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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION EXPANDS NYPD-DHS JOINT HOMELESS OUTREACH EFFORTS

Coordinated inter-agency outreach efforts expanded from two to seven days per week in Midtown Manhattan; City adding 250 Safe Haven beds for street homeless New Yorkers

NEW YORK—The de Blasio Administration today announced a series of enhancements to interagency homeless outreach efforts. The Department of Homeless Services and the New York City Police Department are expanding joint canvassing and outreach operations in Midtown, Manhattan from two days per week to seven days per week, focusing on engaging homeless New Yorkers residing on the streets between 30th Street and 60th Street in Manhattan, with the goal of providing services and helping them transition indoors. Additionally, the City is committing to opening an additional 250 Safe Haven beds within the next two years, in areas where outreach teams are actively engaged with known homeless individuals who would be most effectively served by a community- and borough-based Safe Haven placement, which will assist outreach teams’ efforts to help chronically homeless New Yorkers off the streets and out of the subway system. With this new capacity, this Administration will have nearly tripled the number of beds dedicated to serving street homeless New Yorkers citywide, increasing the operating total from 543 beds to more than 1,500 beds.

“It can take dozens or more contacts to convince homeless New Yorkers to come off the streets and into permanent housing,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “The addition of these new beds and the expansion of the joint DHS-NYPD operations in Midtown will go a long way toward building the trust it takes to make these transitions happen.”

“The homeless are among the most vulnerable New Yorkers, and the NYPD is committed to helping them get the assistance and services they need,” said **NYPD Commissioner James P. O’Neill**. “We’re hopeful that the expanded outreach and additional beds we’re announcing today will help more people transition indoors. Homelessness is not a crime, it’s a major challenge that we all have to work on together—for the entire City’s benefit.”

“There is no single solution to homelessness and this Administration is leaving no stone unturned in our effort to help homeless New Yorkers on the streets come indoors and get back on their feet. Expanding coordinated interagency HOME-STAT outreach with the NYPD is another key

component of our constantly-evolving strategy for addressing homelessness and always improving delivery of services to those in need,” said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. “We also recognize that effective outreach requires supportive resources, so that a homeless New Yorker who is ready to come indoors can do so in a dedicated facility near local support networks. That’s why this Administration has made an unprecedented commitment to opening new capacity for serving street homeless New Yorkers, already doubling the number of dedicated Safe Haven beds to 1,300 this quarter—and that’s why we’re committing today to adding another 250 Safe Haven beds specifically for this population, expanding a proven-successful resource that serves as a first step for helping street New Yorkers stabilize their lives and transition to permanent housing.”

“Engaging our homeless neighbors residing on the streets requires an abundance of patience, persistence, and compassion—and it can take outreach teams many months of regular contact, building trust and offering services, for a New Yorker to ultimately accept that hand up and transition indoors,” said **Department of Homeless Services Administrator Joslyn Carter**. “By combining HOME-STAT and not-for-profit experience with the deep local expertise and relationships that our City’s police officers have developed in this area, we are increasing the chances of effectively making the connection that will make the difference for New Yorkers in need. With our additional commitment to new beds for these New Yorkers, we are further ensuring these individuals can access a productive path to housing permanency.”

Safe Havens are low-barrier programs targeted toward supporting unsheltered homeless individuals, many of whom may be resistant to accepting other services, including traditional shelter. Safe Havens provide an immediate alternative housing resource with private or semi-private rooms and flexible program requirements, which outreach teams have found are more effectively for helping chronic street homeless individuals stabilize their lives. Safe Havens only take referrals from street outreach teams, offer overnight beds, provide robust case management services, and have physical and program characteristics more suitable for helping street New Yorkers stabilize their lives in an effort to move them into permanent housing.

In taking a citywide, multi-agency, community-based approach to addressing street homelessness, DHS engages with external partners to conduct strategic operations and targeted outreach in areas with persistent homeless activity across the five boroughs, meeting homeless New Yorkers where they are within communities. During joint outreach operations with NYPD, NYPD officers accompany HOME-STAT outreach teams as they canvass the area and jointly offer services to unsheltered homeless individuals, with the goal of providing the unique combination of services that will ultimately help them indoors. To further enhance coordination with NYPD, DHS and NYPD are increasing data sharing protocols: NYPD will now receive a daily list of real-time hotspot areas where HOME-STAT outreach teams may encounter homeless individuals more frequently. The NYPD will utilize this information to address street conditions, such as unattended or abandoned belongings.

“All year round, but especially in these freezing temperatures, New Yorkers are acutely aware that so many of our neighbors have no homes to shelter them. So I’m very pleased to see that DHS and NYPD will be conducting outreach every single day, and providing more Safe Haven beds to give homeless New Yorkers the options they need to get in off the streets,” said **State**

Senator Liz Krueger. “Solving homelessness in our city will require a long-term effort by all New Yorkers, but it is one that we can and must commit ourselves to.”

“There is no one solution to addressing the needs of those suffering from chronic homelessness,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee.** “A comprehensive challenge requires a comprehensive solution. That’s why this approach is so promising. It takes a team—HOME-STAT and NYPD—coming together and meeting with individuals on personal level to make progress. Additionally, the commitment to more Safe Haven beds, one of our most effective programs, will mean more individuals off the streets. This administration has shown a steadfast commitment to effective and innovative policies, and it is my hope we continue our advocacy for those most in need.”

“Societies should be judged by how they treat the most vulnerable,” said **Council Member Corey Johnson.** “Bringing in the homeless from the cold should be among our top priorities. I applaud the joint effort launched by NYPD and DHS. This initiative will save lives.”

“The criminal justice system is the wrong tool for helping the homeless living on our streets. The expansion of joint outreach with Department of Homeless Services will connect NYPD officers who have neighborhood knowledge with DHS who have knowledge on how the city can help the homeless on our streets,” said **Council Member Ben Kallos,** co-founder of the East Side Taskforce for Homeless Outreach and Services (ETHOS). “Thank you to Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner O’Neill, and Commissioner Banks for expanding joint outreach as our city’s homeless on our streets face overnight sub-zero temperatures.”

“These are important measures to ensure that New York City is taking care of our most vulnerable individuals,” said **Council Member Keith Powers.** “Thank you to Mayor De Blasio and Commissioner Banks for their commitment.”

“Safe Havens are a critical resource for people experiencing homelessness to get on the path to a permanent supportive housing solution, offering an alternative to life on the street: safe, private, clean accommodations with on-site case management and clinical staff who work with them every step of the way,” said **Breaking Ground President and CEO Brenda Rosen.** “Breaking Ground runs the largest Safe Haven in the city and we see every day the transformative effects on the homeless, who come in off the streets and get a second chance at life, and the positive impacts on communities, with the most vulnerable residents getting the help and services they desperately need. More beds in more locations throughout the City – especially in areas of Queens and Brooklyn where our outreach teams are engaging with people living outdoors – will ensure that more homeless New Yorkers can achieve improved health and stability in housing.”

“BronxWorks applauds the Administration’s announcement that they will fund an additional 250 Safe Haven beds for chronically street homeless New Yorkers,” said **BronxWorks Assistant Executive Director Scott Aurwarter.** “These Safe Haven Programs are without question the most effective mechanism to bring people in off the streets. The recent cold weather is a reminder of the moral imperative to help give these vulnerable individuals a safe and warm place to sleep.”

In December 2015, the City initiated HOME-STAT (Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement Street Action Teams), a citywide multiagency initiative to combat street homelessness in which hundreds of highly-trained not-for-profit outreach staff, including licensed social workers, canvass the streets 24/7/365, proactively engaging homeless New Yorkers, offering services and assistance, and working to gain their trust with the goal of addressing the underlying issues that may have caused or contributed to their street homelessness in order to ultimately help these individuals transition off the streets. Those outreach staff spend months building relationships by making regular—often daily—contact with street homeless New Yorkers: getting to know them, building trust, and sharing information about the resources available to them. It can take months of persistent and compassionate engagement to successfully connect street homeless individuals with City services. In the past year, outreach teams helped 865 homeless New Yorkers off the streets citywide, thanks to new investments and a doubling of the size of those teams.

Not-for-profit service provider partners who conduct citywide outreach efforts also have psychiatrists who perform psychiatric evaluations on the streets and thereby help outreach teams understand and better meet the individual needs of each street homeless New Yorker. These clinicians and psychiatrists help outreach teams make more effective connections with clients who may be difficult to engage, in many cases due to significant mental health challenges. HOME-STAT also provides aftercare services, continuing to work with individuals who receive placements to ensure that they get the supports they need to remain in housing and off of the street.

As part of the City's commitment to redoubling those efforts, the de Blasio Administration has committed unprecedented new resources to street outreach programs and providers:

- **Investing further in street homeless programs and not-for-profit partners** who coordinate outreach across the five boroughs, including doubling investments in street homeless programs funding from \$49.2M (118%) from \$41.8M in FY14 to \$91M in FY18;
- **Adding new staff, including canvassers and analysts**, to expand the scope, reach, and focus of outreach efforts, more-than doubling the number of outreach staff canvassing the streets engaging street homeless New Yorkers;
- **Bringing new capacity dedicated to serving street homeless New Yorkers online**, with hundreds of beds opened during this Administration, hundreds more coming online by early 2018, more than doubling the operating total from 543 beds to more than 1,300 beds, and this additional commitment to another 250 beds;
- **Increasing joint outreach operations with City Agency partners to utilize each Agency's expertise**, engage more New Yorkers, and offer more supports, including the NYPD, the Parks Department, the Department of Health, and the Department of Transportation;
- **Building the City's first-ever by-name list of individuals known to be homeless and residing on the streets** to improve delivery of services, with outreach teams now actively engaging more than 2,000 individuals known by name who are confirmed to be homeless and living on the streets, as well as working to engage more than 1,500 individuals encountered on the streets to evaluate their living situations and determine whether they are homeless as well as what specific supports they may need;

- **Enhancing proactive efforts** after analyzing the first year's results to further optimize proactive canvassing and outreach strategy, with a focus on more effectively mapping and understanding challenging hotspots.

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