

# Family Homelessness in New York City



*When I was 13 years old my mom was diagnosed with cancer. She lost her battle in 2010, and unfortunately six months after her death my grandmother, brother, and I had to move into shelter in Brooklyn. Before I moved into the shelter I lived doubled up with family. We were 11 people in a one-bedroom apartment and so that's why we had to move into shelter. I have a physical disability—cerebral palsy—and I am in a wheelchair. One of the reasons I had to move was our living situation at the time was affecting my health.*



*20-year-old, formerly homeless and disabled college student*

# Family Homelessness in New York City

Homelessness in New York City continues to destabilize families and whole communities. While over 12,000 families—including 25,000 children—called a City shelter their home, the experience of housing instability and homelessness in New York City’s communities goes far beyond what the shelter numbers alone show. In SY 2015–16, City schools identified four times as many homeless students as there were children living in shelter, but the current structure of the City’s shelter system is ill-equipped to meet the long-term stability needs of homeless children and families living both in and outside of the City’s family shelters. In order to shed light on the shelter system as well as the extent of family homelessness by community, this section explores trends in the number of families in shelter, the location of family shelters overall and by shelter type across City Council districts, student homelessness by City Council district, and newly available data on shelter growth, type, and locations.

## New Trends

The number of families in **hotel** shelter units **grew by 20%** over an eighteen-month period from July 2014 to December 2015—an increase of almost 400 families—twice the rate of growth of Tier II units.

City Council District 9 located in **Central Harlem** had the largest number of hotel shelter units and was among the six districts where the most common type of shelter was a **hotel**. (Districts 9, 22, 28, 30, 36, and 48)

**Concourse** and **Highbridge** in District 16 had the most cluster sites in New York City, as well as the largest number of total shelter units.

## Key Findings

Over **two-thirds** of people living in New York City’s shelter system—more than 44,000 people—were **parents** and their **children**. (December 2015)

The seven City Council districts with the highest rates of student homelessness were **East Harlem/Mott Haven**, **Central Harlem**, **Morris Heights**, **Belmont**, **Concourse**, **Hunts Point**, and **Bedford-Stuyvesant**. (Districts 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 36)

While student data show that homeless children are in every New York City Council district, **17 City Council districts** have **no shelters for families with children**.

# Family Homelessness Remains High

Over 12,000 families, including more than 25,000 children, were living in New York City shelters in December 2015.

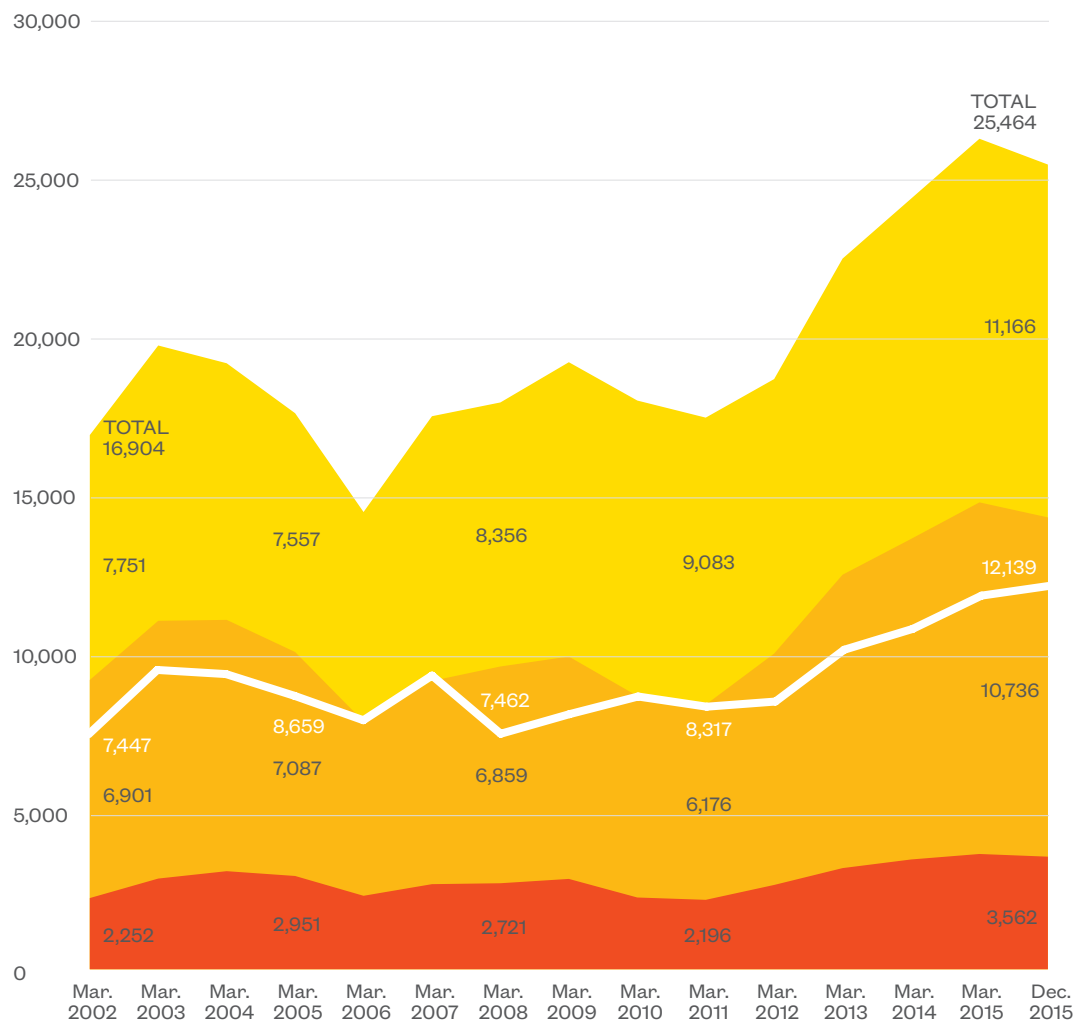
The number of families with children in the City shelter system has increased by over 60% since March 2008.

Children age five and under continue to make up the largest group of children living in family shelters. In December 2015, 44% of children were age five or younger.

## Families and Children Living in New York City Shelters

March 2002–December 2015, 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*, 2008–2015; New York City Department of Homeless Services, *DHS Data Dashboard Charts*, FY 2012–FY 2016.

# Parents and Children Are Largest Group in Shelter

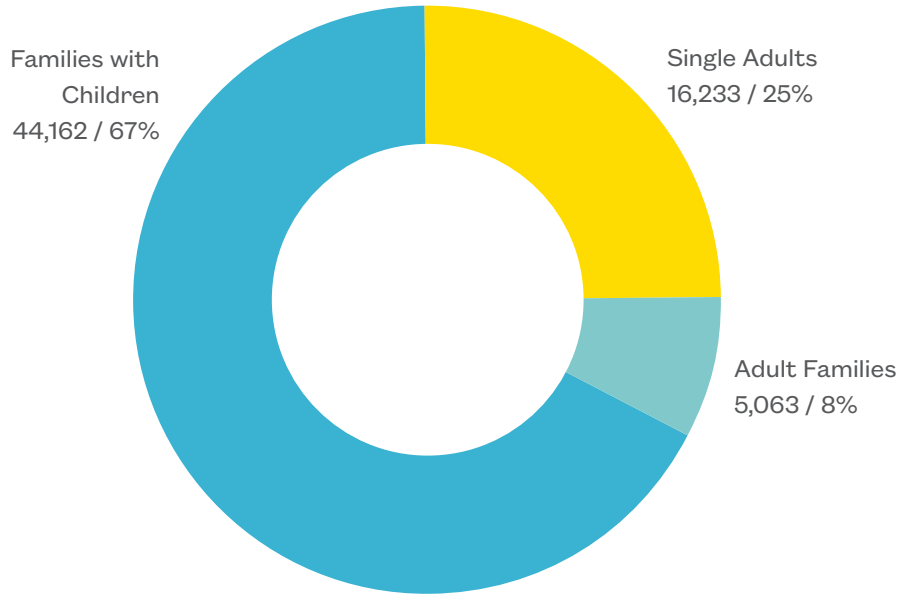
Over two-thirds of people living in New York City’s shelter system—more than 44,000 people—were parents and their children. (December 2015)

Only one-quarter of homeless people living in shelter were single adults.

We know these already high shelter numbers do not tell the full story of homelessness in New York City. The 25,000 children in shelter are a fraction of the more than 100,000 school-age children across the city. As we weigh policy options to meet the needs of homeless families, how do we ensure we reach all families experiencing housing instability?

## Individuals in Shelter, by Family Type

December 2015



Note: Figure refers to the number of unduplicated individuals living in shelters at some point in December 2015. Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, *Local Law 37 Report*, December 2015.

# Locations of Family Shelters

Four City Council districts are home to 33% of the city's entire family shelter capacity. These districts include **East Harlem/Mott Haven, Belmont, Concourse, and Hunts Point**. (Districts 8, 15, 16, and 17)

While student data show that homeless children live in every NYC City Council district, 17 districts have no shelters for families with children.

The same neighborhoods come up in conversations about homelessness and poverty again and again. Is there a way to reimagine the family shelter as a true community resource?

## Where Are Family Shelters?

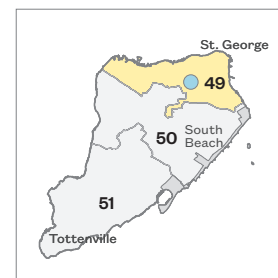
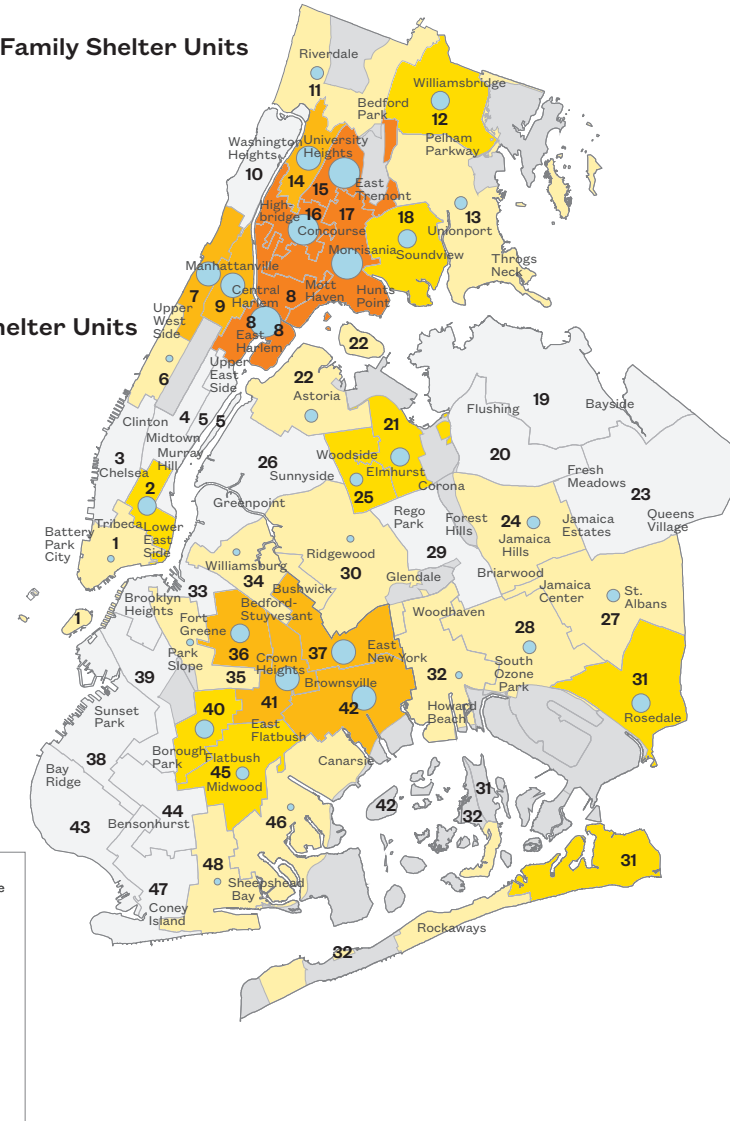
Percent and Number of Family Shelter Units, by City Council District  
December 2015

### Percent of Citywide Family Shelter Units

- 0.0%
- 0.1%–1.6%
- 1.7%–3.2%
- 3.3%–6.1%
- 6.2%–10.1%

### Number of Family Shelter Units

- 16–99
- 100–223
- 224–415
- 416–670
- 671–1,106



Note: Some shelters are not included due to missing or incomplete address information (1,887 units out of 12,839 total family shelter units citywide). Only shelters for families with children are included. See User's Guide for further notes about the shelters included in this publication.  
Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Legal Aid Society.

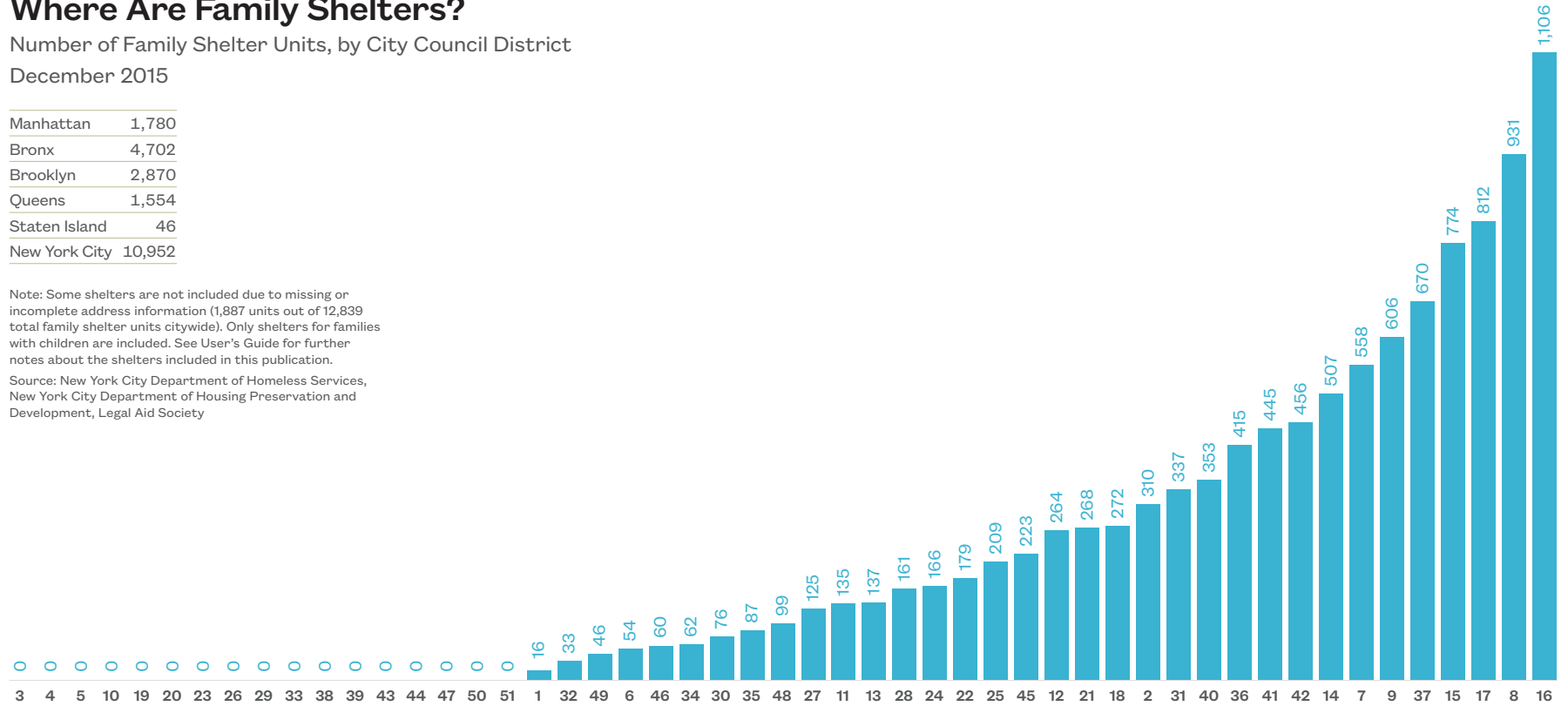
# Where Are Family Shelters?

Number of Family Shelter Units, by City Council District  
December 2015

Manhattan	1,780
Bronx	4,702
Brooklyn	2,870
Queens	1,554
Staten Island	46
New York City	10,952

Note: Some shelters are not included due to missing or incomplete address information (1,887 units out of 12,839 total family shelter units citywide). Only shelters for families with children are included. See User's Guide for further notes about the shelters included in this publication.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Legal Aid Society



## City Council Districts and Select Neighborhoods

**District 1**  
Chinatown, Financial District, Battery Park, Wall Street

**District 2**  
East Village, Lower East Side, Gramercy Park, Rosehill, Kips Bay, Murray Hill

**District 3**  
Chelsea, Midtown South, Soho

**District 4**  
Midtown, Upper East Side, Central Park South, Grand Central, Tudor City

**District 5**  
Lenox Hill, Yorkville, Roosevelt Island, Sutton Place

**District 6**  
Lincoln Square, Upper West Side

**District 7**  
Hamilton Heights, Morningside Heights

**District 8**  
East Harlem, Mott Haven, South Bronx

**District 9**  
Central Harlem, Morningside Heights, Upper West Side, East Harlem

**District 10**  
Inwood, Washington Heights, Marble Hill

**District 11**  
Riverdale, Woodlawn, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge

**District 12**  
Eastchester, Williamsbridge, Wakefield, Edenwald, Fishbay

**District 13**  
Bronxdale, Pelham Bay, Pelham Parkway, Country Club

**District 14**  
Morris Heights, University Heights, Fordham

**District 15**  
Belmont, Fordham, Bathgate, Bronxdale, Van Nest

**District 16**  
Concourse, Highbridge, West Bronx, Morrisania

**District 17**  
Hunts Point, Melrose, Longwood, Morrisania, Crotona Park East

**District 18**  
Parkchester, Soundview, Castle Hill, Harding Park, Glason Point

**District 19**  
Bayside, Whitestone, Auburndale, College Point, Little Neck, Douglaston

**District 20**  
Flushing, Murray Hill, Queensboro Hill, Mitchell Gardens

**District 21**  
Corona, East Elmhurst, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights

**District 22**  
Astoria, Steinway, Woodside, East Elmhurst

**District 23**  
Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Bayside Hills, Bellerose, Douglaston, Floral Park

**District 24**  
Jamaica Center, Kew Gardens Hills, Pomonok, Utopia

**District 25**  
Elmhurst, Jackson Heights

**District 26**  
Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, Astoria

**District 27**  
Cambria Heights, St. Albans, Hollis, Queens Village, Addisleigh Park, Jamaica

**District 28**  
Rochdale, South Ozone Park, Jamaica, South Jamaica

**District 29**  
Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Rego Park, Richmond Hill

**District 30**  
Glendale, Maspeth, Ridgewood, Middle Village, Richmond Hill, Woodside

**District 31**  
Far Rockaway, Laurelton, Rosedale

**District 32**  
Rockaway Beach, Woodhaven, Belle Harbor, Breezy Point

**District 33**  
Downtown Brooklyn, Williamsburg, Brooklyn Heights, DUMBO

**District 34**  
Bushwick, East Williamsburg

**District 35**  
Crown Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill

**District 36**  
Bedford-Stuyvesant, Weeksville

**District 37**  
Cypress Hills, Highland Park, Bushwick, City Line

**District 38**  
Red Hook, Sunset Park, Windsor Terrace

**District 39**  
Gowanus, Park Slope, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Columbia Waterfront

**District 40**  
Ditmas Park, Prospect Lefferts, Flatbush, Kensington

**District 41**  
Brownsville, Ocean Hill, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East Flatbush

**District 42**  
East New York, New Lots

**District 43**  
Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, Bath Beach

**District 44**  
Borough Park, Ocean Parkway

**District 45**  
East Flatbush, Flatlands, Flatbush, Midwood, Canarsie

**District 46**  
Canarsie, Marine Park, Flatlands, Georgetown, Bergen Beach, Mill Basin

**District 47**  
Bensonhurst, Coney Island, Gravesend, Sea Gate

**District 48**  
Brighton Beach, Sheepshead Bay, Brightwater Towers

**District 49**  
Port Richmond, Stapleton, St. George, Tompkinsville

**District 50**  
Grasmere, New Dorp, Travis, Bulls Head

**District 51**  
Huguenot, Tottenville, Arden Heights, Annadale

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## Family Shelter Type Differs by Community

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The type of shelters available for families struggling with homelessness varies by City Council district.

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In the majority of City Council districts that had a family shelter, the most common type was a Tier II family shelter.

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City Council District 9 located in **Central Harlem** had the largest number of hotel shelter units and was among the six districts where the most common type of shelter was a hotel.

(Districts 9, 22, 28, 30, 36, and 48)

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**Concourse** and **Highbridge** in District 16 had the most cluster sites in New York City, as well as the largest number of total shelter units.

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In three districts in the Bronx including **Riverdale**, **Belmont**, and **Parkchester**, cluster sites were the most common type of family shelter. (Districts 11, 15, and 18)

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Only areas of northern Manhattan, the Bronx, and central Brooklyn were home to all three types of shelters.

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*My family and I have been in the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) on and off since 2006. For the last four years, my mother, two siblings and I have lived in two different shelters called cluster sites in the Bronx. The living conditions are horrible. I work two part-time jobs to ensure that they have food and clothes to go to school in and keep warm with. I attend college with the intention of breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness in my community and family.*



*22-year-old, formerly homeless college student*

# Family Homeless Shelters

Number and Type of Family Shelters and Units, by City Council District  
December 2015

City/ Borough/ City Council District	Total Number of Shelters	Total Number of Shelter Units	Most Common Shelter Unit Type	Number of Tier II Shelter Units	Number of Cluster Site Units	Number of Hotel Units
<b>New York City</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>10,952</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>6,711</b>	<b>2,275</b>	<b>1,966</b>
<b>Manhattan</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,780</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>507</b>
<b>Bronx</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>4,702</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>2,183</b>	<b>1,827</b>	<b>692</b>
<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>2,870</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Queens</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1,554</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>397</b>
<b>Staten Island</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
1	1	16	Tier II	16	0	0
2	3	310	Tier II	310	0	0
3	0	0	-	0	0	0
4	0	0	-	0	0	0
5	0	0	-	0	0	0
6	1	54	Tier II	54	0	0
7	7	558	Tier II	363	15	180
8	24	931	Tier II	660	144	127
9	21	606	Hotel	195	84	327
10	0	0	-	0	0	0
11	9	135	Cluster Site	0	135	0
12	6	264	Tier II	185	17	62
13	3	137	Tier II	129	8	0
14	21	507	Tier II	209	201	97
15	35	774	Cluster Site	206	356	212
16	30	1,106	Tier II	668	406	32
17	25	812	Tier II	362	288	162
18	18	272	Cluster Site	0	272	0
19	0	0	-	0	0	0
20	0	0	-	0	0	0
21	3	268	Tier II	268	0	0
22	2	179	Hotel	79	0	100
23	0	0	-	0	0	0
24	3	166	Tier II	106	0	60
25	1	209	Tier II	209	0	0
26	0	0	-	0	0	0
27	2	125	Tier II	125	0	0
28	1	161	Hotel	0	0	161
29	0	0	-	0	0	0
30	1	76	Hotel	0	0	76
31	2	337	Tier II	337	0	0
32	1	33	Tier II	33	0	0
33	0	0	-	0	0	0
34	2	62	Tier II	62	0	0
35	6	87	Tier II	62	15	10
36	21	415	Hotel	169	65	181
37	7	670	Tier II	641	0	29
38	0	0	-	0	0	0
39	0	0	-	0	0	0
40	11	353	Tier II	166	136	51
41	26	445	Tier II	383	62	0
42	10	456	Tier II	410	46	0
43	0	0	-	0	0	0
44	0	0	-	0	0	0
45	2	223	Tier II	198	25	0
46	1	60	Tier II	60	0	0
47	0	0	-	0	0	0
48	1	99	Hotel	0	0	99
49	1	46	Tier II	46	0	0
50	0	0	-	0	0	0
51	0	0	-	0	0	0

Note: Some shelters are not included due to missing or incomplete address information (1,887 units out of 12,839 total family shelter units citywide). Only shelters for families with children are included. See User's Guide for further notes about the shelters included in this publication.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Legal Aid Society.



# Family Homeless Shelters, by City Council District

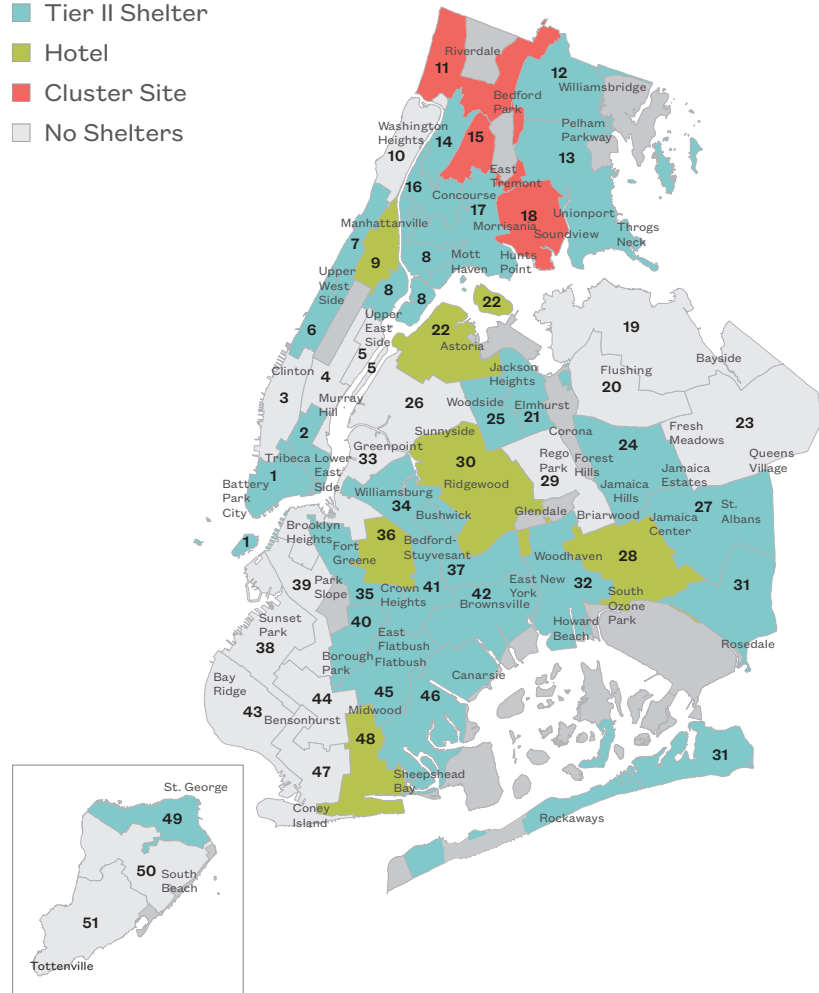
Geographic Patterns of Family Shelter Units by Shelter Type

December 2015

## Most Common

### Most Common Shelter Unit Type

- Tier II Shelter
- Hotel
- Cluster Site
- No Shelters



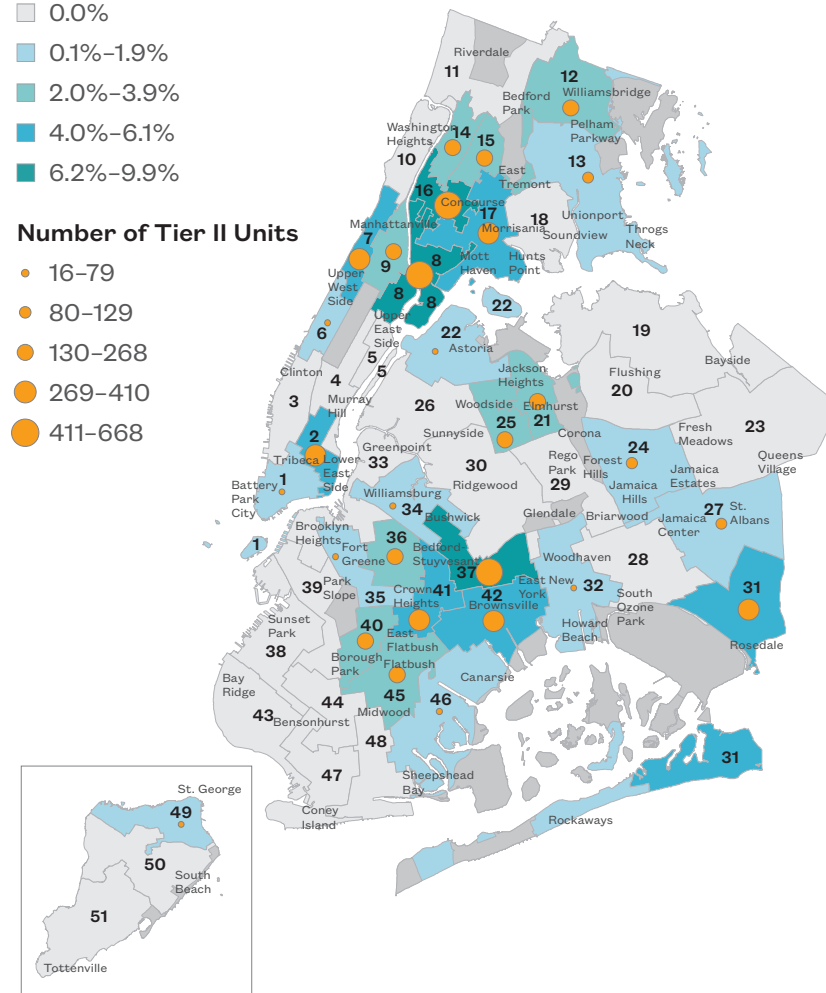
## Tier II Shelters

### Percent of Citywide Tier II Units

- 0.0%
- 0.1%–1.9%
- 2.0%–3.9%
- 4.0%–6.1%
- 6.2%–9.9%

### Number of Tier II Units

- 16–79
- 80–129
- 130–268
- 269–410
- 411–668

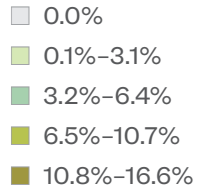


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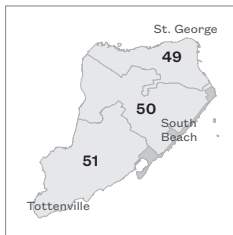
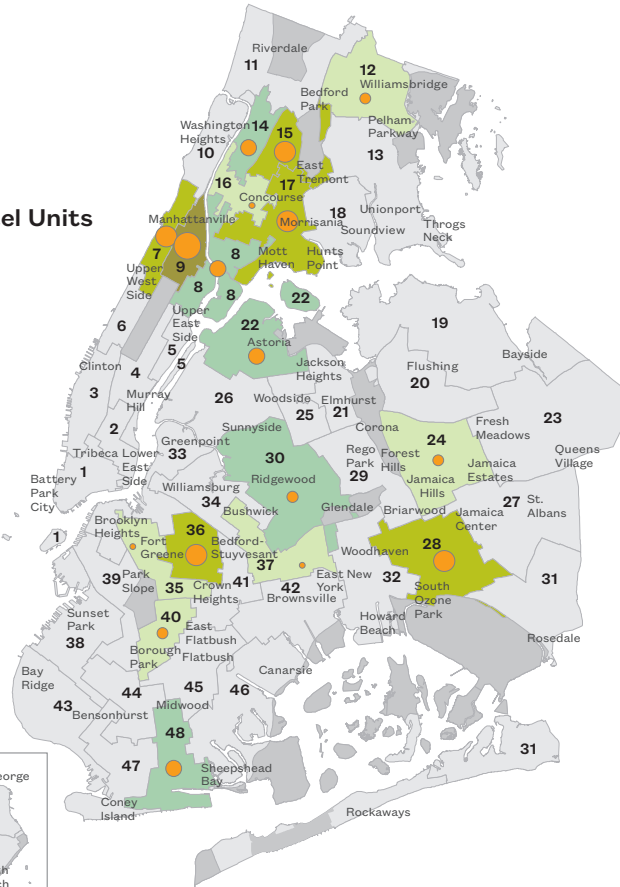
Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Legal Aid Society.

## Hotels

### Percent of Citywide Hotel Units

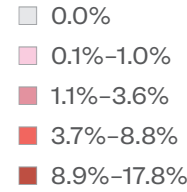


### Number of Hotel Units

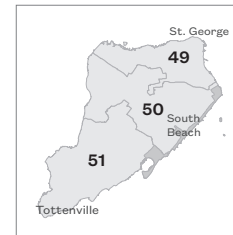
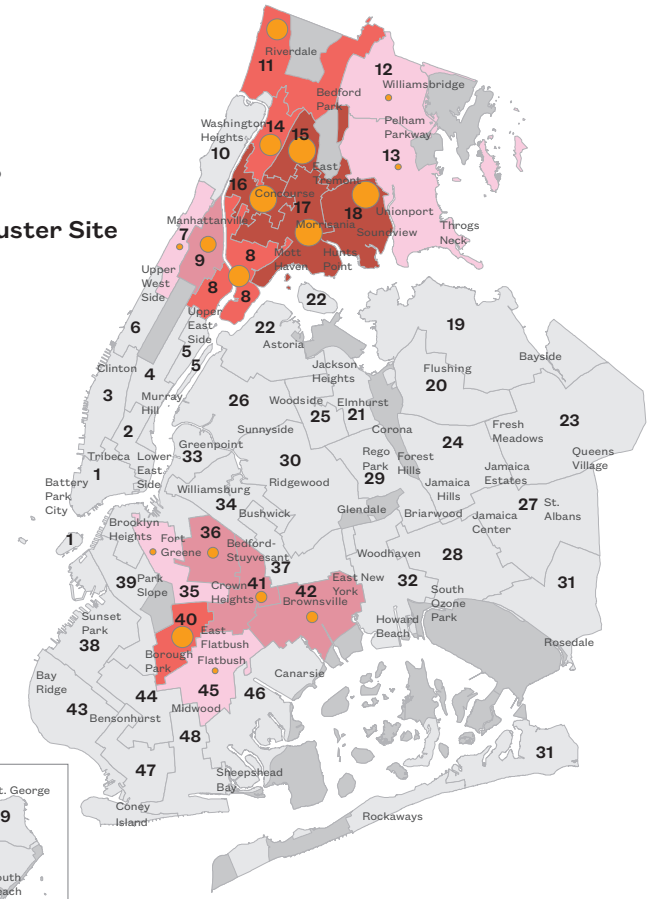
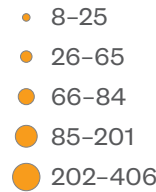


## Cluster Sites

### Percent of Citywide Cluster Site Units



### Number of Cluster Site Units



Note: Some shelters are not included due to missing or incomplete address information (1,887 units out of 12,839 total family shelter units citywide). Only shelters for families with children are included. See User's Guide for further notes about the shelters included in this publication.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Legal Aid Society.

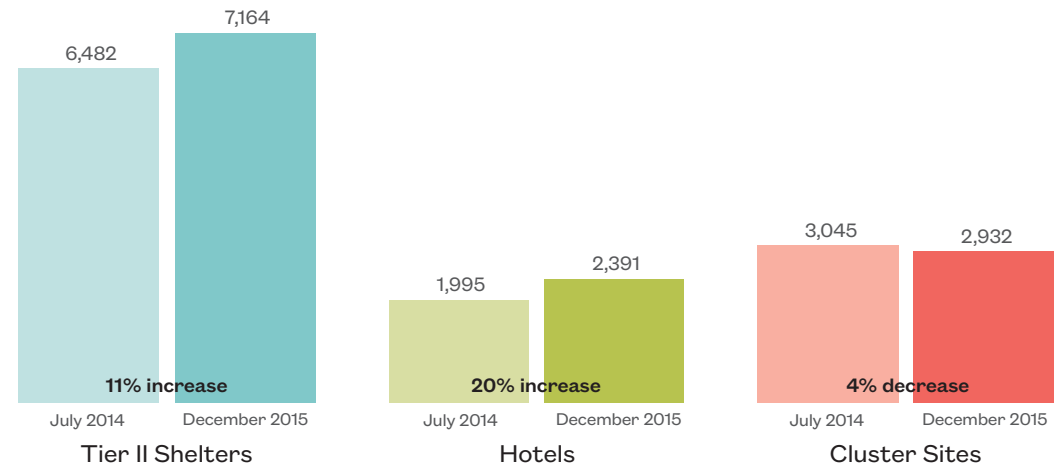
## Hotel Use Is Growing

The number of families in hotel shelter units grew by 20% over an eighteen-month period from July 2014 to December 2015—an increase of almost 400 families—twice the rate of growth of Tier II facilities.

Hotels are the least likely type of family shelters to have contracts with the City. Only 3% of all hotel shelters had contracts in December 2015. Non-contracted emergency shelters operate on a per-diem basis with the City, often lacking services available at other contracted sites.

## Changes in Type of Shelter

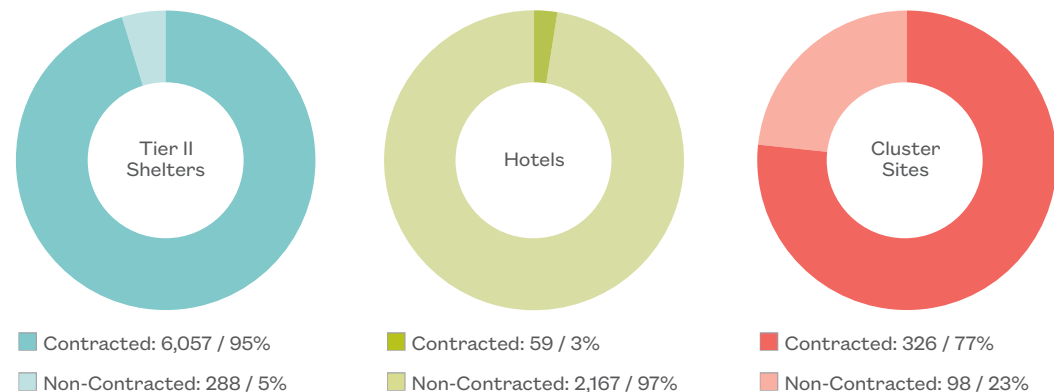
Average Monthly Census by Family Shelter Type, with Percent Change July 2014 and December 2015



Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2015 and FY 2016.

## City Shelter Contracts, by Shelter Type

Number of Family Shelter Units that Have Contracts with the New York City Department of Homeless Services December 2015



Note: City-run shelters are excluded. Figures include family with children shelters only.

Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2016.

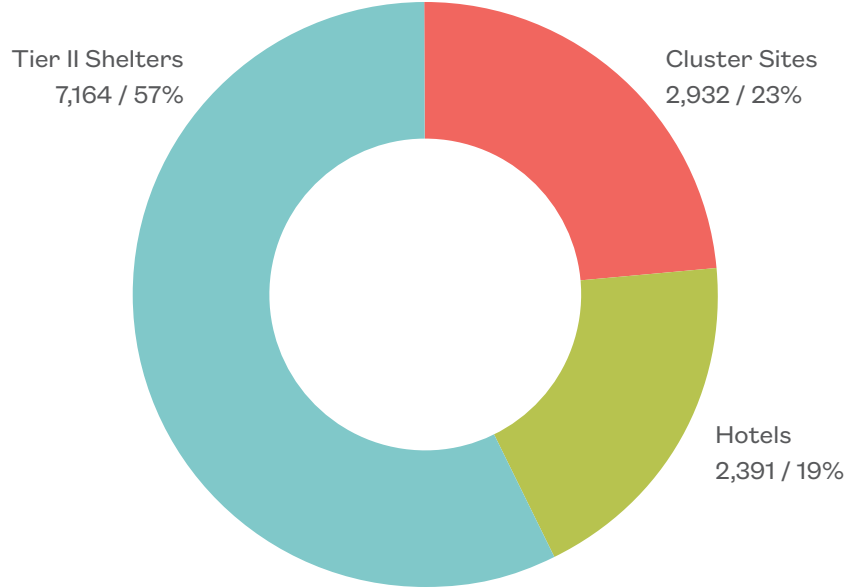
# Cluster Sites and Hotels Remain Common

More than 12,000 families with children lived in City shelter facilities during December 2015. Almost half (43%) lived in cluster sites or hotels.

Cluster site apartments and most hotels often lack the scale and scope of services for parents and 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 2015



Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.  
Source: New York City Department of Homeless Services, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, FY 2016.

# Risk of Homelessness by City Council District

The full extent of family homelessness in New York City is not represented by the number of families living in shelter. Over 80,000 homeless students attended New York City Public Schools in SY 2014–15. These students serve as a proxy for the larger number of families in the city experiencing homelessness.

Homeless students attended schools in every New York City Council district; however, areas of the Bronx, central Brooklyn, and northern Manhattan saw the greatest concentrations.

The seven City Council districts with the highest rates of student homelessness were **East Harlem/Mott Haven, Central Harlem, Morris Heights, Belmont, Concourse, Hunts Point, and Bedford-Stuyvesant.**

(Districts 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 36)

## Where Are Homeless Students?

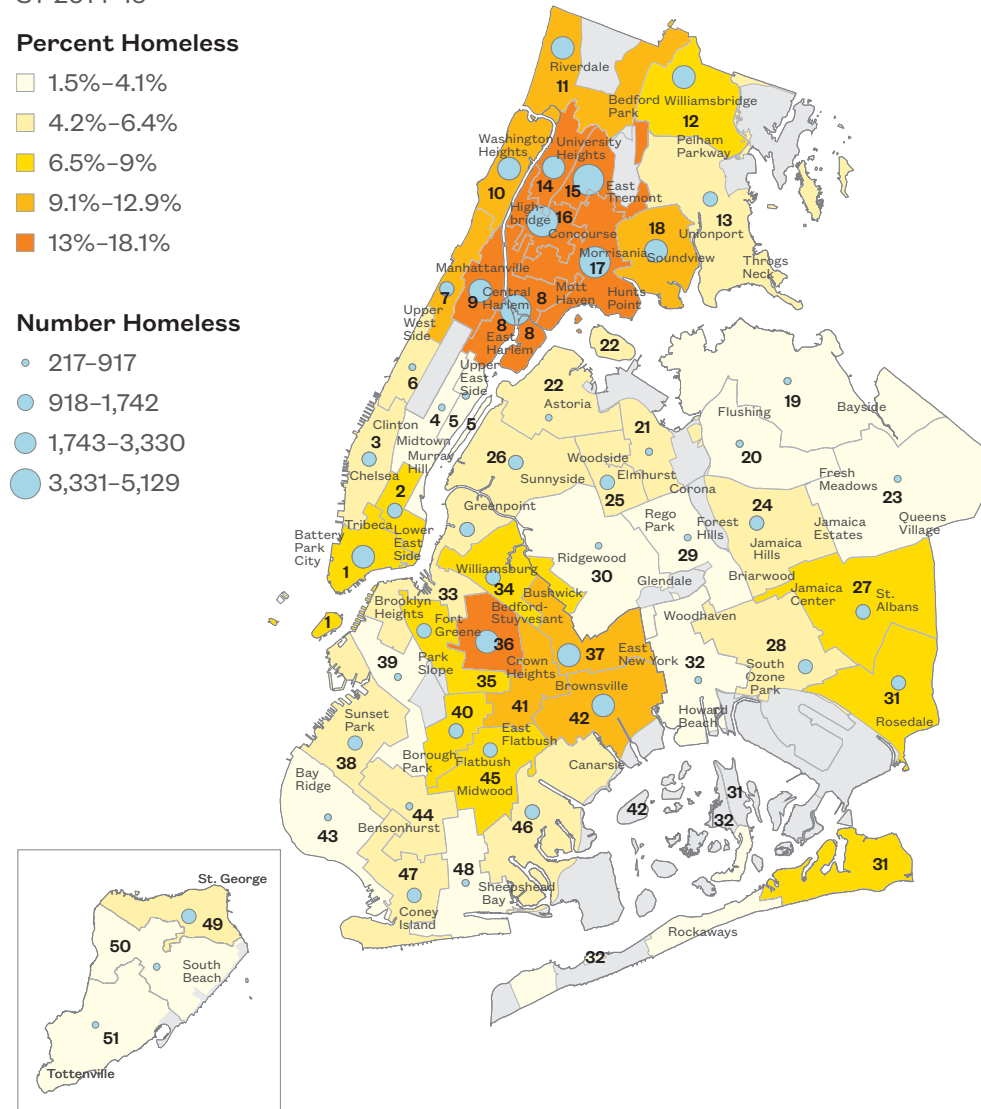
Percent and Number of Students Who Were Homeless, by City Council District SY 2014–15

### Percent Homeless

- 1.5%–4.1%
- 4.2%–6.4%
- 6.5%–9%
- 9.1%–12.9%
- 13%–18.1%

### Number Homeless

- 217–917
- 918–1,742
- 1,743–3,330
- 3,331–5,129



Note: Data on homeless students represent where students attend school; homeless students may attend school in districts where they do not live. Source: New York City Department of Education, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, SY 2014–15.

# Where Are Homeless Students?

Student Homelessness, by City Council District  
SY 2014–15

City/ Borough/ City Council District	Number of Students	Number of Homeless Students	Percent of Students Homeless	Families with Children Entering Shelter				% Change SY 2010–11 to 2014–15
				Pre-Kinder- garten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	
<b>NYC</b>	<b>1,066,068</b>	<b>82,463</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>42,575</b>	<b>14,730</b>	<b>17,839</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Manhattan</b>	<b>158,903</b>	<b>14,347</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>6,395</b>	<b>2,354</b>	<b>4,130</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Bronx</b>	<b>224,686</b>	<b>30,177</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1,781</b>	<b>16,828</b>	<b>5,982</b>	<b>5,087</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>309,215</b>	<b>21,939</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>11,404</b>	<b>3,780</b>	<b>4,799</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Queens</b>	<b>307,756</b>	<b>13,515</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>6,843</b>	<b>2,287</b>	<b>3,335</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Staten Island</b>	<b>65,087</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>3%</b>
1	25,261	1,891	7%	44	763	307	737	17%
2	17,875	1,388	8%	66	508	229	561	20%
3	21,074	1,167	6%	-	138	69	905	-4%
4	5,843	217	4%	-	38	71	103	17%
5	8,140	277	3%	-	122	10	136	11%
6	16,196	765	5%	12	266	152	321	31%
7	10,907	1,405	13%	55	938	243	147	10%
8	28,487	4,136	15%	218	2,574	631	638	36%
9	15,114	2,306	15%	139	1,364	372	390	30%
10	20,838	2,502	12%	70	1,121	505	777	-5%
11	26,012	2,872	11%	34	1,669	494	642	48%
12	21,896	1,804	8%	14	984	321	437	18%
13	23,593	1,513	6%	18	676	377	420	16%
14	18,406	3,330	18%	72	2,183	937	106	45%
15	25,789	4,467	17%	114	2,943	870	480	51%
16	27,533	4,752	17%	72	2,695	1,037	853	38%
17	32,849	5,129	16%	209	2,769	1,108	939	20%
18	22,926	2,692	12%	32	1,431	578	610	35%
19	20,876	592	3%	35	390	82	78	173%
20	18,360	589	3%	12	198	74	295	32%
21	16,790	904	5%	-	709	146	37	34%
22	12,975	656	5%	23	240	173	195	-18%
23	24,671	521	2%	-	275	75	150	-2%
24	35,321	1,589	4%	14	410	189	911	4%
25	21,503	1,032	5%	15	605	181	221	55%

City Council District	Number of Students	Number of Homeless Students	Percent of Students Homeless	Families with Children Entering Shelter				% Change SY 2010–11 to 2014–15
				Pre-Kinder- garten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	
26	26,744	1,271	5%	41	604	128	492	67%
27	15,730	1,131	7%	23	717	280	95	20%
28	21,066	1,110	5%	45	695	125	220	8%
29	16,609	425	3%	-	212	79	125	34%
30	19,342	755	4%	-	388	213	138	58%
31	16,396	1,283	8%	51	793	275	147	38%
32	23,273	750	3%	12	316	189	215	2%
33	19,175	1,028	5%	32	253	195	527	14%
34	19,344	1,742	9%	99	993	267	360	13%
35	20,578	1,509	7%	70	744	224	434	18%
36	13,402	1,984	15%	132	1,108	449	259	-4%
37	20,816	2,282	11%	85	1,339	419	414	12%
38	22,560	1,361	6%	28	1,096	143	86	55%
39	17,690	721	4%	53	510	62	93	14%
40	13,117	1,183	9%	19	599	333	212	18%
41	15,404	1,911	12%	91	1,169	384	229	10%
42	17,470	2,041	12%	96	1,234	438	230	4%
43	25,168	836	3%	-	299	55	454	1%
44	19,733	917	5%	37	353	131	380	19%
45	14,467	1,146	8%	43	721	225	146	5%
46	16,177	1,014	6%	40	523	248	190	29%
47	23,568	1,070	5%	34	370	96	541	20%
48	20,721	763	4%	18	342	159	230	13%
49	19,823	1,229	6%	31	787	160	239	-4%
50	19,378	418	2%	-	172	76	152	11%
51	23,252	341	1%	-	145	90	93	8%

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. In order to protect student privacy and adhere to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act, numbers that would display 10 or fewer homeless students were redacted. Data on homeless students represent where students attend school; homeless students may attend school in districts where they do not live.

Source: New York City Department of Education, unpublished data tabulated by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, SY 2010–11 and SY 2014–15.