

**DHS DETAILS COMPREHENSIVE 4-POINT PLAN TO  
REDUCE NYC HOMELESSNESS**

*Mayor's Budget Expands Homelessness Prevention*

*Plan outlines proposals for Subsidies for Working Families Who Have Been in Shelter for More Than a Year and Vulnerable Populations to be Created in Partnership with the State*

*Affirms Commitment to Assessing, Improving, and Re-imagining City Shelters*

**May 19, 2014** - Commissioner Gilbert Taylor today detailed a comprehensive plan to reduce homelessness, help transition homeless families from shelter into permanent housing, and improve shelter conditions. Together, in collaboration with agencies like the Human Resources Administration, the steps will help New York City reduce the number of families facing homelessness. The plan expands homelessness prevention efforts, creating the largest and most proven prevention program in the nation; it proposes the creation of two rent subsidy plans that will assist working families who have been in shelter for more than a year and vulnerable populations; it utilizes targeted supportive housing for high needs populations; and, it reaffirms the administration's commitment to assess, improve, and reimagine shelter models. This plan better serves families and individuals before they seek shelter, it addresses the needs of those while in shelter, and it strategically plans for families exiting shelter. Furthermore, it invests in better outcomes for homeless households as they achieve independence, creates and develops higher quality shelters with better targeted programming throughout the system, and it reduces reliance on shelter models that do not encourage supportive environments. DHS' FY'15 budget is \$953.3M. The Commissioner detailed the plan at today's budget hearing before the New York City Council.

"New Yorkers deserve action in the face of this unprecedented homelessness crisis. And that's what this plan delivers. These are proven, compassionate and fiscally-responsible solutions. We have laid out a blueprint based on the fundamental knowledge that helping families avoid homelessness and moving families from shelter to permanent housing represent far better outcomes for both vulnerable New Yorkers and taxpayers than continuing an unacceptable status quo," said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli.

"This plan charts a bold, new course for homelessness in New York City, and the Mayor's budget clearly invests in better outcomes for homeless households with a goal of homelessness prevention, independence, and permanent housing," said Commissioner Taylor. "As part of the de Blasio Administration's vision for a better New York for everyone, it is my goal to redefine homeless services with an enhanced focus on prevention, permanent housing strategies, and client experience."

"I commend the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Commissioner Gilbert Taylor on including these policy items in the agency's increased budget," said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. "Homeless advocates have long joined with elected officials in calling for increased supportive housing, heightened attention to shelter environments, and a sensible rental subsidy program to help the city's at-risk populations. These wide-range policies go far to address these long-standing concerns."

"With our shelter population at a record high, we must do more to find long-term, sustainable solutions to fight homelessness," said **Comptroller Scott M. Stringer**. "The Department of Homeless Services' four-point plan is an ambitious effort to address some of our city's toughest homeless policy challenges. In particular, the plan's emphasis on prevention services and transitioning homeless families to permanent housing is critical to ensuring that even the most vulnerable New Yorkers can enjoy safe, stable housing."

"For too long, our city's growing homeless population has suffered in the shadows," said **City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "The City Council has committed to significantly reducing these numbers, and I am glad the Administration shares our goal of ensuring no New Yorker is left on the streets. With emphases on improving shelter conditions, preventing homelessness, and helping families to transition out of the system into permanent, stable housing through the Working Families Rental Assistance Program, this plan comprehensively ensures that more New Yorkers will be able to truly call this city home."

"For too many New Yorkers, every day is a struggle and homelessness is too often the result," said **City Council Member Stephen Levin**. "The homelessness crisis in our city will only grow worse if serious action is not taken. I commend Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Taylor for releasing today's plan to prevent homelessness in our city and for including the largest increase for homelessness prevention since Homebase began."

"Today's announcement signals a sea change in how New York City deals with homelessness," said **Mary Brosnahan, President & CEO, Coalition for the Homeless**. "The Mayor is charting a new, far more constructive strategy to deal with the record homelessness crisis he inherited. These are critical pieces of comprehensive plan that must be scaled to match the unprecedented the magnitude of this problem."

"The blight of homelessness causes suffering to far too many New Yorkers. It is unacceptable. With today's announcement, the Mayor has taken an important and necessary step in addressing this crisis. This multi-faceted plan includes programmatic and funding commitments to protect families from losing their homes, while creating housing opportunities for those who currently have little recourse but to spend their nights in shelters. It contains concrete solutions to help vulnerable populations," said **Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, Executive Director, The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York**.

"Taken together, a combination of expanded homelessness prevention and anti-eviction services on the front end to help families remain in their own homes, and rental assistance and access to permanent housing on the back end to help families secure and maintain affordable permanent housing, creates the very real possibility of reducing the number of homeless individuals and families," said **Gail B. Nayowith, Executive Director, SCO Family of Services**.

"Mayor de Blasio is following words with action when it comes to his administration's commitment to addressing record homelessness in our City. There's no magic bullet for this crisis, which is why Commissioner Taylor is proposing a multi-pronged strategy that will ensure more humane conditions in the shelter system, help homeless families move into permanent housing, increase the availability of supportive housing, and enable families who are at-risk for eviction to avoid entering the

shelter system in the first place. Along with Mayor de Blasio's plan to create or preserve 200,000 affordable housing units over the next decade, this administration is developing a comprehensive approach to ensure all New Yorkers have safe, decent and affordable housing,” said **Sean Barry, Executive Director, Vocal-NY**.

### **The 4-Point Plan**

#### **Increase Homeless Prevention Services**

- **Expand Evidence-based Homebase Prevention Program:** DHS will expand its Homebase program, adding at least nine addition sites. Homebase is a five-borough network of neighborhood-based services that has been proven to help individuals at risk of homelessness remain in their communities and avoid entering shelters, to serve 5,000 more families. Homebase currently operates out of 14 locations in neighborhoods with high shelter entry rates and serves over 10, 000 households annually.
- **Expand the Family Eviction Prevention Program, FEPS:** The City, through HRA, will work with the State to explore expansion of seek State approval to expand the FEPS program. FEPS provides families assistance with paying back-due rent and/or provides an ongoing monthly rental subsidy for families with children under age 18.
- **Consolidate Anti-Eviction Prevention Programs:** \$15.1M administered by various city agencies will be consolidated at HRA to provide more targeted and effective use of resources to 6,400 DHS clients.
- **Create a Public Awareness Campaign for Homebase:** DHS will invest \$870,000 to launch a Homebase homelessness prevention public awareness campaign that is designed to target those households most at risk of entering the shelter system. The campaign will include bus, subway, and check cashing ads as well as a PSA on local cable TV

#### **Increase Resources To Help Homeless Families Transition to Permanent Housing**

- **Working Families Rental Assistance Program:** Provide 801 families annually (3,204 in total) with a 3 year subsidy, with an option to renew for up to 5 years.
- **Create Vulnerable Populations Rental Assistance Pilot Funded by a Cluster Rate Reduction:** Reinvest shelter savings in permanent housing resources for vulnerable homeless families.
- **Focus on Population-Specific Interventions**  
**Veterans:** The city is committed to the national goal to end homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015. To help achieve this goal, the City will redouble its efforts through programs such as Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH), Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF) and Grant per Deim (GPD). The City will also identify and rehouse veterans living in shelters and on the street. This work will require close collaborations among City agencies who work with veterans and Federal partners.

#### **Target Supportive Housing for High Needs Population**

- **Increase supportive housing:** The city will continue its commitment to finish out the NY/NY III agreement, which will create 9,000 units serving people who are at risk of becoming homeless or already homeless and suffer severe mental illnesses. As every unit of supportive housing saves taxpayers more than \$10,000 per year in public resources such as shelters, emergency rooms, jails and psychiatric facilities, the City will work with the State to identify new supportive housing opportunities. In addition, the City will seek to further expand the production of supportive housing.

#### **Assess, Improve and Re-Imagine City Shelters**

- **Interagency Task Force:** Convene the first Interagency Task Force on Homelessness to address the needs of and leverage resources for multi-system involved individuals and families. The first meeting will be held this summer.
- **Cluster Unit Reviews:** DHS is conducting on-site reviews of all cluster units; sweeping inspections of its 3,000+ clusters units within the system to review health and safety conditions for each unit.
- **Shelter-Specific Changes (Invested \$3M in FY14), Auburn and Catherine St. Shelters:** DHS announced transition plan for 174 families with children at Auburn and 92 at Catherine. Transition at Auburn is already completed. Transition at Catherine St. is expected to be completed by end of 2014.

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