



Five Facts NYC Candidates Need to Know about **FAMILY HOMELESSNESS**

May 1, 2021

1 Homelessness is a children's issue.

While the conversation surrounding homelessness on the campaign trail has been centered around single adults, over half (57%) of individuals living in shelter are members of families with children.¹ Additionally, one out of every three people experiencing homelessness in New York City is a child. Half of those children are infants and toddlers (ages 0–5).² The number of children sleeping in shelter each night—over 17,000—would fill nearly every seat at a basketball game held in the Barclays Center.³

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2 Shelters with supports and employment programs will help families confront the barriers contributing to their housing instability.

Elected officials must be sure there is sufficient money allocated toward mental health services and job training for parents in shelter. Without these supports homeless families will have a slim chance of maintaining their housing, and families will return to the shelter system when their time-limited housing vouchers expire.

Mental health services and job training for parents in shelter are essential.

3 Housing alone will not end family homelessness.

To stabilize families outside shelter the City needs to (1) increase the supply of deeply affordable housing and landlord acceptance of housing program vouchers and (2) help homeless parents grow income so they can independently maintain housing in the community. If families are receiving support for their social-emotional barriers, they can better avoid becoming rapidly unhoused.

4 Homeless children cannot afford continued educational instability.

The 32,000-plus⁴ students living in New York City shelters each year—over 14,000 school-age children on any given night⁵—exceeds the entire public-school population of Buffalo, NY, the second largest city in New York State.⁶ The COVID crisis has exacerbated the gaps in education access, and has illustrated the crucial need for dedicated educational supports for students residing in shelter. In addition to attendance monitoring, families in shelter need the help of DOE staff in forming close linkages to their school communities throughout the duration of the pandemic that can be sustained with the support of shelter-based staff long after it ends.

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5 Demand for family shelter units will increase when the eviction moratorium ends.

With roughly 14,500 eviction orders on hold,⁷ we must plan for an increase in family homelessness post-pandemic. Less than five years ago a staggering 14,000+ families with children were living in shelter, composing 70% of NYC's total shelter population,⁸ and all signs point toward an increase above the current 9,000 families once (1) the eviction moratorium is lifted and (2) the public health crisis has abated enough that families feel safe to enter shelter to escape overcrowding and domestic violence situations. The City must divert families from unsafe, service-thin commercial hotels and crowded cluster units and direct them to safe, service-enriched shelters focused on breaking the cycle of family homelessness.

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¹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf> Note: DHS updates this file daily and does not archive reports in full. Data used for this document pulled from DHS Daily Report 2/10/2021 (Data from Tuesday, February 09, 2021)

² <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dashboard/tables/FYTD21-DHS-Data-Dashboard-Data.pdf>

³ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf> and <https://www.barclayscenter.com/center-info/about-us> Note: DHS updates this file daily and does not archive reports in full. Data used for this document pulled from DHS Daily Report 2/10/2021 (Data from Tuesday, February 09, 2021)

⁴ Tabulations based on figures in data sets found at https://nysteachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/INF_SED_SIRS2019-20_120320.xlsx and <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Education/2018-2019-Students-in-Temporary-Housing-School/4e3j-75af>

⁵ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dashboard/tables/FYTD21-DHS-Data-Dashboard-Data.pdf>

⁶ <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2019&instid=800000052968>

⁷ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/8/12/21365895/evictions-on-hold-but-pre-pandemic-cases-forge-ahead/>

⁸ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dashboard/tables/FY2017-DHS-Data-Tables-Dashboard-revised-1'30'2019.pdf>


The Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness (ICPH) raises awareness and advances the public conversation about family homelessness through the production and dissemination of publications, resources, and other tools. Its public policy insights are informed by field-based practices in education, employment, and social services at family shelters.

Questions: Info@ICPHusa.org

Media Inquiries or Presentations:
Media@ICPHusa.org

(212) 358-8086
www.ICPHusa.org

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