



A Brief Plan to End Homelessness

Reflecting The Partnership's priorities, approach, and framing, the key pillars of The Partnership's plan to end homelessness are:

1. A *Housing First* model to assist eligible families and individuals in retaining and obtaining appropriate and affordable housing. This means doing all that we can to get people off the street and into a setting (drop-in center, safe haven, or shelter) that places them on the road to permanent housing, which might include permanent supportive housing. This also means that we must offer extensive, flexible assistance (legal services, mediation with landlords, rental assistance, etc.) to those at significant risk of losing their current housing so as to avoid entry into shelter. Among these efforts, The Partnership urges:
 - a. Expanding eviction prevention services, including increasing free legal representation in housing court and for those most at-risk. We fund greater on-site and by referral eviction prevention staff and services, including access to mediation services, one-time grants for rental arrears, and other support at housing courts throughout the City and in a wide variety of health and human services organizations.
 - b. Increasing the number and value of city, state, and federal investments in housing vouchers, such as the federal Section 8 program, and subsidies that permit low-income families and those experiencing homelessness to secure affordable units in the community. It is also necessary to peg the value of the subsidies and vouchers to the Fair Market Rents (FMR) as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For example, The Partnership supports the City Council's and shelter providers' campaign to increase the value of vouchers in the City's Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) consistent with annually updated FMR.
 - c. Passing the Home Stability Support (HSS) bill sponsored by State Senator Liz Krueger and Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, which would create a new rent supplement (replacing all existing rent subsidy programs) for families and individuals eligible for public assistance benefits who are facing eviction, homelessness, or housing loss due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. HSS is a statewide, 100% state-funded, supplement that would bridge the difference between the current shelter allowance and 85% of FMR (New York City and other local social services districts could choose to raise the supplement up to 100% of FMR at local expense).
 - d. Increasing the proportion of the Mayor's affordable housing plan targeted to families and individuals experiencing homelessness to 15% or higher.
 - e. Requiring 25% of all new, as-of-right housing developments to be affordable for low-income families (not more than 60% of AMI).
 - f. Creating a 'land bank' to build permanently affordable housing (not more than 50% of AMI) on otherwise viable City-owned vacant lots via nonprofit housing developers and targeting a reasonable proportion of these units to extremely and very low-income households.
 - g. Eliminating the current 421a tax break for luxury developments and redirecting the property tax revenue (the program's cost) to supporting the affordable housing development programs noted above.
2. Funding low-barrier access to health and behavioral health services (mental health and substance use disorder services), emotional support, and timely benefits assistance so as to improve the likelihood that a family or individual retains their current or future housing.
 - a. Pass statewide or federal universal health care to provide and guarantee access to quality health and behavioral health services to all residents without regard of their ability to pay.

- b. Target ThriveNYC resources to those most in need, including New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, by expanding ThriveNYC's Connections to Care program and increasing behavioral health investments in drop-in centers, safe havens, and shelters, not only for youth but also in settings serving families with children, adult families, and single adults.
 - c. For families and individuals not specifically in need of supportive housing, offer flexible and creative services to deliver emotional support and address trauma, which can serve as barriers to obtaining and retaining housing.
 - d. Offer targeted and flexible assistance and support to youth aging out of foster care and individuals leaving City and State correctional facilities, among others, so as to avoid entry into shelter.
3. Offering ready and flexible access to vocational training/placement and educational support, which will help individuals and families grow their resources and independence and thereby improve their chances of staying out of shelter once housed and ending a cycle of homelessness.
 - a. Improve and expand DOE and DHS services to ensure at-risk children's consistent school attendance, both while unstably housed (doubled-up, frequent moves) and while in shelter. This is key to preventing a continuing cycle of homelessness and entry into shelter later in life.
 - b. Consistent with Mayor de Blasio's *Turning the Tide on Homelessness* plan, create sufficient 'purpose-built' shelter capacity in communities across the five boroughs, and thereby end use of clusters and commercial hotels, so as to permit families with school-age children to be sheltered near their schools.
4. **COVID-19 related supports:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness need:
 - a. Continued funding for alternative spaces, including hotels, for immediate isolation and self-quarantine, to minimize the number of people vulnerable to virus exposure by living in congregate shelters and on the streets.
 - b. An eviction moratorium to stay in place until the pandemic is over and sufficient rental assistance has been funded by the federal government to safeguard families in their homes. Low-income renters cannot meet the monthly demands of paying rent during the NYS PAUSE, especially those working in low-paying industries most impacted by pandemic-related shutdowns. Keeping the moratorium in place gives renters protections by ensuring that they and their families have a safe place to live that also allows them to practice pandemic safety guidelines.
 - c. Local- and state-level support for emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention, as provided for in the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. The \$100 billion Act was introduced in Congress by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representatives Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Denny Heck (D-WA), to forestall the tidal wave of post-moratoria evictions when renters are unable to pay rental arrears accumulated over the months of the pandemic shutdown.