

Practice Update

# Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness

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On June 14th, 2022, New York City Mayor Eric Adams released his much-anticipated housing plan entitled “Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness.” In his announcement, Mayor Adams outlined his comprehensive plan to provide safe, high-quality, affordable homes for New Yorkers at a time in the City’s history when such housing is needed more than ever.

“Housing cannot be a privilege. It is the key to living a healthy lifestyle. Safe, stable, and affordable housing is fundamental to our prosperity” Mayor Adams said. The plan sets out five major steps his administration will take to achieve these goals.

The first step involves improving the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) by delivering resources for repairs, and upgrading the services NYCHA provides to residents and the processes by which they do so. Modern technology is poised to play a central role in facilitating these changes.

The second step is to address homelessness and housing instability. This would be accomplished by breaking down government silos to better measure and address homelessness, helping New Yorkers stay housed, improving shelters and services for those experiencing homelessness, helping New Yorkers move into permanent housing faster, and

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reducing the risk of returning to shelter. The Administration intends to accomplish these goals by implementing a new system for tracking and measuring homelessness, listening to peer lived experience to inform policymaking, strengthening access to emergency financial assistance and housing stabilization services, increasing shelter and services for displaced households, increasing outreach to unsheltered New Yorkers, expanding shelter and services to meet a wider range of needs, and expanding access to supportive housing.

The third step is to create and preserve affordable housing. The Mayor committed to accelerating the creation of supportive housing by completing 15,000 supportive housing units by 2030, two years ahead of the current schedule. Additionally, by significantly expanding affordable homeownership opportunities, the Mayor contends that his administration can help communities build and maintain wealth. The Administration plans to pursue regulatory reforms and advances in construction technology, leverage zoning to encourage more affordable housing, advocate for federal resources, redevelop underutilized government-owned land, and take other measures to accomplish this goal. The Mayor considers this as the best way to stop displacement through gentrification, whereby black and brown communities and renters are priced out of the chance to build wealth for future generations.

The fourth step is to improve the health and safety of New Yorkers by improving housing quality to ensure healthy and safe living conditions, keeping New Yorkers safe in their homes in a changing climate, and creating healthier and more sustainable homes.

The final step is reducing administrative burden to address the full scope of the homelessness crisis in New York City. This will enable the Administration to more efficiently deliver critical government assistance and available resources to those most in need of government support.

“The plan is the most comprehensive housing plan in New York City history” the Mayor said. It was crafted in direct collaboration with New Yorkers who have experienced homelessness. The housing and homelessness crisis has been worsening in recent years. According to the 2021 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey released by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, there is a citywide net rental vacancy rate of 4.54 percent, and a less than 1 percent vacancy rate for apartments renting below \$1,500 a month, the City’s lowest-cost units.

Notably, the Mayor’s plan does not include any discussion of large-scale neighborhood rezonings, or a firm commitment to numerical targets for the production of affordable housing. We are hopeful that this plan will continue to develop and these changes will be implemented successfully.

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