

**PRESS RELEASE  
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**CITY PROPOSES SINGLE UNIFIED RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO  
STREAMLINE AND SIMPLIFY REHOUSING PROCESS**

*Consolidated CityFHEPS program will make it easier for New Yorkers in need to identify and secure permanent housing opportunities*

**NEW YORK**—The de Blasio Administration today announced that the City is streamlining its rental assistance programs, consolidating seven different initiatives into one, to make it easier for New Yorkers in need to get back on their feet or remain in their homes and simpler for landlords to participate in the programs, opening doors of opportunity. The new City Fighting Homelessness & Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) program will replace all of the current Living in Communities (LINC I, II, III, IV and V) programs, along with the Special Exit and Prevention Supplement (SEPS), and City Family Eviction Prevention and Exit Plan Supplements (CityFEPS) with a single unified rental assistance program to simplify the process of identifying and securing permanent housing opportunities that enable New Yorkers experiencing housing instability to exit shelter or avoid entering shelter altogether. The [proposed rule](#) will be published for public comment on Friday, July 20, 2018.

“Streamlining rental assistance will help New Yorkers experiencing homelessness obtain and remain in homes they deserve rather than on the streets or in shelter,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “It’s one more tool we’re using to help turn the tide on this decades-long challenge.”

“We are constantly looking for new ways to improve the lives of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness and by streamlining our rental assistance programs we’ll be able to help more people find permanent homes,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. “This change will benefit our homeless neighbors and landlords participating in this program, and will lead to a more efficient and effective process to rehouse homeless families.”

“After the City and State cut the Advantage rental assistance program in 2011, which led to a 38 percent increase in homelessness in just three years, this Administration jumped in aggressively to fill the gap by rebuilding rental assistance and rehousing programs from scratch, which have so far provided nearly 95,000 New Yorkers with the vital support needed to remain housed or secure housing,” said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. “By streamlining our initiatives into one unified program, we’re taking those efforts further, making it easier for New Yorkers in need and landlords with the keys to housing options to open and access more doors of opportunity citywide. This common-sense step is another example of our City’s commitment to using every tool at our disposal to address the nationwide challenge of homelessness that has been decades in the making.”

The citywide challenge of homelessness was not created overnight. Homelessness in New York City increased 115 percent between 1994 and 2014—and in just three years between 2011 and 2014, it grew almost 40 percent, from 38,000 to more than 51,000 after the City and State

cancelled the Advantage rental assistance program. Immediately upon taking office, the de Blasio Administration stepped in to fill the gap left by the City and State's cancellation of the Advantage rental assistance program by creating and implementing new rental assistance programs as well as reinstating rehousing programs. While the devastating impacts of economic inequality, including rising rents outpacing wages, and past choices made in New York City, Albany and Washington led to the homeless crisis we face today, the initiatives of the Department of Social Services (HRA and DHS) are beginning to reverse the trend, with the City's rebuilt rental assistance and rehousing programs helping more than 94,300 children and adults exit or avoid shelter since 2014, with the vast majority exiting shelter; and the DHS shelter census for 2017 remained roughly flat year over year for the first time in more than a decade.

Further streamlining the City's rental assistance programs will:

- provide greater clarity, consistency, and efficiency for all participants in the programs, including New Yorkers experiencing housing instability and/or homelessness, City social-service and shelter staff, not-for-profit providers, as well as landlords, making it easier to open doors to more housing options
- align City programs with the State Family Homelessness Eviction Prevention Supplement (State FHEPS) program, including implementing similar rent levels and time frames for rental assistance eligibility

"I appreciate the City's effort to streamline our various rental assistance programs and make it easier for struggling New Yorkers to exit shelter or be able to avoid it entirely. Our neighbors in need were left in crisis after the senseless end to the Advantage rental program, and our city continues to face steep challenges left in the wake of government's underinvestment in combating homelessness on every level. We must have a clear and shared mission: to help New Yorkers secure safe, permanent housing that they can afford and where they can thrive. Bureaucracy cannot and must not stand in the way of children and families finding homes, nor in the way of landlords who want to be part of the solution," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"I commend the efforts of Mayor de Blasio and his administration to combat the homeless crisis facing New York. Streamlining the existing rental assistance vouchers into one program will make it easier for New Yorkers to access the programs and services they desperately need. I look forward to working together as we continue to implement new strategies to prevent and alleviate homelessness," said **Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, Chair of the Social Services Committee**.

"Streamlining vouchers will help thousands of New Yorkers with one of the biggest challenges residents experience in our city—finding a home for themselves and their family," said **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee**. "Making the process easier, for both prospective tenants and landlords, means fewer individuals in shelter or on the streets, and more people into the homes they deserve. I'm proud to support the City's continued commitment to addressing homelessness and I look forward to the next innovations that place individuals on the path to permanency."

"With the increased cost of living and stagnant wage growth in this city, an increasing number of New Yorkers are finding it difficult to afford a place to live. Helping those in need find suitable housing and providing them the means to avoid ending up in a shelter or on the street is essential

in a city that values fairness and seeks to treat everyone with dignity. Streamlining our rental assistance programs to make it easier for New Yorkers who have fallen on hard times to find a home is exactly the kind of work necessary to effectively address homelessness and will give more people the opportunity to afford housing in the city they call home,” said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., Chair of the Housing Committee.**

“This is a win for every New York family trying to break the cycle of homelessness once and for all,” said **Christine C. Quinn, President & CEO of Win.** “For over two years, each day Win has worked publicly and privately to push the city and the state to make Mayor de Blasio’s transformative LINC voucher program permanent. That day is now here. It’s only through permanency that we can ensure that each year formerly homeless families grappling with an out-of-control housing market are able to stay in the homes they fought so hard to achieve. Making LINC vouchers permanent and ensuring that they increase incrementally in value is one of the strongest tools in existence for making family homelessness a thing of the past. On behalf of thousands of moms and their kids who can now stay in their homes, we are grateful to Commissioner Banks and Mayor de Blasio for partnering with Win and providers across the city to make this critical program permanent - and their own home an enduring reality.”

“We welcome these changes that are easier to understand and should also streamline the process for our families and single adults to secure permanent housing,” said **Joanne Oplustil, President & CEO of CAMBA Inc.**

“We applaud the City for this smart and important step to further help New Yorkers experiencing housing instability. By streamlining its rental assistance programs, the City is making it easier for the nearly 1,000 adults in Project Renewal’s shelters to identify and secure permanent housing, and the individuals and families in our permanent housing to remain in their homes. Furthermore, this consolidated program will help our staff navigate the housing process more efficiently for our clients,” said **Jody Rudin, COO of Project Renewal.**

“As one of the largest providers of shelter and housing in New York, Samaritan Daytop Village fully supports the City’s efforts to streamline the rental assistance program. Cutting red tape and centralizing services will help vulnerable New Yorkers, including families, navigate the system quicker and more efficiently. Samaritan Daytop Village’s goal has always been to provide our clients the tools they need to find safe and affordable permanent housing. We are grateful to the City for creating one unified program which will help put clients on the path to independence much faster,” said **Mitchell Netburn, President & CEO of Samaritan Daytop Village.**

“As someone who has spent the last 25 years of my career working to address homelessness in NYC, I applaud the de Blasio administration for its decision to consolidate its housing subsidy programs into a single program. Over the years, we’ve come to understand that at its core, the homeless crisis in NYC is an affordable housing crisis. The leadership shown by this administration in establishing and then working to improve their programs should stand as an example to others in government,” said **Frederick Shack, CEO of Urban Pathways.**

“BronxWorks remains committed to identifying the best resources available to assist our Bronx neighbors that face housing insecurity. We also support the NYC Human Resources Administration as they strive to streamline the process. The ultimate goal remains the same, to

help ensure a stable home for Bronx singles and families,” said **Eileen Torres, Executive Director of BronxWorks**.

In February 2017, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City, a new approach to addressing the challenges of homelessness that built on four core pillars, including preventing homelessness whenever we can; rehousing families and individuals so they can move out of shelter or avoid homelessness altogether; addressing street homelessness; and transforming the City’s haphazard approach to providing shelter and services that has built up over the last four decades by shrinking the Department of Homeless Services’ footprint by 45 percent and ending the use of 360 “cluster” shelter and commercial hotel locations while opening a smaller number of 90 borough-based shelters in all five boroughs. The city- and nationwide challenge of homelessness wasn’t created overnight and it won’t be solved overnight, but this Administration’s strategies are taking hold and headed in the right direction:

- the DHS shelter system census for 2017 remained flat year over year for the first time in a decade;
- with increased investments in legal services for tenants and rent arrears payments, evictions by City Marshalls have dropped 27 percent over the past four years, resulting in 70,000 New Yorkers remaining in their homes since 2014;
- by phasing out decades-old stop-gap measures, including closing half of all units in the 18-year-old cluster program, while identifying 20 high-quality, borough-based shelter facilities, we have reduced our shelter footprint from 647 buildings reported in the *Turning the Tide* plan last year to our current 492 buildings—a 25-percent reduction in one year;
- through doubling our 24/7/365 outreach efforts and a commitment to tripling the number of specialized beds dedicated to serving street homeless New Yorkers, we have helped 1,815 homeless New Yorkers transition off the streets and subways into transitional programs and permanent housing since the launch of HOME-STAT, the most comprehensive program to address street homelessness in the nation;
- and, as described above, since 2014, our rental assistance and rehousing programs have enabled more than 94,300 children and adults to move out of shelter or avoid entering shelter in the first place, with the vast majority exiting shelter.

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