness

Perhaps the biggest factor contributing to unprecedented homelessness in New York City is that, for the first time since modern homelessness emerged more than three decades ago, the City has no housing assistance for homeless adults and vulnerable children to escape homelessness.

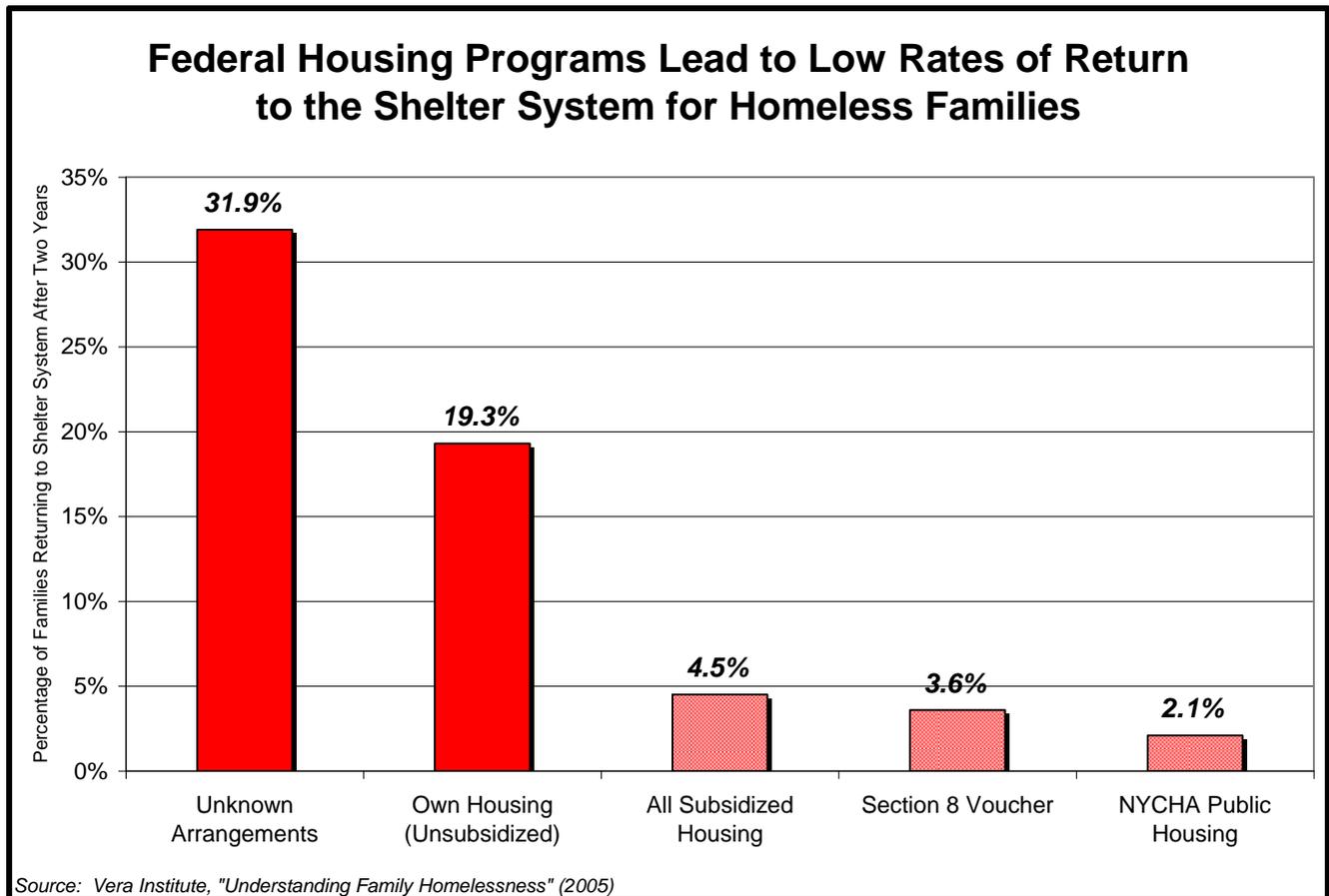
To address this glaring need, the New York City Council and Speaker Christine Quinn have proposed a plan to resume the priority use of Federal housing programs to help homeless kids and families leave the shelter system, and to create a new local rental assistance program modeled on Federal housing vouchers.

The City Council plan would return to the successful approach of previous New York City Mayors Koch, Dinkins, and Giuliani – and even Mayor Bloomberg in his first term. Following is background on the successful use of Federal housing programs to reduce homelessness and the City Council’s forward-thinking plan:

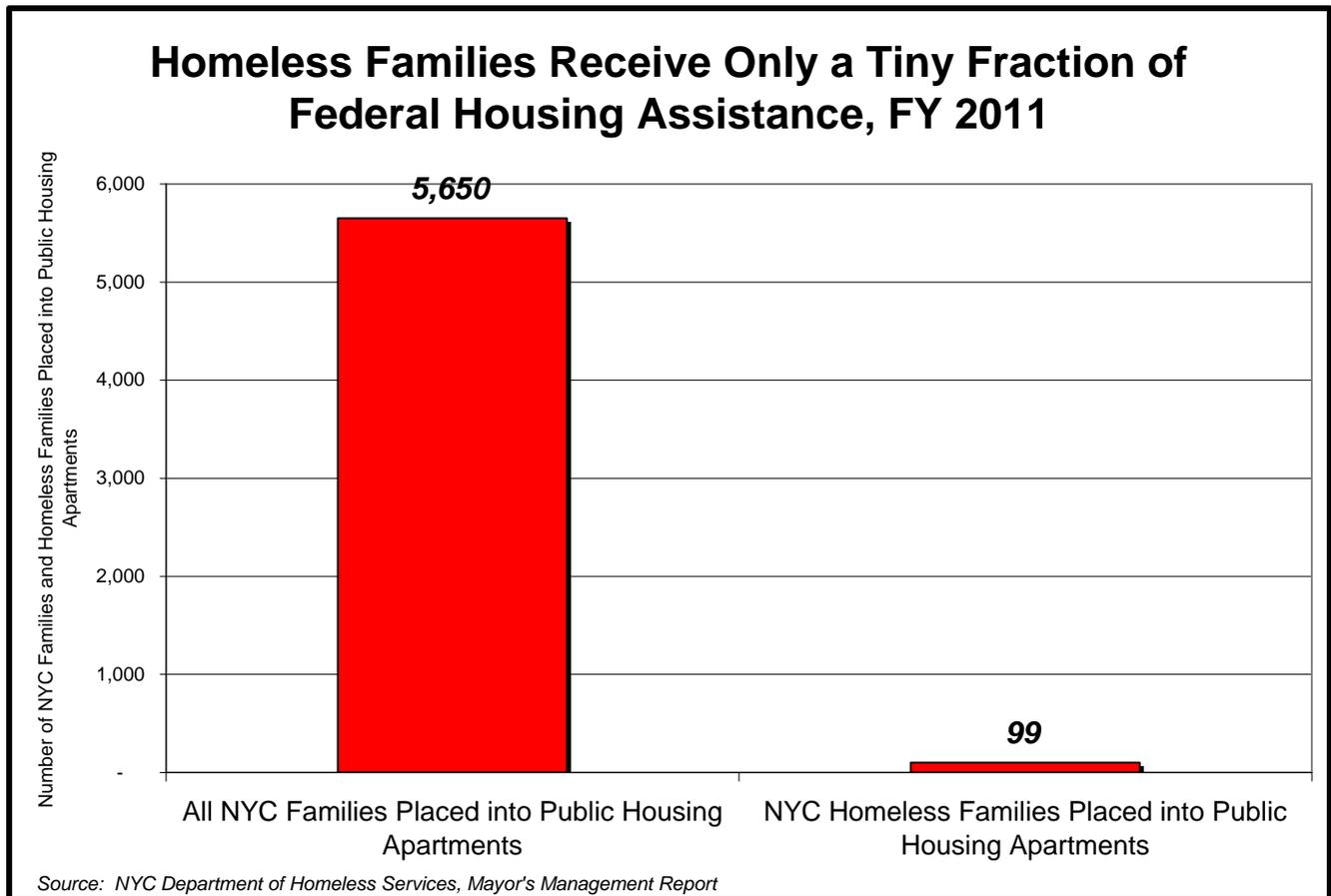
- Beginning under the Koch administration, the City of New York began helping homeless families relocate from the municipal shelter system to permanent housing by allocating a modest share of scarce Federal public housing apartments (administered by the New York City Housing Authority, or NYCHA) and Federal housing vouchers, known as Section 8 vouchers.
- From FY 1990 through FY 2005, under four New York City mayors, the City helped 53,302 homeless families – including more than 100,000 children – move to long-term, permanent housing (18,340 families with public housing and 34,962 families with Section 8 vouchers).



- Over the same period, an additional 11,292 homeless families with more than 20,000 children were moved from shelters to City-funded apartments assisted by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development.
- The priority use of Federal housing programs, begun by Mayor Koch, was continued under Mayors Dinkins and Giuliani and even under Mayor Bloomberg in his first term, when it contributed to a significant reduction in family homelessness from 2003 to 2004.
- Academic research over two decades shows overwhelmingly that homeless families who exit the shelter system with Federal housing assistance have the lowest rates of return to shelter.
- In contrast, families who exit the shelter system with no housing subsidies have the highest rates of return to shelter – in some studies, half of all such families return to homelessness.
- In 2004, the Bloomberg administration commissioned the Vera Institute to conduct a comprehensive study of family homelessness. The City-commissioned Vera Institute study found that families leaving the New York City shelter system with Federal housing assistance have very low rates of return to shelter.
- According to the City-commissioned Vera Institute study, only 2.1 percent of families who left to NYCHA public housing returned to shelter after two years, and only 3.6 percent of families leaving with Section 8 vouchers returned after two years.
- In contrast, the Vera Institute study found that, after two years, 31.9 percent of families leaving shelter to unknown arrangements returned to the system, and 19.3 percent who left to unsubsidized housing also returned to shelter.



- Nevertheless, in October 2004 the Bloomberg administration announced its break with the successful policy of using Federal housing programs, with the denial policy fully implemented a year later.
- As a result of Mayor Bloomberg's denial policy, in FY 2011, when the number of homeless children and families reached all-time record highs, the City assisted only 202 families with Federal housing programs (99 families with public housing and 103 families with Section 8 vouchers).
- When the Bloomberg administration announced the denial policy in late 2004, City officials claimed that cutting off homeless New Yorkers from Federal housing assistance would lead to fewer families entering the shelter system. The opposite has happened.
- In FY 2005, when the Bloomberg administration first enacted the denial policy, 8,986 homeless families entered the shelter system. In FY 2006, the following year and before the economic recession began, 10,251 homeless families entered the shelter system, a 14 percent increase.
- In FY 2011, 13,543 homeless families entered the shelter system, a remarkable 51 percent more than in FY 2005, the year the denial policy was implemented.
- During the period when the City used Federal housing resources (FY 1990-FY 2005), an average of 5,916 homeless families resided each night in municipal shelters.
- In the period since the Bloomberg administration enacted its denial policy (FY 2006-FY 2011), an average of 9,134 families resided each night in municipal shelters, 54 percent more than under the previous policy. In April 2012 there were an average of 10,322 homeless families with 17,247 children sleeping in the municipal shelter system.



- In late March 2011, the City terminated the flawed, time-limited Advantage rental assistance program for all shelter residents, which the Bloomberg had used since 2007 as a replacement for Federal housing programs. Since that time, the City has provided no housing assistance whatsoever to help homeless children and families move from shelters to permanent housing.
- In February 2012, New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn proposed, in her “State of the City” address, a plan to resume the use of Federal housing programs to help homeless New Yorkers and to create a new local rental assistance program modeled on the successful Section 8 voucher program.
- In her “State of the City” address, Speaker Quinn declared:

“As we work to provide all our neighbors with an affordable place to live, we can’t ignore the growing number of homeless New Yorkers. There are currently 10,000 families living in homeless shelters in New York City, some with children just a few months old. If these kids are going to have a fighting chance, we need to get their families back on the path to stable housing. But for many, our shelter system has become a dead end. Without a rental assistance program for the homeless, most families have no way to access long term housing.

“They either end up back on the street, or return to crowded shelters night after night. That’s not the New York City we know. This is a city that catches you when you fall, and helps set you back on your feet. That’s why Council Member Annabel Palma and I are calling on the City to create a new program to get homeless families off the streets, out of the shelters, and into their own homes.

“Working together we can create a brand new rental assistance program to help families cover rent in private buildings. And we need to prioritize homeless New Yorkers for NYCHA apartments and Section 8 vouchers, so we can get even more families into long term stable housing. By the way, this isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s the fiscally responsible thing to do. The average cost of a rental subsidy for a family of four is \$800 a month. To house that same family in a shelter? \$3,000.”

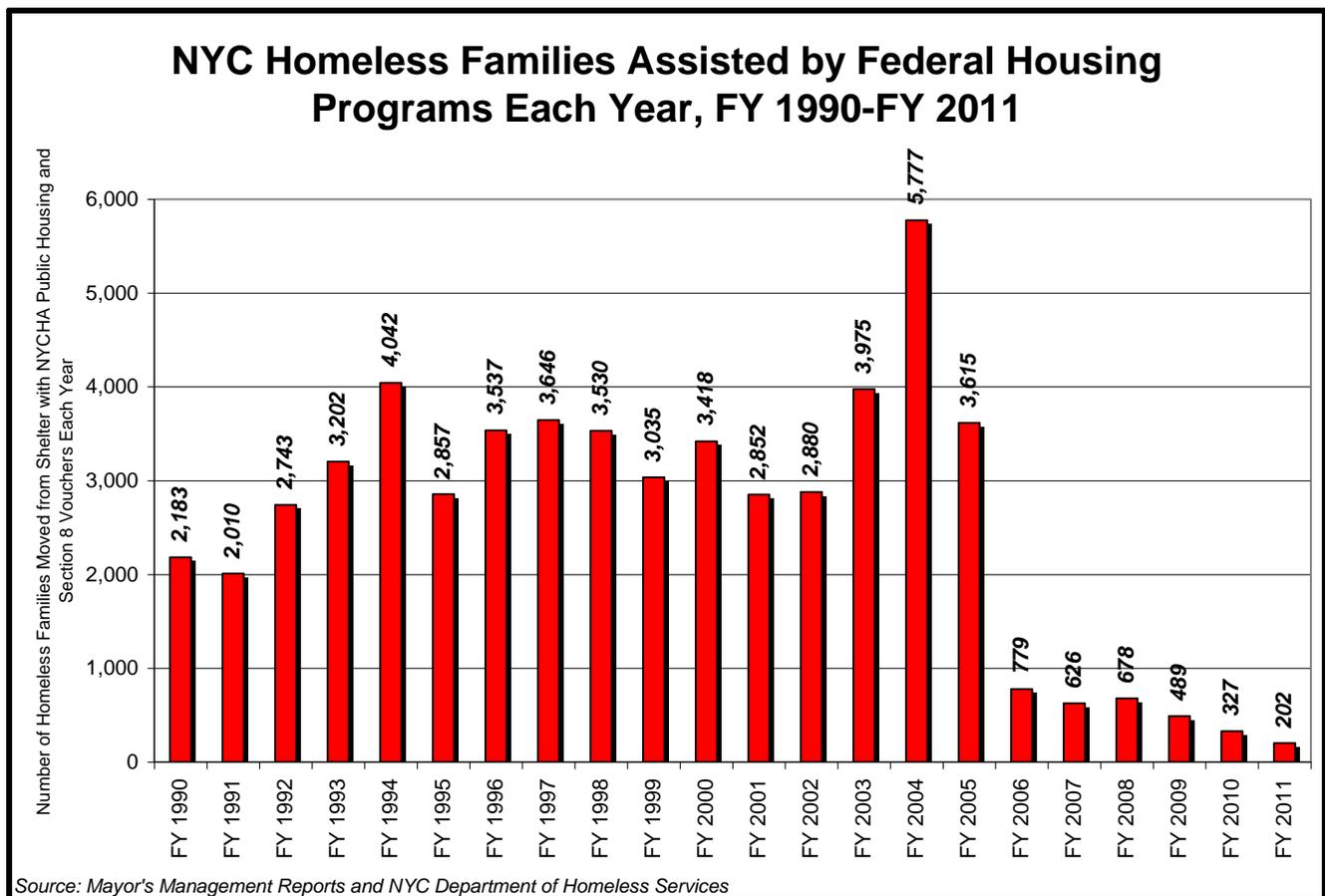
- In April 2012, the City Council included the homeless housing assistance proposal in its City Charter-mandated response to Mayor Bloomberg’s FY 2013 preliminary budget plan:

“A BETTER APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS

“The Council continues to call into question the Administration’s decision to terminate the Advantage program, which was the City’s sole rental assistance program for the homeless. The Administration decided it would discontinue the Advantage program – which provided rental assistance for homeless individuals and families for up to two years – when State and Federal support was pulled. At the time the City announced the elimination of the program more than 15,000 Advantage clients were accessing the rental subsidy program. The Council calls upon the Administration to prioritize a viable solution to keep former Advantage families currently in apartments housed.

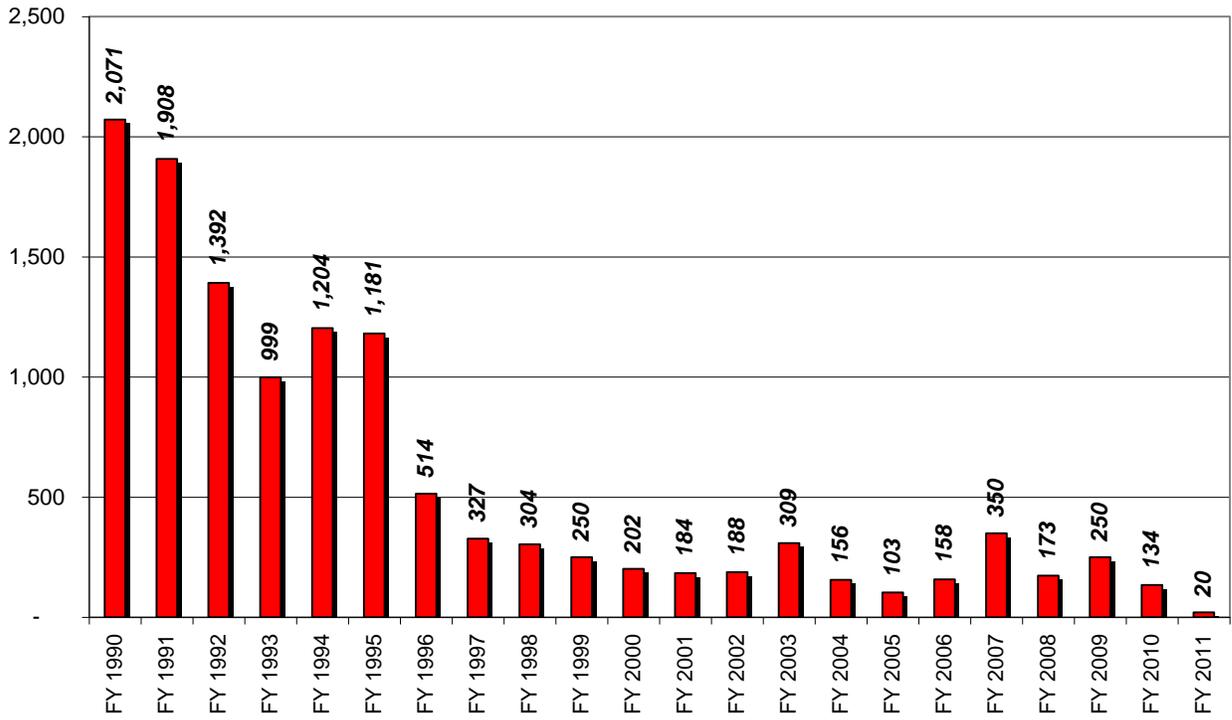
“The Department of Homeless Services’ (DHS) shelter census numbers are again at a record high after years of consistent increases, with over 40,000 adults and children spending the night in its shelters currently. The Council welcomes any opportunity to work with the Department of Homeless Services to identify and promote paths for homeless families and singles out of the shelter system and into permanent housing. Specifically, we encourage DHS to work with the Housing Authority (NYCHA) to restore the preference for homeless families for vacant NYCHA units and available Section 8 vouchers, as well as to work with the Council to create a pilot rental subsidy program to replace the Advantage program and help transition families out of shelter and into appropriate permanent housing.”

- The City Council plan can be enacted very quickly because the highest priority category for NYCHA-administered public housing and housing vouchers continues to be for shelter residents referred by the NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration – meaning those agencies merely need to resume such referrals.
- If enacted by the City, the City Council plan would result in housing assistance for thousands of homeless children and adults each year.
- The City Council plan would not only help thousands of children and families escape the shelter system and reduce the homeless shelter population. It would also save millions of dollars in City and State taxpayer dollars spent on the shelter system.
- Currently it costs an average of \$36,000 per year to shelter a homeless family in the municipal shelter system, with much of that cost borne by City and State tax dollars as well as Federal welfare dollars administered by the State.
- In comparison, the cost of providing a Section 8 voucher to house a family is approximately \$10,000 per year – less than one-third the cost of shelter – with nearly all of the cost paid for by the Federal government.
- The Coalition for the Homeless urges Mayor Bloomberg and City officials to enact City Council Speaker Quinn’s homeless housing assistance plan, and begin stemming the tide of rising homelessness in New York City.



NYC Homeless Families Placed into City-Assisted Apartments Each Year, FY 1990-FY 2011

Number of Homeless Families Moved from Shelter into Apartments Created or Preserved by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development Each Year



Source: Mayor's Management Reports, Department of Homeless Services

Notes on Data Sources

- Homeless shelter population data since September 2011 is taken from NYC Stat, administered by the NYC Mayor’s Office of Operations, and is published pursuant to Local Law 37 of 2011, which requires various City agencies to report accurate data on the number of people residing in City-administered shelters. This report uses homeless shelter population data from these reports consistent with shelter census reports published by the City since the early 1980s, and includes shelters currently administered by the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and three shelters for homeless families currently administered by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), which have been included in 25 years of previous shelter census reports. The NYC Stat reports can be found here: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/nycstat/html/reports/reports.shtml>
- For the period before September 2011, data for homeless families and children is from DHS’s “Emergency Housing Services for Homeless Families Monthly Report,” which has been published by the City since the early 1980s. This DHS monthly report includes approximately 200 families (with approximately 1,000 people) who reside in homeless shelters currently administered by HPD.
- For the period before September 2011, data for homeless single adults in municipal shelters is from the following DHS reports: (1) DHS daily census reports for shelters for homeless single men and women, which have been produced daily by the City since 1982; (2) DHS census reports for shelters for homeless veterans; and (3) DHS census reports for “safe haven” shelters, which are restricted to long-term street homeless adults. (Note that the large majority of shelters for veterans and “safe haven” shelters were once included as part of the DHS daily adult shelter census report. These shelters were “converted” to different service models beginning in 2007 and were then excluded, in various stages, from DHS daily adult shelter census report and from DHS’s website.) Data for homeless single adults also includes data for homeless people sleeping in DHS “stabilization beds,” which are also restricted to chronically street homeless adults, but only since July 2010; this data is taken from DHS “Critical Activities Reports,” available on the DHS website.
- Data about Federal housing programs, the Advantage program, and other housing subsidy programs is from the City of New York, Mayor’s Office of Operations, “Mayor’s Management Report” for various years, available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/html/home/home.shtml>, as well as from DHS “Critical Activities Reports,” available on the DHS website.

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