



The Family Homelessness Coalition (FHC) is comprised of formerly homeless mothers and 20<sup>1</sup> organizations representing service and housing providers and children’s advocacy organizations united to end family homelessness. Our budget, legislative, and programmatic priorities speak to preventing family homelessness, improving the well-being of children and families in shelter, and supporting the long-term stability of families with children who leave shelter.

Before the recent influx of migrant families, 9,800 families with children were already languishing in our shelter systems, spending 520 days in shelter on average. Without immediate actions, the housing and shelter crises will only exacerbate the negative effects to children’s well-being. FHC recommendations are cost-effective; will improve outcomes for unhoused families; create space within our existing shelter system for newly arrived migrants; and positively impact our local economy.

### Overarching Priorities

**We urge the City to:**

**Refrain** from suspending the right to shelter.

**Exempt** DSS/HRA/DHS/HPD from the Mayor’s 15% PEG and hiring freeze, **prioritize** the filling of open city agency staff lines.

**Reject** cuts to non-profit homelessness prevention and shelter services.

### Prevent Homelessness

**Implement CityFHEPS expansion** that removes administrative and eligibility barriers and expedites access to housing support for families in the community and in shelters.

**Improve Public Benefit access and retention.** Address HRA staffing shortage, remove red tape, and implement technology solutions to ensure CityFHEPS payments and renewals, cash aid, SNAP, childcare, Medicaid, along with other benefits, are secured AND are not disrupted in transition to permanent housing.

**Prioritize Access to Homebase Services** by refraining from budget cuts and advocating for additional funding to expand capacity within existing programs and open new sites, to ensure that families in the community have access to supportive services such emergency rental assistance, housing subsidies renewals, and legal assistance to avoid shelter entrance and continue their path to housing and economic mobility.<sup>ii</sup>

## Promote Wellbeing in Shelter

**Baseline funding for shelter-based Community Coordinators** in the face of looming federal funding reductions to help children get to school every day and access needed educational support.

**Implement a meaningful COLA** for homeless services staff, as programs have average vacancy rates of 20% and high turnover for their lowest paying positions like housing specialists.

## Improve Timely Access to Affordable Housing

**Allow ALL families access to HPD set asides:** Even the playing field for all families experiencing homelessness, regardless of which shelter system they are in, as promised by the Adams administration on page 51 of the Housing our Neighbors Blueprint.

**Reduce steps and streamline the process to fill vacant affordable housing units** made available through Housing Connect to meaningfully reduce lease up timetables.

**Open-up city-funded supportive housing to domestic violence survivors** and their children.

## State Advocacy Priorities

### Improve Housing Access and Economic Well-Being

- **Support** the passage of the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) ([S568B/A4021](#)).
- **Support** increasing cash assistance and indexing it to inflation ([S9513/A9130](#)) and increasing the shelter allowance to fair market rate ([S8632/A8900A](#)).
- **Return to a shared state-local funding** partnership on ALL shelter costs.
- **Support** the enhancement of the State tax-based credits to lift incomes.
  - **Expand and deepen** the New York State Earned Income Tax Credit by permanently increasing the percentage of the state credit paid to families from 30% to 45% of the federal credit and adjust filing requirements so all immigrant tax-filers can access the credit.
  - **Reform** the Empire State Child Credit by removing the phase-in that limits the credit amount from reaching the lowest-income families.
- **Support expansion of SNAP benefits:**
  - [A05933](#) - establishing task force for a state-funded version of SNAP for all.
  - [A06214](#) - establishing a state SNAP minimum benefit that is higher than the federal amount.

---

<sup>i</sup> Advocates For Children, Anthos/Home, Barrier Free Living, CAMBA, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Coalition for the Homeless, CSH, Enterprise Community Partners, Gateway Housing, Henry Street Settlement, Homeless Services United, Homes for the Homeless, New Destiny Housing, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, Riseboro, Safe Horizon, Sanctuary for Families, Settlement Housing Fund, The Volunteers of America, WIN, and Family Homeless Coalition Fellows: Lurden Corona, Rhonda Jackson and Kadisha Davis.

<sup>ii</sup> Homeless Services Society (HSU) conducted a survey with 13 Homebase location, the results showed an average of 52% staff turnover within 12 months, an average vacancy rate of 20%. While average contracted caseloads are 34:1, actual average caseloads are 94:1 for programs which flexed to try to meet the demand (some programs are as high as 125:1 and even 250:1) and wait times for appointments at some sites already into 2024.