



HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING ROADMAP FOR MAYOR ADAMS NYC HOUSING PLAN

On a given night, there are approximately 72,000 New Yorkers sleeping in NYC shelters and 2,300 sleeping on the streets. 2021 was the deadliest year on record for homeless New Yorkers, sheltered and unsheltered. Of the 640 homeless New Yorkers lost their lives on record, 489 of those individuals were residing in shelters.

Since taking office, Mayor Adams has not offered a clear plan on how he will house those living on the streets and in shelters. Instead, he has only [offered punitive solutions](#) that only serve to further stigmatize and ostracize people who are homeless in New York City. Our newly-elected mayor has a responsibility and opportunity to address the homelessness crisis with care and compassion, not the same failed tactics that only harm people who are homeless.

In anticipation of Mayor Eric Adams forthcoming housing plan, VOCAL-NY Homelessness Union is urging him to include and act on the following policies:

1. Use all available vacant housing stock, NYCHA units and vouchers to rehouse homeless New Yorkers. On record, developers have stated there are currently [20,000 rent-stabilized apartments that sit vacant](#). It is unconscionable to think that during a housing shortage and global pandemic, developers are allowed to warehouse vacant apartments in exchange for the highest bid. There needs to be an immediate plan to rapidly rehouse all homeless New Yorkers by: using all available vacant apartments and set-aside HPD & NYCHA to house homeless residents, utilizing federal and local vouchers, increasing the number of supportive housing units available.

2. Immediately end encampment sweeps & quality of life criminalization that target homeless New Yorkers. Mayor Adams' administration has continued to neglect the [CDC guidelines](#) of consideration for encampments. Substantial [evidence base studies](#) have long demonstrated that the use of street sweeps on those who are street homeless is hazardous to their physical, mental and emotional health, further traumatizing and deepening an individual's mistrust of police and agency assistance. Encampment-busting is not a new tactic: the De Blasio administration was [reported to dismantle more than 9,000 encampments](#) during his term, which did not result in a decrease in the number of people who were homeless. The fact remains that without permanent housing, encampment sweeps and criminalization will not move people off the streets.

3. Provide access to public, taxpayer-funded bathrooms in subways & in streets. The 2016 decriminalization of public urination has created a dilemma in a city of over 8.5 million residents, where it ranks [80 out of 100 cities in the nation](#) with the amount of bathrooms for public use. Restricting access to public restrooms is a quality of life issue that is often used to criminalize individuals experiencing homelessness resulting in upwards to \$350 in fines. Homeless people experience urinary tract issues and related health problems at a rate 300% higher than the general population. The MTA continues to scapegoat vandalism as its reason for only opening 16% of bathrooms across its 76 of its stations, while [spending \\$371,000,000](#) on cleaning contractors to deep clean near vacant subways during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when MTA ridership was at its lowest in history. Even its own board member has gone on record to note that the largest transit system in the nation would [benefit from an increase in public restrooms](#) on the street and even in the subways. In addition, NYC DOT has continued to warehouse 15 Automatic Public Toilets (APT) after receiving numerous recommendations for siting and installation.