

Family Homelessness Coalition 2026 Policy Priorities



Reform CityFHEPS Administration

The City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) is a critical rental assistance program that reduces and prevents homelessness in New York City. Since 2018, it has helped tens of thousands of individuals and families find and keep housing. As vital as this tool has been for New Yorkers, significant administrative burdens are preventing it from working at its best. The processing, approval and inspection processes are lengthy, complex, and costly. In order to enhance oversight, address these barriers, and ensure that the program works as efficiently as possible, FHC recommends the following reforms to the administration of CityFHEPS.

Recommendations



Streamline the Voucher Process



Income certify someone as eligible for CityFHEPS upfront at the shopping letter stage and allow that income eligibility to be valid for a year before a new shopping letter or a rebudgeting process is required, except in instances of substantial change in income or at the voucher holder's request.

Delegate voucher approval authority to community-based organizations (CBO) to alleviate burden from DSS staff. CBO partners should be given access to all relevant systems, such as Welfare Management System, to help expedite the process on behalf of clients.



Address Inspection Rules

Address inspection rules that require a unit from DHS to inspect certain units and delegate authority to inspect all units to community-based partners that currently do voucher inspections for all other units.



Expand and Enhance Data Transparency

Expand and enhance existing CityFHEPS data transparency requirements to more effectively identify solutions to challenges faced by voucher holders during processing and utilization of vouchers.

About FHC

The Family Homelessness Coalition (FHC) is made up of organizations representing service and housing providers, children's advocacy organizations, and people with lived experience in homelessness, working to strengthen prevention and post-shelter services for at-risk families. We promote child and family well-being when shelter is unavoidable and advocate for the creation of more permanent housing resources for homeless children and their families.

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Restore Homebase to the Core of What it Does Well

Since the pandemic, Homebase providers have been saddled with huge administrative and capacity burden. This has not been accompanied with funding and staffing levels to match the current demands from New Yorkers facing housing instability and the expanded scope of services expected from the City. As a result, wait times have increased for critical Homebase services. A shift in scope is needed to enable Homebase staff to focus on the core of reaching out to people in community at risk of housing instability and homelessness and offering holistic support. To ensure that Homebase can return to providing its core services effectively and efficiently, FHC recommends the following:



Resource Sufficiently

The tremendous increase in caseload and ever-expanding set of responsibilities, paired with lack of adequate funding, have limited Homebase providers' ability to provide its critical services like help with eviction prevention, emergency rental assistance and obtaining benefits. **Homebase funding must be increased.**



Staff Sufficiently

Sufficiently staff HRA centers and training center staff to minimize wait times and churning of New Yorkers at HRA Benefits Access Centers who are at risk of losing their housing or lacking public benefits or SNAP.



Dedicate Funding for Rental Assistance

Create a separate RFP with dedicated funding for rental assistance processing. This will reduce strain on Homebase providers and expedite processing, ensuring people facing housing instability can obtain resources through the entry points that are most accessible to them.



Dedicate Funding for Aftercare Services

Create a separate RFP with dedicated funding for aftercare services. This will ensure organizations can properly dedicate staff and tailored services, including support for recertification and income supports to help resolve issues earlier.

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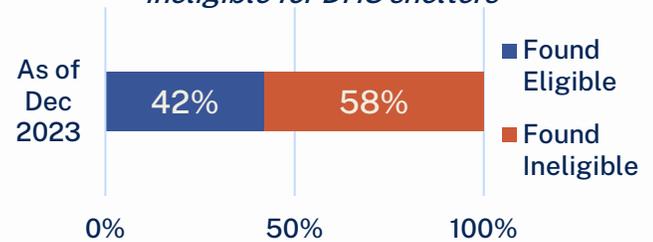
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Shelter Intake Reform

For families who are declaring themselves in need of family shelter, the intake process is overly burdensome and designed in a way that is leading to an overly high number of initial denials. Processes that are meant to confirm a family’s need for shelter have too many barriers, are often uprooting, and needlessly lengthen families’ time spent in housing insecurity.

On average, more than half of families with children were found ineligible for DHS shelters



Issue Area	Recommendations
 <p>Application Process Reform <i>The application process to prove homelessness takes 62 days on average. Methods of proving homelessness are difficult to achieve and the reapplication process can be uprooting.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the housing history requirement from 2 years to 1 year. • Allow families to reapply from their current temporary shelter placement, holding their bed/room placement as their reapplication is processed. • Allow reapplications over the phone. • After 1 eligibility denial, allow a self attestation to housing history.
 <p>Placements Near Schooling <i>Nearly 40% of families in shelter continue to be placed in a different borough from where their youngest child goes to school. When shelter placements are far from schools, it disrupts children’s education.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that shelter placements for families with children in school are within the same community school district or the same borough of the school of the youngest child. • PATH staff should ask the parent(s) if they are interested in a shelter transfer to be closer to their child’s school and give written information to the parent about how to request a school-related shelter transfer. • Ensure that a family’s shelter placement request is reviewed within 7 days of the initial placement and again at 30 days. If a closer placement is available, shelter transfer should be offered as soon as possible.

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