

Overview: Family Homelessness in New York City

Family homelessness continues to rise across New York City, adversely affecting the poorest children and often destabilizing entire neighborhoods. In just three and a half years, from July 2011 through December 2014, roughly 70,000 families with children applied for shelter, and over 36,000 entered the system. While families from every New York City community become homeless, those living in some areas of the city face a much greater risk. The information in this section provides an overview of the growth in the number of families with children living in New York City shelters, the communities where families lived prior to entering shelter, factors within the shelter system contributing to growth, the type of shelter where families are being housed while they are homeless, and how student homelessness can serve as a proxy for community-wide housing instability.

Key Findings

Over 70% of all homeless people living in the New York City shelter system in December of 2014 were parents and their children.

One out of every five (18%) homeless people in shelter was a child age five or under in December 2014.

Five community districts accounted for one out of every five (22%) families entering shelter during the three and a half years from July 2011 through December 2014. These districts included **East New York**, **Bedford-Stuyvesant**, **Concourse/Highbridge**, **University Heights**, and **Unionport/Soundview** (K05, K03, B04, B05, and B09).

Close to half (46%) of homeless parents and children in shelter lived in either cluster site apartments or hotels in December 2014.

The majority of families with children in shelter between July 2014 and December 2014 entered shelter for the first time in 2005.

The percentage of families returning to shelter within one year of their exit to permanent housing increased sharply between FY 2005 and FY 2015 from less than 1% to 17%.

The full extent of family homelessness is not represented by the shelter census. Student homelessness serves as a proxy for the larger number of families in the city experiencing housing instability.

Family Homelessness Continues to Grow

From March 2002 to December 2014, the number of families with children living in New York City shelters increased by roughly 4,800, while the number of children increased by over twice that, or by close to 10,500 (62%).

Young children age five and under continue to make up the largest age group of people living in City shelters. Over 12,000 children aged five or younger stayed in shelter in December 2014.

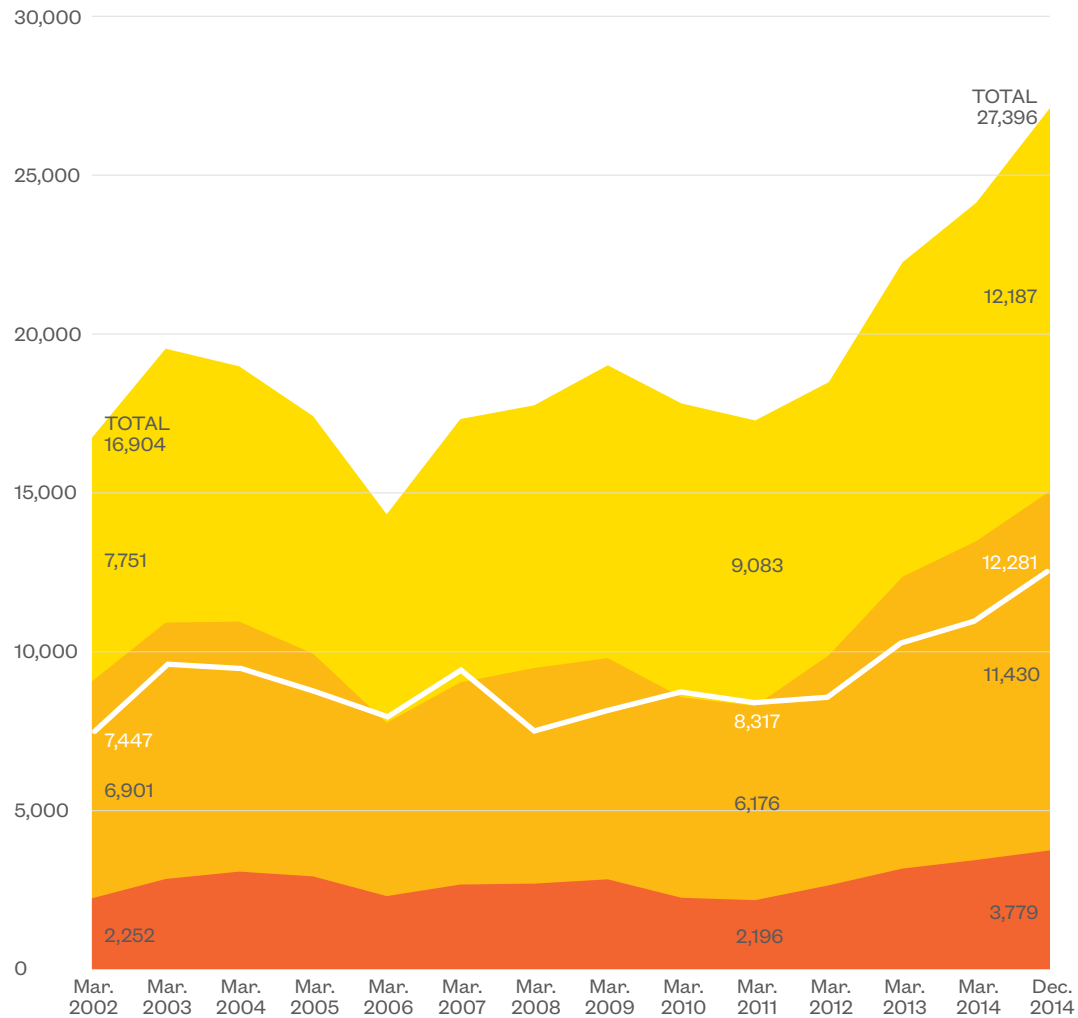
Since March 2011, family shelters have seen a rapid increase in the number of children aged 6 through 13. This group increased by 85% in less than four years (March 2011–December 2014).

Both community factors and shelter policies contribute to the reasons why many families enter shelter more than once.

Families and Children Living in New York City Shelters

March 2002–December 2014, by Month and Year

■ Ages 0–5 ■ Ages 6–13 ■ Ages 14–17 □ Families



Note: "Families" years 2002–2007 are sourced from New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Critical Activities Reports; years 2008–2014 are sourced from DHS Daily Report monthly averages. Number of children by age reflects the total count of individual children served in DHS family shelters per month, while "Families" reflects the daily average number of families served in the shelters during that month. Prior to 2008, family counts included both families with children and adult families. Beginning in 2008, DHS began counting families with children and adult families separately, and the graph for those years shows only families with children.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, *Critical Activities Report*, FY 2002–FY 2011; New York City Department of Homeless Services, *Daily Report*, 2008–2014; New York City Department of Homeless Services, *DHS Data Dashboard Charts*, FY 2012–FY 2015.

Parents and Children Are the Majority of Shelter Residents

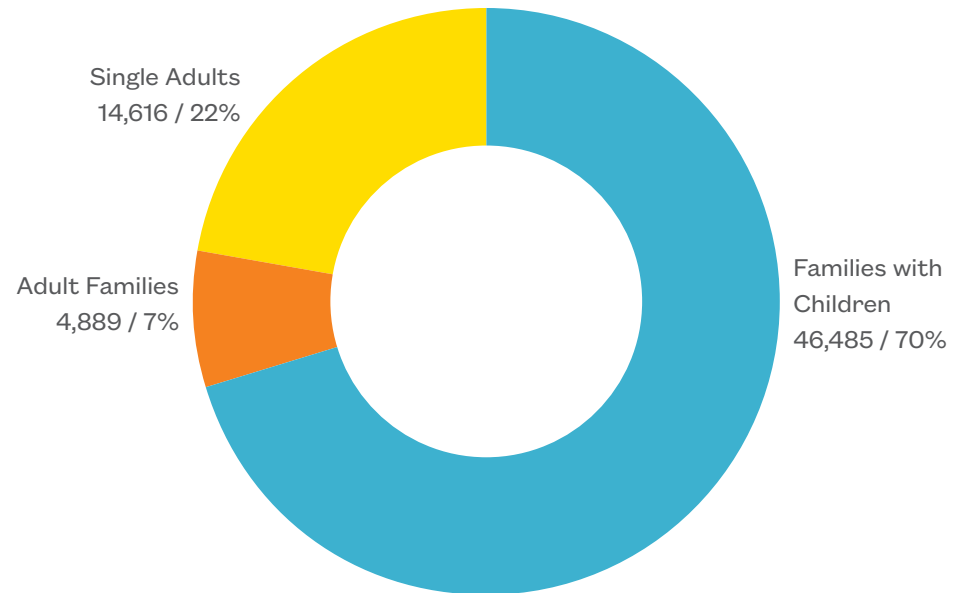
In December 2014, one out of every five people living in a New York City homeless shelter was a child age five or under.¹

Over two-thirds (70%) of all people living in shelter at the end of 2014 were parents and their children.

The large number and rapid growth of children living in shelter is a crisis; however, while in shelter the opportunity exists to address their developmental needs in order to promote their educational and emotional growth.

Individuals in Shelter, by Family Type

December 2014



Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding. Figure refers to the number of unduplicated individuals living in shelters at some point in December 2014.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, *DHS Data Dashboard Fiscal Year to Date 2015*.

¹ New York City Department of Homeless Services, *DHS Data Dashboard Fiscal Year to Date 2015*.

Communities Where Families Lived Prior to Entering Shelter

In just three and a half years, from July 2011 through December 2014, over 36,000 families with children were found eligible for shelter; close to 70,000 applied.

The citywide shelter eligibility rate was 52%. This rate varied from 35% in **Greenwich Village** (M02) to 72% in **Midtown** (M05) from July 2011–December 2014.

The number of families with children entering shelter by community district during the three-and-a-half year period ranged from 11 in **Greenwich Village** (M02) to close to 2,000 in **East New York** (K05).

8,000 families from five community districts made up one out of every five (22%) families found eligible for shelter in New York City between July 2011 and December 2014. These communities were: **East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Concourse/Highbridge, University Heights, and Unionport/Soundview** (K05, K03, B04, B05, and B09), which had an overall eligibility rate of 53%.

Seven of the top ten community districts for shelter entry in the first half of FY 2015 were located in the Bronx (**University Heights, Concourse/Highbridge, Mott Haven, Williamsbridge, Morrisania, Unionport/Soundview, and East Tremont**, Districts B01, B03, B04, B05, B06, B09, and B12) and three in Brooklyn (**East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Brownsville**, Districts K03, K05, and K16).

The ten neighborhoods listed above accounted for 2,614 families entering shelter in just six months representing 40% of family shelter entrants and 39% of applicants from July–December 2014.

Public policy that expects to effectively curtail shelter entry must be based on a comprehensive understanding of local dynamics.

Family Applications and Eligibility for Shelter, by Community District

Number of Homeless Families with Children Applying for and Entering Shelter

FY 2012 through First Half of FY 2015*

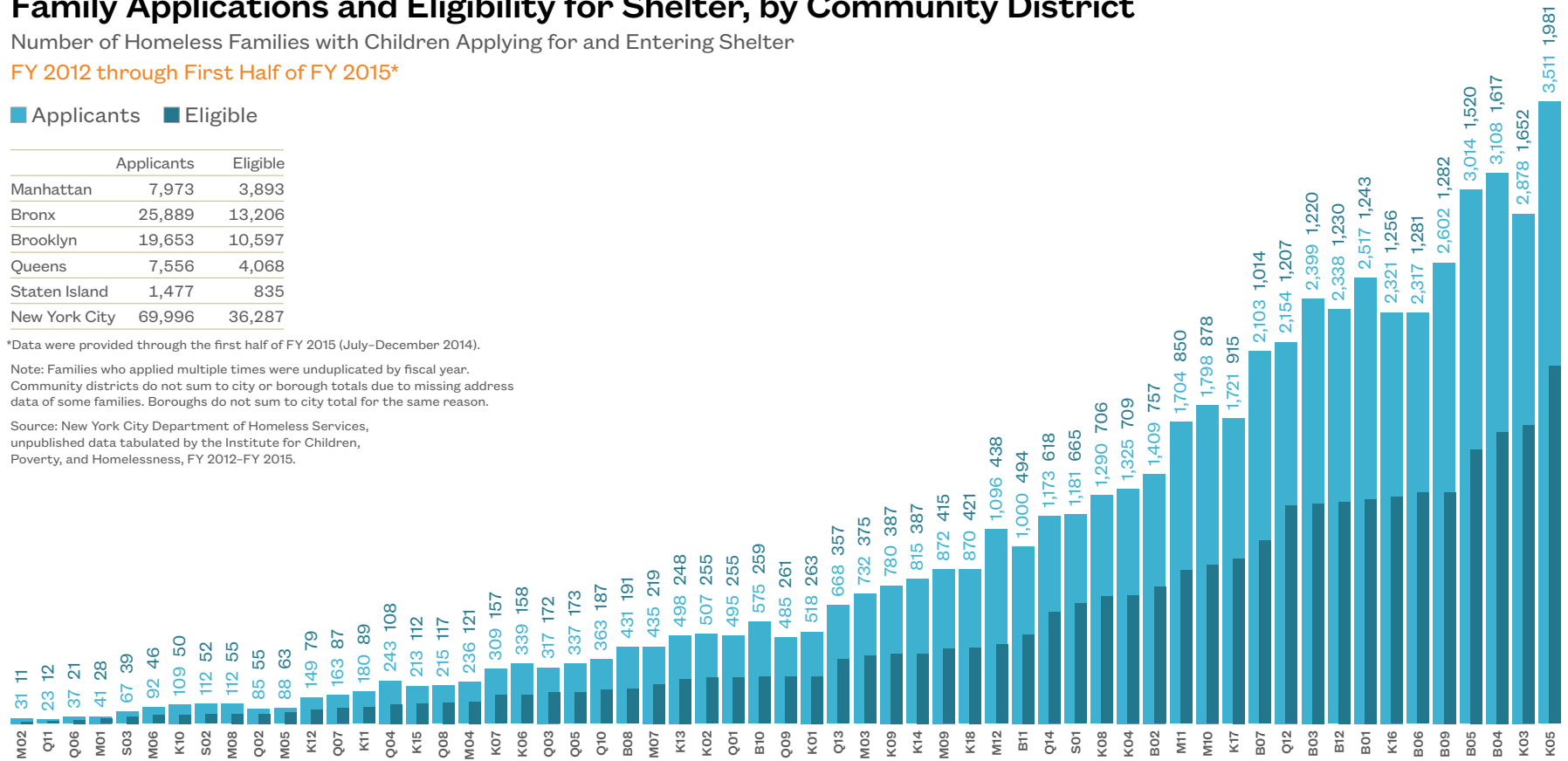
■ Applicants ■ Eligible

	Applicants	Eligible
Manhattan	7,973	3,893
Bronx	25,889	13,206
Brooklyn	19,653	10,597
Queens	7,556	4,068
Staten Island	1,477	835
New York City	69,996	36,287

*Data were provided through the first half of FY 2015 (July–December 2014).

Note: Families who applied multiple times were unduplicated by fiscal year. Community districts do not sum to city or borough totals due to missing address data of some families. Boroughs do not sum to city total for the same reason.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2012–FY 2015.



Community Districts and Select Neighborhoods

Manhattan

M01 & M02
Tribeca/Greenwich Village

M03

Lower East Side

M04 & M05

Chelsea/Clinton/Midtown

M06

Murray Hill/Stuyvesant

M07

Upper West Side

M08

Upper East Side

M09

Manhattanville

M10

Central Harlem

M11

East Harlem

M12

Washington Heights

Bronx

B01 & B02
Mott Haven/Hunts Point

B03 & B06
Morrisania/East Tremont

B04
Concourse/Highbridge

B05
University Heights

B07

Bedford Park

B08

Riverdale

B09

Unionport/Soundview

B10

Throgs Neck

B11

Pelham Parkway

B12

Williamsbridge

Brooklyn

K01

Williamsburg/Greenpoint

K02

Fort Greene/Brooklyn Heights

K03

Bedford-Stuyvesant

K04

Bushwick

K05

East New York

K06

Park Slope

K07

Sunset Park

K08

Crown Heights North

K09

Crown Heights South

K10

Bay Ridge

K11

Bensonhurst

K12

Borough Park

K13

Coney Island

K14

Flatbush/Midwood

K15

Sheepshead Bay

K16

Brownsville

K17

East Flatbush

K18

Canarsie

Queens

Q01

Astoria

Q02

Sunnyside/Woodside

Q03

Jackson Heights

Q04

Elmhurst/Corona

Q05

Ridgewood/Glendale

Q06

Rego Park/Forest Hills

Q07

Flushing

Q08

Fresh Meadows/Briarwood

Q09

Woodhaven

Q10

Howard Beach

Q11

Bayside

Q12

Jamaica/St. Albans

Q13

Queens Village

Q14

The Rockaways

Staten Island

S01

St. George

S02

South Beach

S03

Tottenville

Family Applications and Eligibility for Shelter, by Community District

Number of Homeless Families with Children Applying for and Entering Shelter

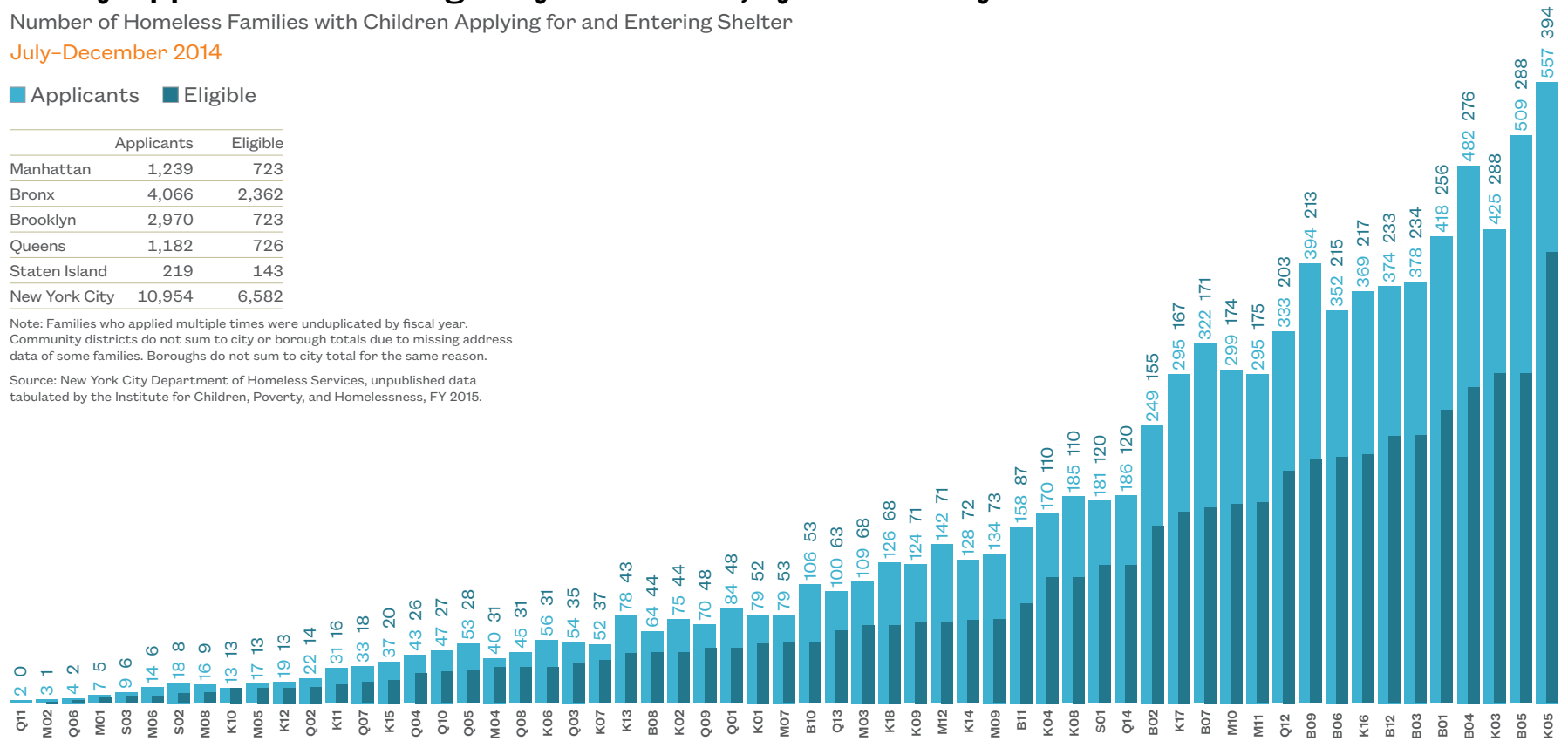
July–December 2014

■ Applicants ■ Eligible

	Applicants	Eligible
Manhattan	1,239	723
Bronx	4,066	2,362
Brooklyn	2,970	723
Queens	1,182	726
Staten Island	219	143
New York City	10,954	6,582

Note: Families who applied multiple times were unduplicated by fiscal year. Community districts do not sum to city or borough totals due to missing address data of some families. Boroughs do not sum to city total for the same reason.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2015.



Community Districts and Select Neighborhoods

Manhattan M01 & M02 Tribeca/Greenwich Village	M10 Central Harlem	B07 Bedford Park	Brooklyn K01 Williamsburg/Greenpoint	K08 Crown Heights North	K16 Brownsville	Q05 Ridgewood/Glendale	Q12 Jamaica/St. Albans
M03 Lower East Side	M11 East Harlem	B08 Riverdale	K02 Fort Greene/Brooklyn Heights	K09 Crown Heights South	K17 East Flatbush	Q06 Rego Park/Forest Hills	Q13 Queens Village
M04 & M05 Chelsea/Clinton/Midtown	M12 Washington Heights	B09 Unionport/Soundview	K03 Bedford-Stuyvesant	K10 Bay Ridge	K18 Canarsie	Q07 Flushing	Q14 The Rockaways
M06 Murray Hill/Stuyvesant	Bronx B01 & B02 Mott Haven/Hunts Point	B10 Throgs Neck	K04 Bushwick	K11 Bensonhurst	Queens Q01 Astoria	Q08 Fresh Meadows/Briarwood	Staten Island S01 St. George
M07 Upper West Side	B03 & B06 Morrisania/East Tremont	B11 Pelham Parkway	K05 East New York	K12 Borough Park	Q02 Sunnyside/Woodside	Q09 Woodhaven	S02 South Beach
M08 Upper East Side	B04 Concourse/Highbridge	B12 Williamsbridge	K06 Park Slope	K13 Coney Island	Q03 Jackson Heights	Q10 Howard Beach	S03 Tottenville
M09 Manhattanville	B05 University Heights		K07 Sunset Park	K14 Flatbush/Midwood	Q04 Elmhurst/Corona		
				K15 Sheepshead Bay			

Extent of Housing Instability and Homelessness in New York City Neighborhoods

Taking the total population of each community district into account and calculating the shelter entry rate per 1,000 families allows for a more accurate comparison across communities. It also highlights communities whose shelter entry numbers are lower but are significantly affected by homelessness.

The average annual rate of family shelter entry in New York City was 5.6 per 1,000 families between FY 2012 and the first half of FY 2015. However, the rate varied greatly by community district ranging from a low of 0.1 per 1,000 families in **Bayside**, Queens (Q11), to a high of 19.1 per 1,000 families in the **Morrisania/East Tremont** area of the Bronx (B03/B06).

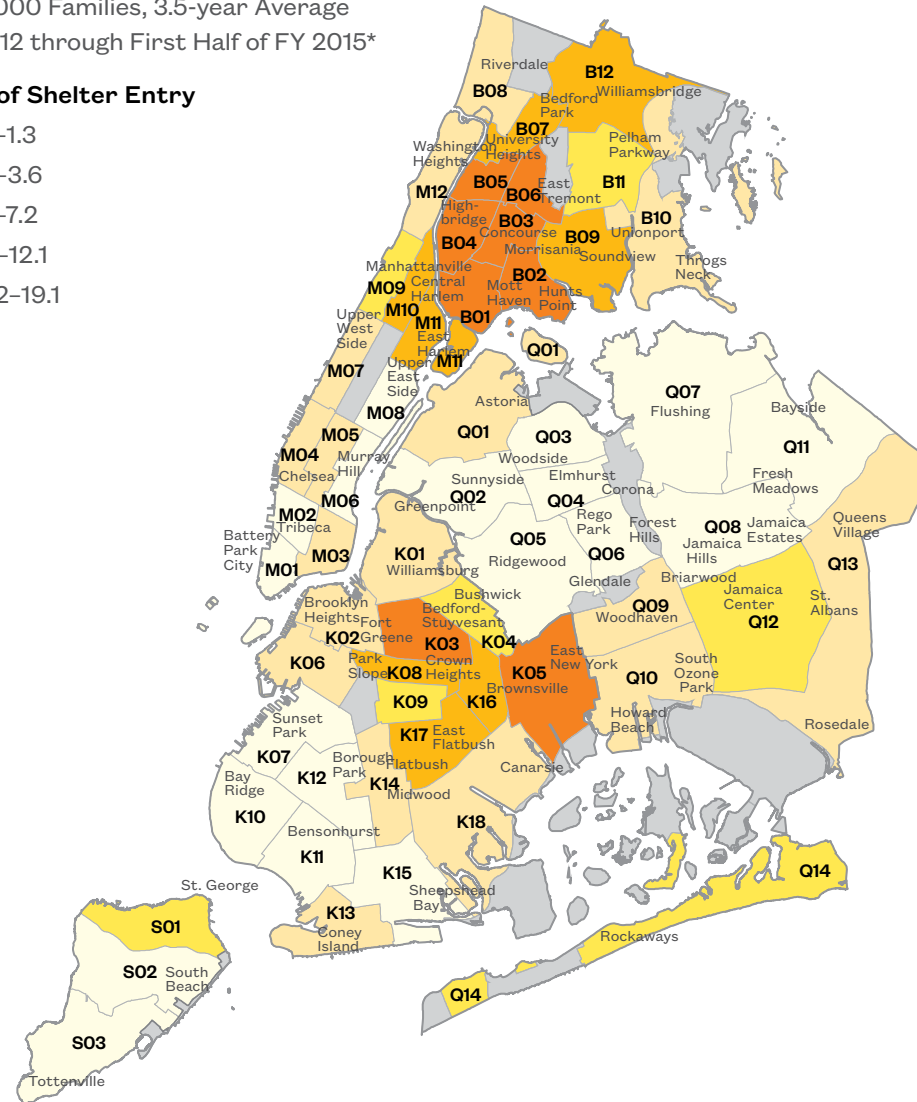
The five community districts with the highest rate of family shelter entry were: **Morrisania/East Tremont, Mott Haven/Hunts Point, and Concourse/Highbridge** in the Bronx, and **Bedford-Stuyvesant** and **East New York** in Brooklyn (B01/B02, B03/B06, B04, K03, and K05).

Where Families Lived Prior to Shelter, by Community District

Annual Rate of Families with Children Entering Shelter per 1,000 Families, 3.5-year Average FY 2012 through First Half of FY 2015*

Rate of Shelter Entry

- 0.1-1.3
- 1.4-3.6
- 3.7-7.2
- 7.3-12.1
- 12.2-19.1



*Data were provided through the first half of FY 2015 (July-December 2014).

Note: Number of families entering shelter is an average from FY 2012 through the first half of FY 2015. Number of families is an average from 2012-2014. Coefficient of variation for average number of family households is 1.6%-4.5%.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2012-FY 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 1-year Estimates*, 2012-2014.

Where Families Lived Prior to Shelter, by Community District

Annual Rate of Families with Children Entering Shelter per 1,000 Families, 3.5-year Average

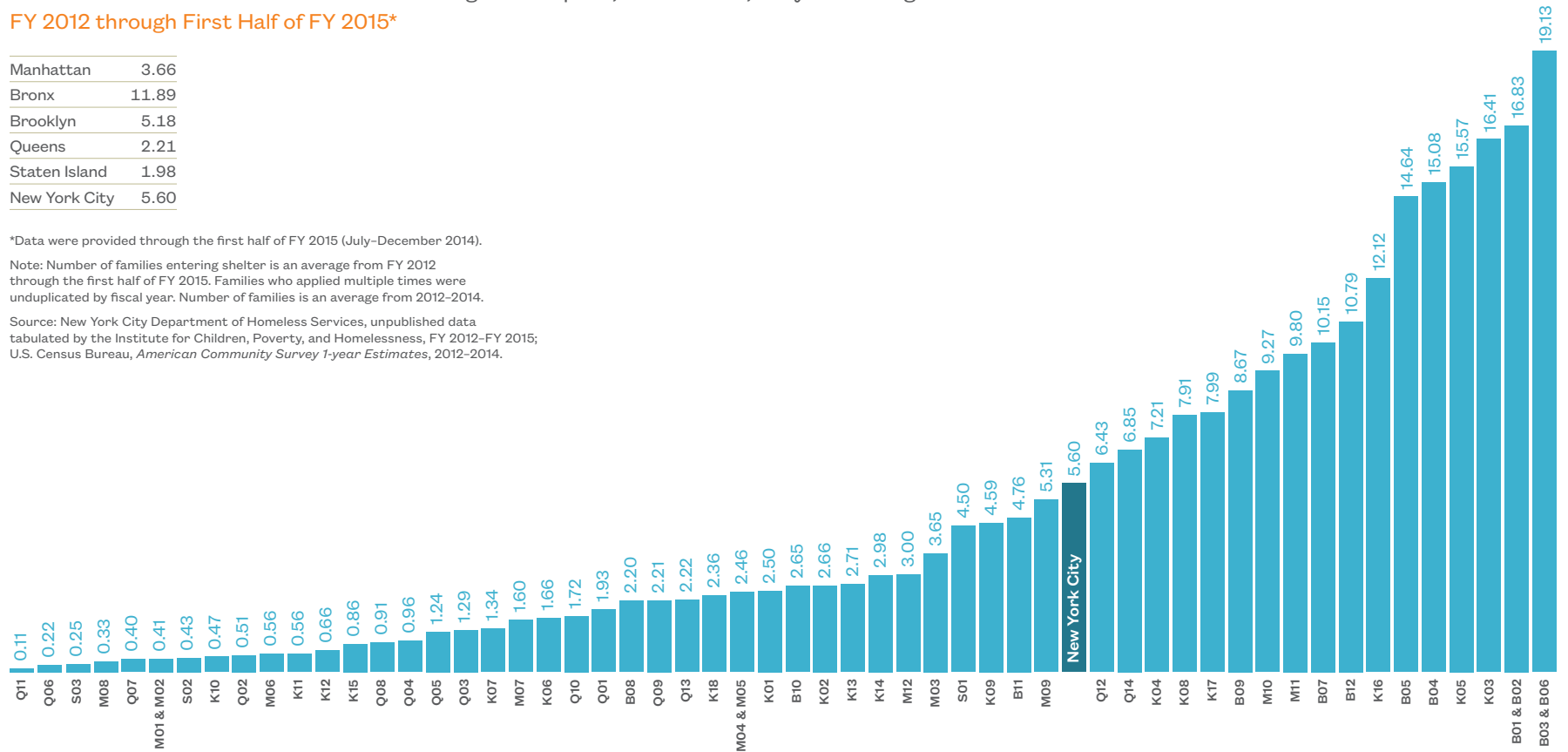
FY 2012 through First Half of FY 2015*

Manhattan	3.66
Bronx	11.89
Brooklyn	5.18
Queens	2.21
Staten Island	1.98
New York City	5.60

*Data were provided through the first half of FY 2015 (July–December 2014).

Note: Number of families entering shelter is an average from FY 2012 through the first half of FY 2015. Families who applied multiple times were unduplicated by fiscal year. Number of families is an average from 2012–2014.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2012–FY 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 1-year Estimates*, 2012–2014.



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Central Harlem

M11

East Harlem

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Washington Heights

Bronx

B01 & B02

Mott Haven/Hunts Point

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Morrisania/East Tremont

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Concourse/Highbridge

B05

University Heights

B07

Bedford Park

B08

Riverdale

B09

Unionport/Soundview

B10

Throgs Neck

B11

Pelham Parkway

B12

Williamsbridge

Brooklyn

K01

Williamsburg/Greenpoint

K02

Fort Greene/Brooklyn Heights

K03

Bedford-Stuyvesant

K04

Bushwick

K05

East New York

K06

Park Slope

K07

Sunset Park

K08

Crown Heights North

K09

Crown Heights South

K10

Bay Ridge

K11

Bensonhurst

K12

Borough Park

K13

Coney Island

K14

Flatbush/Midwood

K15

Sheepshead Bay

K16

Brownsville

K17

East Flatbush

K18

Canarsie

Queens

Q01

Astoria

Q02

Sunnyside/Woodside

Q03

Jackson Heights

Q04

Elmhurst/Corona

Q05

Ridgewood/Glendale

Q06

Rego Park/Forest Hills

Q07

Flushing

Q08

Fresh Meadows/Briarwood

Q09

Woodhaven

Q10

Howard Beach

Q11

Bayside

Q12

Jamaica/St. Albans

Q13

Queens Village

Q14

The Rockaways

Staten Island

S01

St. George

S02

South Beach

S03

Tottenville

First-Time Homeless Are the Smallest Proportion of Families in Shelter

Over 17,000 families lived in shelter at some point between July 2014 and December 2014. Fewer than 3,000 (16%) entered shelter for the first time in the 2014 calendar year.

The majority (56%) of families with children in shelter between July 2014 and December 2014 entered shelter for the first time during the Bloomberg administration.

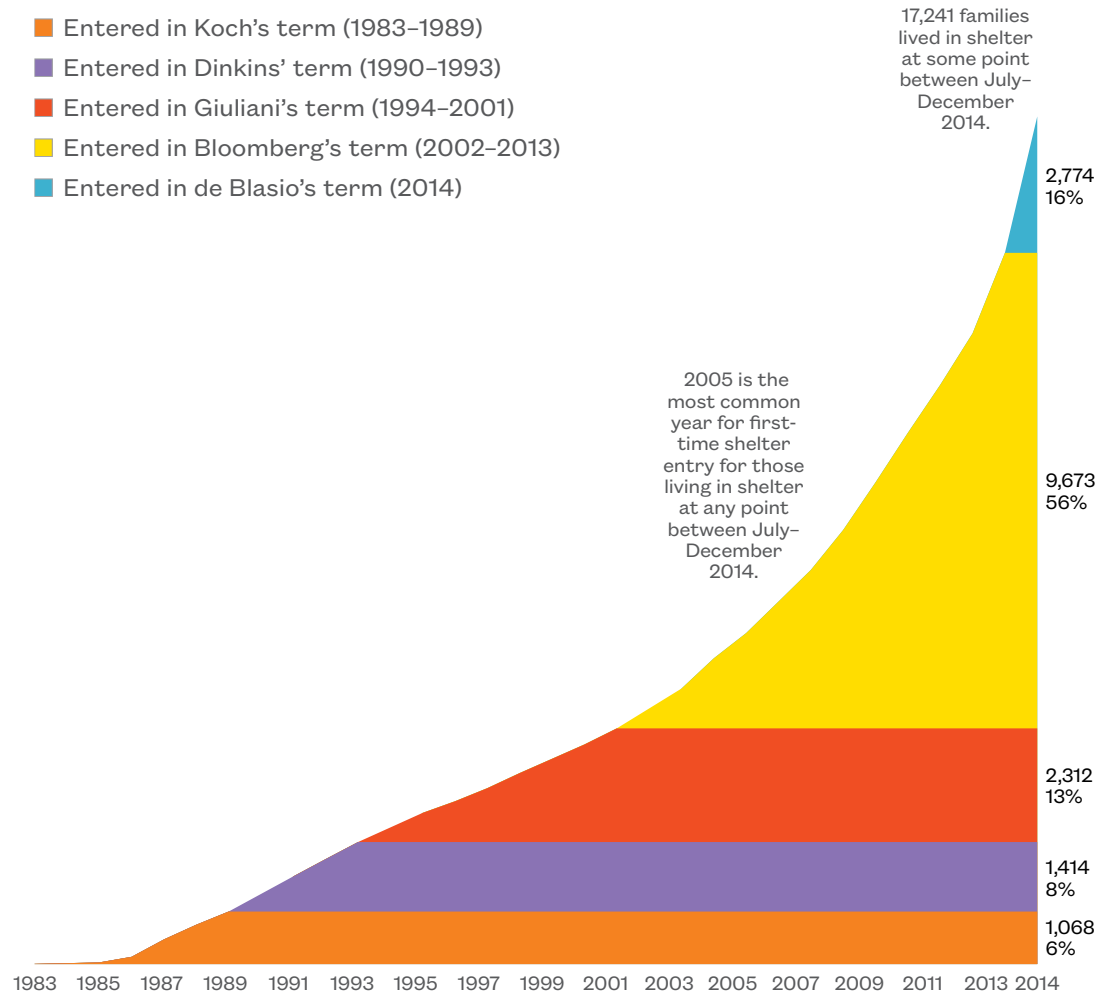
Growth in the shelter system is not due to new homeless families with children entering shelter, but to long-term stayers—families who have remained in shelter longer than one year or returned to shelter repeatedly. Eighty-four percent of families had entered shelter for the first time prior to the 2014 calendar year.

In order to reduce family homelessness, the reasons families return to shelter must be addressed. A policy focus on long-term family stability is key.

First Date of Entry into the New York City Shelter System

Number and Percent of Families with Children Living in Shelters During July–December 2014, by Year of First Ever Entry into the New York City Shelter System

- Entered in Koch’s term (1983–1989)
- Entered in Dinkins’ term (1990–1993)
- Entered in Giuliani’s term (1994–2001)
- Entered in Bloomberg’s term (2002–2013)
- Entered in de Blasio’s term (2014)



Note: Chart depicts only families that were in shelter during July–December 2014. Families are unduplicated in each year. Years refer to calendar years. Data presented here do not provide information on the length of a family’s stay in shelter or the total number of times a family stayed in shelter.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2015.

Rise in Rapid Return to Shelter

In FY 2015 the rate for families with children returning to shelter within one year was 17%. In FY 2005, the rate was less than 1%.

The most rapid increase in the one-year return to shelter rate took place between FY 2011 and FY 2015 when there was a 14 percentage-point increase in just four years.

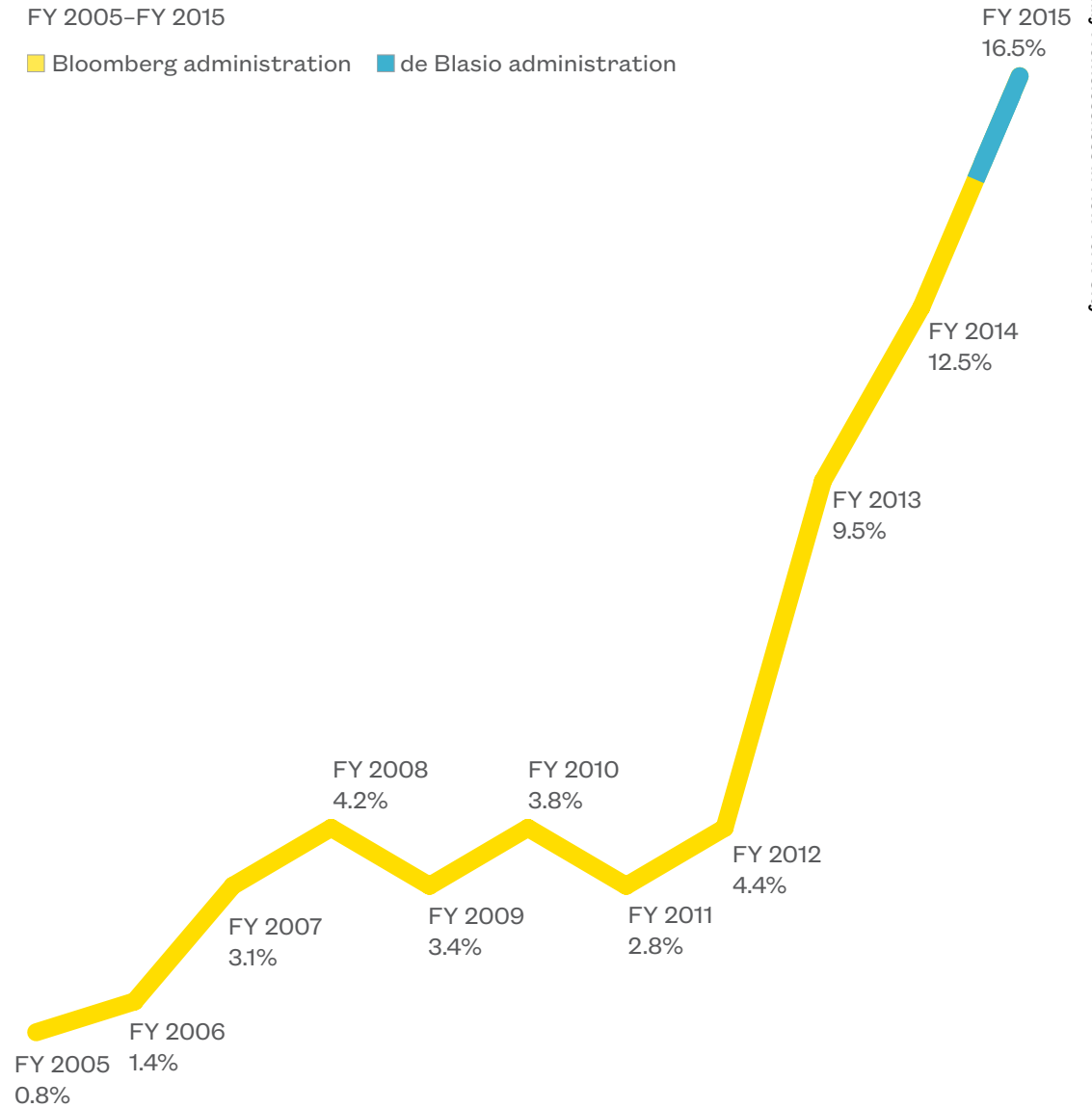
The one-year return to shelter rate is an indicator of the level of housing instability families face after exiting shelter into permanent housing.

When a family returns to shelter—particularly within such a short period of time—it is both extremely destabilizing for their children’s educational and social development and costly to the city taxpayer.

Return to Shelter Rate in New York City

Percent of Families with Children that Returned to Shelter Within One Year
FY 2005–FY 2015

■ Bloomberg administration ■ de Blasio administration



Note: Figure refers to the percentage of families with children who exited New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year.

Source: New York City Mayor's Office of Operations, *Mayor's Management Report*, 2009–2015.

Cluster Sites and Hotels Continue to House Large Numbers of Homeless Families

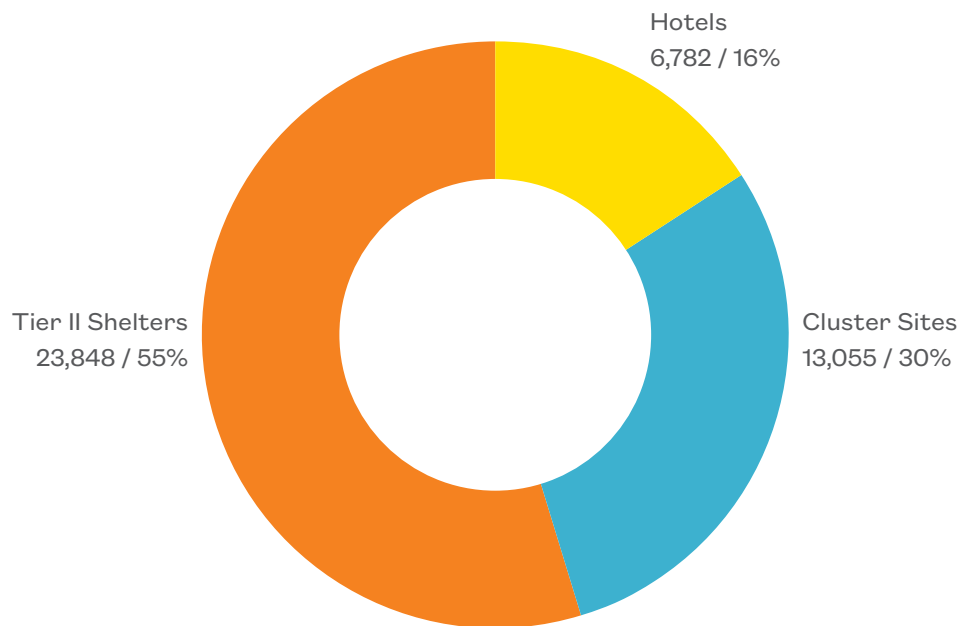
Over 43,500 parents and children lived in a family shelter in December 2014. Close to half (46%) lived in cluster site apartments and hotels.

Cluster site apartments continue to represent a significant portion (30%) of total family shelter capacity.

Cluster site apartments and hotels often lack the needed services for parents and their children that are available through contracted Tier II shelters. With close to half of all families with children living in these settings, thousands of families are not receiving the assistance they need to end their homelessness.

What Type of Shelter Do Families Live In?

Average Census of Families with Children
December 2014



Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding. The number of parents and children represented in this chart differs from the December 2014 unduplicated count given on page 10. This chart shows the average monthly census for December.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2015.

Tightening the Front Door: Shelter Application and Eligibility

Within three months of de Blasio's entry into office, the percentage of families found eligible for shelter rose from 39% to 57%. This brief rise in eligibility during de Blasio's first year in office as mayor, however, dropped back down to an eligibility rate that was similar to that of the last two years of his predecessor, Mayor Bloomberg.

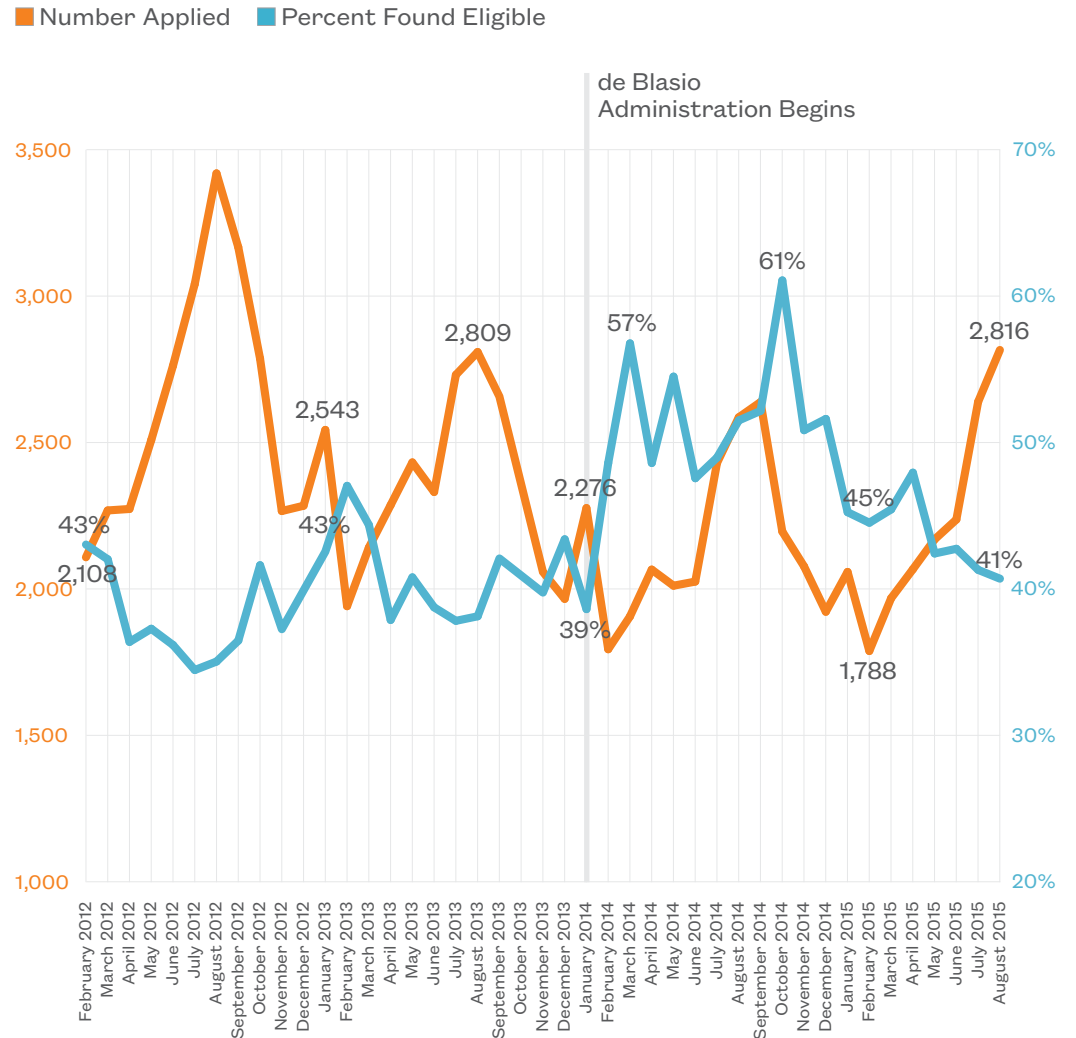
As of August 2015, the monthly eligibility rate for family shelter was 41%. This is much lower than the six-month rate of 60% from July–December 2014 (page 25).

In August 2015 over 2,800 families applied for shelter in New York City. This is the largest number of applicants since September 2012, when over 3,100 families applied.

The more than 20 percentage-point fluctuation in eligibility rate that is seen between January 2014 and August 2015 highlights how eligibility criteria can significantly affect the number of families entering shelter.

Family Shelter Applicants and Eligibility in New York City

Number of Families with Children Applying for Shelter and Percent of Applications Found Eligible 2012–2015, by Month



Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, *Local Law 37 Report*, 2012–2015.

Student Data Reveal the Extent of Homelessness in City Council Districts

The proportion of students who were homeless in SY 2013-14 varied greatly by City Council district ranging from 2% in District 51 in the **Arden Heights** and **Tottenville** area of Staten Island to 20% in District 14 encompassing the **Fordham** and **Kingsbridge** area of the west Bronx. The average rate of student homelessness in New York City was 8% in SY 2013-14.

City Council District 17 in the **Melrose** and **Hunts Point** area of the Bronx had the largest number of homeless students attending school out of all 51 City Council districts. In SY 2013-14 over 5,000 homeless students were enrolled in schools in District 17 and 16% of all students attending school there were homeless.

The full extent of family homelessness is not represented by the shelter census. Student homelessness serves as a proxy for the larger number of families in the city experiencing housing instability.

Student Homelessness, by City Council District

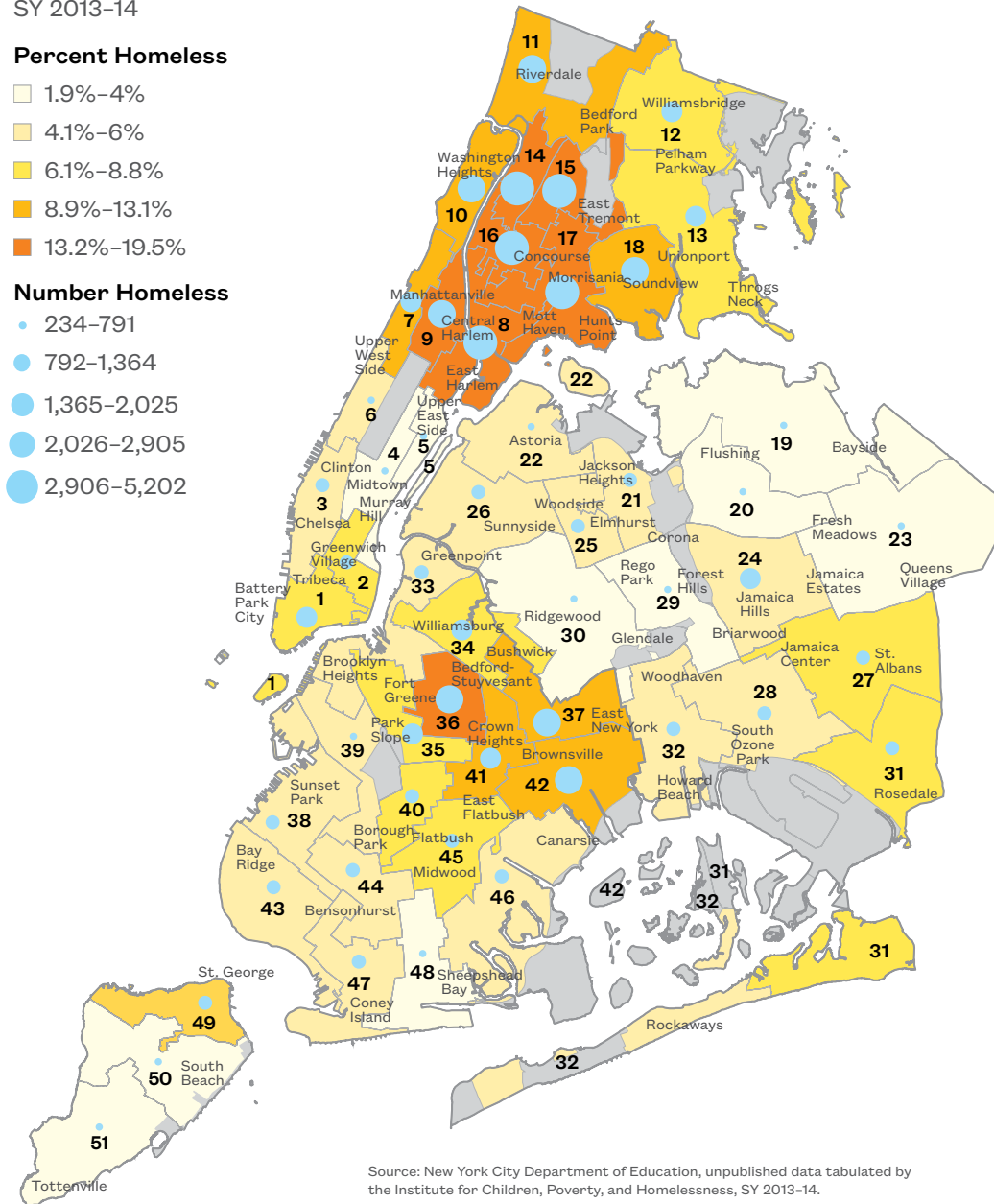
Percent and Number of Students Who Were Homeless
SY 2013-14

Percent Homeless

- 1.9%–4%
- 4.1%–6%
- 6.1%–8.8%
- 8.9%–13.1%
- 13.2%–19.5%

Number Homeless

- 234–791
- 792–1,364
- 1,365–2,025
- 2,026–2,905
- 2,906–5,202



Source: New York City Department of Education, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, SY 2013-14.

Student Homelessness, by City Council District

SY 2013-14

City Council District	Number of Students	Number of Homeless Students	Percent of Students Homeless	Number of Homeless Students				% Change SY 2010-11 to 2013-14
				Pre-Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	
1	25,797	2,025	7.8%	63	868	337	710	25.4%
2	17,983	1,364	7.6%	69	490	224	527	17.6%
3	20,627	1,102	5.3%	-	117	73	833	-9.7%
4	5,813	234	4.0%	-	23	86	113	26.5%
5	7,928	253	3.2%	-	112	13	119	1.2%
6	16,221	791	4.9%	-	295	167	297	35.4%
7	11,230	1,469	13.1%	50	972	273	141	10.6%
8	28,579	4,162	14.6%	174	2,617	663	590	37.3%
9	15,651	2,291	14.6%	123	1,381	354	362	29.6%
10	21,183	2,558	12.1%	72	1,174	574	676	-3.4%
11	26,262	2,905	11.1%	25	1,679	468	667	49.8%
12	21,658	1,901	8.8%	-	999	413	437	23.8%
13	23,409	1,603	6.8%	29	736	374	410	22.5%
14	18,262	3,557	19.5%	83	2,342	1,002	94	55.3%
15	25,913	4,439	17.1%	74	2,985	831	476	50.3%
16	27,420	4,675	17.0%	64	2,745	986	773	35.0%
17	33,247	5,202	15.6%	161	2,821	1,207	867	21.5%
18	22,957	2,824	12.3%	40	1,482	633	595	41.9%
19	20,714	546	2.6%	19	326	127	63	151.6%
20	18,221	609	3.3%	-	210	93	275	36.2%
21	16,937	1,005	5.9%	14	796	141	36	48.9%
22	13,836	771	5.6%	-	231	213	262	-3.5%
23	24,701	626	2.5%	13	288	104	199	17.9%
24	35,233	1,724	4.9%	15	397	196	934	12.8%
25	21,058	947	4.5%	-	629	161	132	42.0%
26	26,319	1,156	4.4%	20	516	120	482	52.1%
27	15,749	1,174	7.5%	19	751	276	105	25.0%

City Council District	Number of Students	Number of Homeless Students	Percent of Students Homeless	Number of Homeless Students				% Change SY 2010-11 to 2013-14
				Pre-Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	
28	20,959	1,053	5.0%	20	669	115	205	2.7%
29	16,315	442	2.7%	-	232	85	111	39.0%
30	19,104	731	3.8%	-	362	225	120	52.6%
31	16,207	1,291	8.0%	50	790	297	133	29.5%
32	23,551	1,084	4.6%	15	455	255	326	47.1%
33	19,393	1,084	5.6%	32	272	216	529	20.6%
34	19,999	1,738	8.7%	90	999	267	350	13.2%
35	21,075	1,605	7.6%	41	788	260	484	25.6%
36	14,485	2,177	15.0%	112	1,241	474	303	4.9%
37	21,429	2,413	11.3%	80	1,457	432	380	18.6%
38	22,068	1,225	5.6%	29	924	157	101	39.4%
39	17,292	790	4.6%	52	526	89	114	24.4%
40	13,274	1,071	8.1%	-	516	335	180	6.6%
41	16,085	1,976	12.3%	50	1,302	390	191	14.2%
42	18,173	2,227	12.3%	85	1,333	485	245	13.3%
43	24,498	1,135	4.6%	-	299	78	694	37.2%
44	19,474	936	4.8%	38	327	157	402	21.4%
45	14,665	1,188	8.1%	23	731	218	204	8.6%
46	16,683	997	6.0%	32	501	277	167	26.8%
47	23,081	1,089	4.7%	21	370	119	538	21.8%
48	20,743	770	3.7%	15	358	131	246	14.4%
49	19,684	1,304	6.6%	32	746	202	291	2.4%
50	19,299	598	3.1%	14	281	97	195	58.2%
51	23,328	443	1.9%	-	191	117	119	40.6%

Note: The number of homeless students by grade does not add up to the total number of homeless students because of students whose grade level data are missing and are not counted in grades pre-K-12. “-” either indicates that the data would display 10 or fewer homeless students or that the total N is under 30.

Source: New York City Department of Education, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, SY 2010-11 and SY 2013-14.