

Poll: Democrats concerned about housing supply, split on who needs support



BY JANAKI CHADHA | 03/17/2021 05:03 AM EDT

Almost half of Democratic voters think the city isn't building enough housing, according to a new poll commissioned by the Citizens Housing & Planning Council, which also revealed that a significant portion of them have experienced homelessness.

Key takeaways: Surveying 1,500 registered Democrats in New York City earlier this year, polling firm On Cue Analytics found a majority of respondents ranked housing affordability and homelessness among the biggest concerns facing the city. Forty-seven percent said the city needs to increase its housing supply, according to the survey, which was shared with POLITICO in advance of a CHPC briefing for mayoral candidates the nonprofit advocacy group is holding Wednesday.

The survey also found the city's homelessness crisis has touched a broad share of voters. One in five respondents said they have experienced homelessness, and nearly 50 percent said they know someone who has.

Yet, when it came to the type of housing city government should develop, voters were divided about who those plans should focus on.

Many of the candidates running for mayor have criticized the de Blasio administration's housing program for not focusing enough on low-income households, but among respondents who cited housing affordability as a top issue, 37 percent said new affordable housing should be built for people at a range of income levels. Twenty-eight percent said the city should focus on middle-class households.

Thirty-one percent said affordable housing efforts should focus only on the poorest and most vulnerable households.

Survey details: The poll was conducted on behalf of CHPC between Jan. 28 and Feb. 4. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percent. Saul Shemesh of On Cue Analytics said the survey polled a representative sample of registered Democrats across the five boroughs.

NYCHA: A majority of respondents said they support bringing in private partners to help manage New York City Housing Authority developments, which the city has been doing through a controversial federal program called Rental Assistance Demonstration. Of NYCHA residents surveyed, 61 percent said they support some form of private management to help address problems in public housing.

“I think probably elected officials right now are hearing a much more heated debate around that, but we wanted to kind of get around the noise on social media and in a community board meeting and really go to a broader swath of New Yorkers,” said Jessica Katz, executive director of CHPC. “I do hope that this sort of emboldens the candidates to think about those tools in a real way.”

What’s next: CHPC is sharing the results at a briefing for mayoral candidates and their staff on Wednesday. The event will be open to the public.

“We’re excited for it to be a resource and hope that it helps [candidates] be a little bit bolder about what they’re able to say as they roll out their housing plans,” Katz said.