

HOMELESSNESS HITS HOME

A New York City Public Opinion Poll

OCTOBER 2013 an ICPH Public Opinion Poll

Homelessness is an issue that many New Yorkers are forced to confront every day—from passing a homeless person on the sidewalk or subway to facing homelessness themselves. A basic awareness of the growing crisis is unavoidable. But in a city as large and economically diverse as New York, it stands to reason that the thought of life without stable housing weighs more heavily on some people than on others. To better understand New Yorkers’ thoughts on homelessness, the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH), in conjunction with Baruch College, conducted a survey of local residents to see exactly how awareness and attitudes varied across the city.

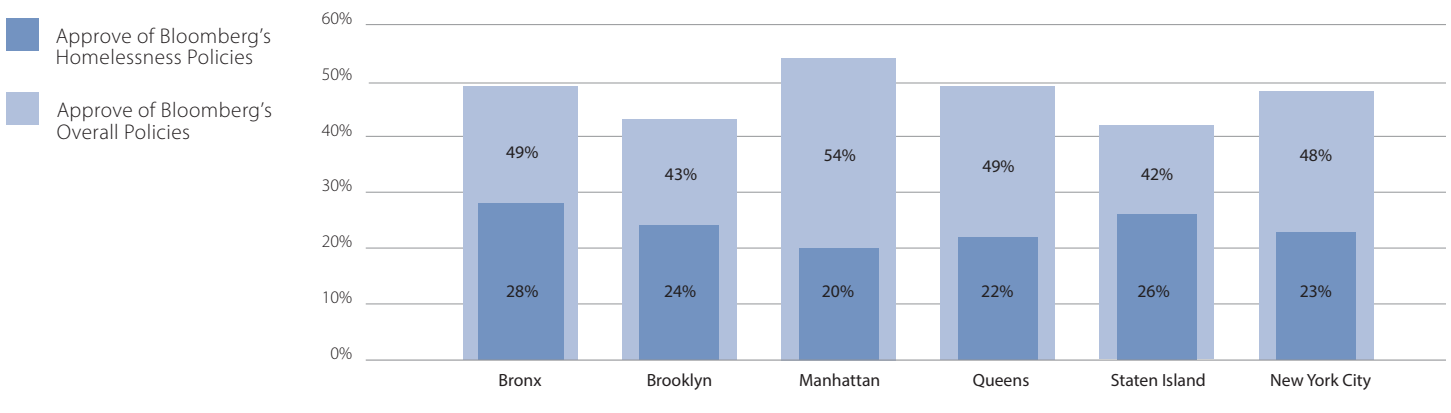
Key Points

- New Yorkers are evenly split on their approval of Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s overall job performance, but deeply critical of his legacy on homelessness.
- A majority (67%) of New Yorkers believe that improving job training is a better solution to homelessness than expanding rental subsidies.
- Homelessness impacts residents of the Bronx at higher rates than those in other boroughs. Bronx residents also report more difficulty affording basic expenses.
- Minority residents are more likely to know someone who has recently become homeless. Blacks and Hispanics are also more aware than whites of recent increases in the city’s homeless population.

Bloomberg’s Legacy

- Only 28% of residents said they had noticed an increase in the number of homeless during Bloomberg’s tenure—a period that saw the homeless population rise by 61%, according to the NYC Department of Homeless Services.
- Citywide, only 23% of New Yorkers approve of how Bloomberg has handled homelessness, compared with a 48% overall job performance approval rating. In Manhattan alone, Bloomberg’s approval rating plummets from 54% to 20% when only homelessness policies are considered.

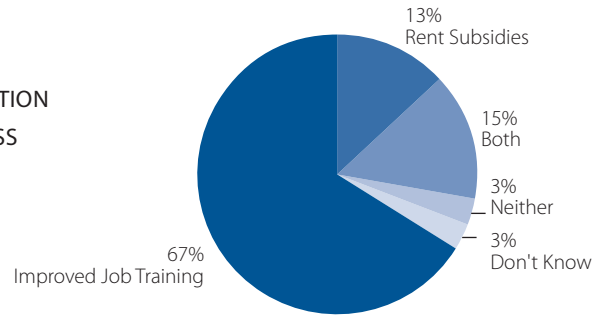
APPROVAL OF MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND HIS HOMELESSNESS POLICIES



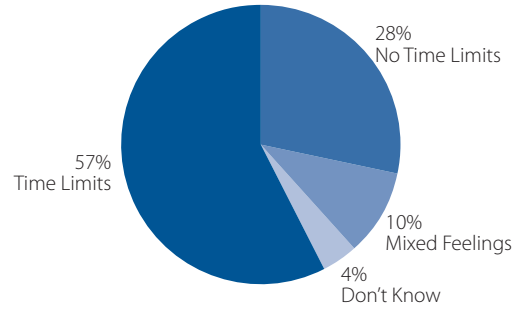
A New Policy Direction?

- Improved job-training programs are preferred by 67% of New Yorkers as the solution to homelessness. Support for these types of programs is highest in the Bronx and Staten Island.
- 75% of Hispanic residents and 61% of blacks favor improved job training. Citywide, only 13% of residents support rental subsidies as the solution to homelessness.
- A majority of New Yorkers, 57%, favor implementing time limits for residents of the city’s shelters.
- New Yorkers are split on who should be allowed in shelter: 44% want entry restricted to the local region, and 51% say it should be open to people from anywhere in the U.S. or the world.

PREFERRED SOLUTION TO HOMELESSNESS



SUPPORT FOR SHELTER TIME LIMITS

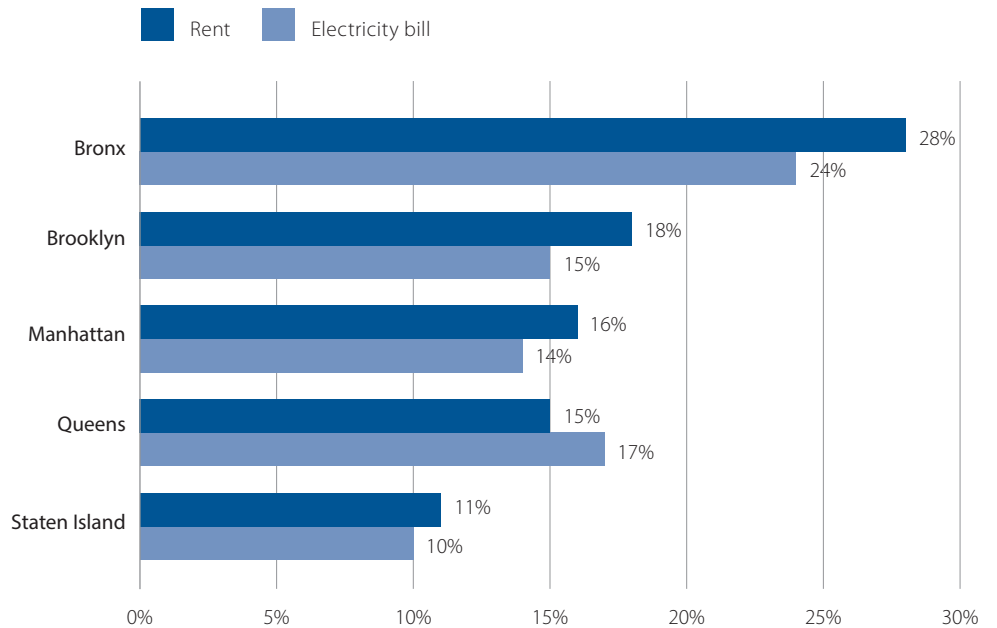


Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100.

The Bronx Factor

- In the Bronx, 10% of residents have spent at least one night homeless or unstably housed, versus 5% citywide.
- Residents of the Bronx are more likely to see homelessness in their everyday lives. 33% of residents of the borough know a homeless person.
- Bronx residents report more difficulty affording basic living expenses. 28% said they are struggling to afford their rent.

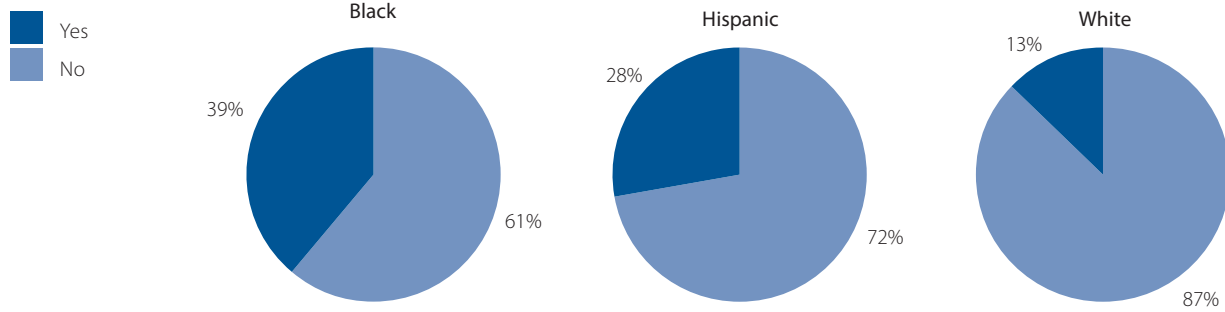
NEW YORKERS WHO REPORT STRUGGLING TO PAY RENT AND UTILITIES



Homelessness and Race

- 39% of black New Yorkers and 28% of Hispanics know someone who has recently become homeless, compared with 13% of whites and 23% of New Yorkers of any race.

NEW YORKERS WHO KNOW SOMEONE WHO RECENTLY BECAME HOMELESS



- Blacks and Hispanics are more aware of the increase in homelessness under Bloomberg. 39% of blacks and 32% of Hispanics reported noticing an increase, compared with only 23% of whites.
- Blacks are the only racial group in which a majority (53%) disapproves of Bloomberg’s approach to homelessness.

Survey Methodology

The ICPH public opinion survey—administered between July 2, 2013 and August 2, 2013—polled a random sample of 1,003 adults residing in New York City. Baruch College Survey Research conducted the telephone interviews by landline and cell phone in English and Spanish. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample						
Gender	Male	47%	Age	18–29	24%	
	Female	53%		30–44	27%	
Race	White	42%		45–64	31%	
	Black	27%		Over 64	15%	
	Asian	7%	Marital Status	Single	34%	
	Other	18%		Married	40%	
Ethnicity	Hispanic	26%		Living with partner	7%	
	Not Hispanic	72%		Separated/Divorced	12%	
Income	Less than \$30,000	22%	Education	Widowed	7%	
	\$30,000–49,999	14%		Did not graduate high school	12%	
	\$50,000– 99,999	24%		H.S. diploma or GED	31%	
	More than \$100,000	24%		Some college	23%	
Borough	Bronx	16%		Bachelor’s degree	19%	
	Brooklyn	30%		Post-grad	12%	
	Manhattan	21%		Party affiliation	Republican	13%
	Queens	28%			Democrat	59%
	Staten Island	6%		Unaffiliated	17%	

* In some cases, categories do not total 100% due to rounding and responses of “don’t know” or “refused.”

For other recent reports and polls see the “Reports and Briefs” page at www.ICPHusa.org:

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February 2011

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February 2011

Perceptions of Homelessness in Chicago and New York City: An ICPH Poll Comparison

May 2010

Stemming the Tide: New Yorkers Expect Government Solutions for Rising Family Homelessness

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The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH) is an independent nonprofit research organization based in New York City. ICPH studies the impact of poverty on family and child well-being and generates research that will enhance public policies and programs affecting poor or homeless children and their families. Specifically, ICPH examines the condition of extreme poverty in the United States and its effect on educational attainment, housing, employment, child welfare, domestic violence, and family wellness. Please visit our Web site for more information: www.ICPHusa.org.