



New York State Comptroller  
**THOMAS P. DiNAPOLI**

Economic and Policy Insights

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# **New Yorkers in Need: Homelessness in New York State**

January 2025

## Introduction

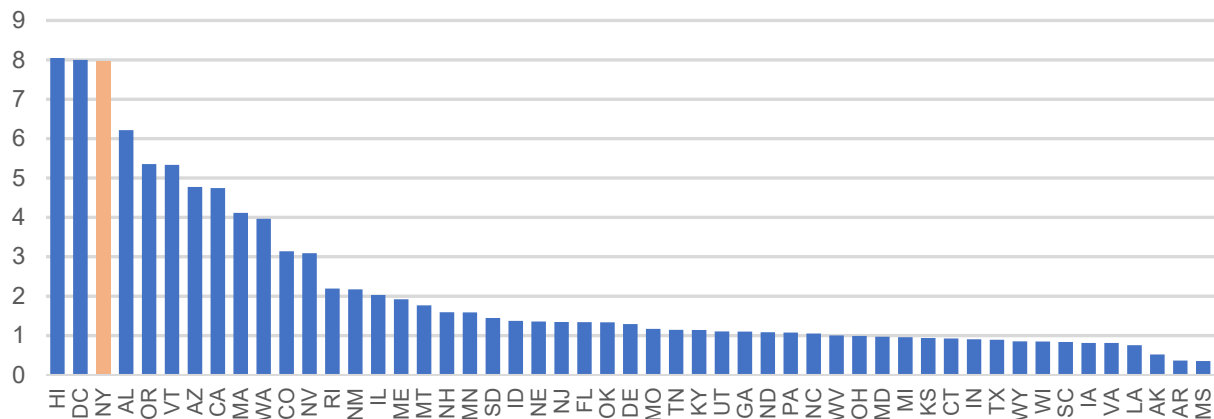
Having safe and adequate housing is a necessity. Yet an increasing number of New Yorkers are experiencing housing insecurity, with an alarming increase in recent years in the number of homeless. Between January 2022 and January 2024, homelessness in New York more than doubled, while growing by more than 20 percent in the rest of the nation. A key reason for the increase has been the mass arrival of asylum seekers to New York in this period. While the homelessness increase was driven mostly by New York City, the rest of the state’s regions also experienced increases during this time period. The concerning rise makes it imperative that the State improve the transparency and effectiveness of its current housing resources and programs, and consider additional actions to mitigate evictions and homelessness, particularly for children.

## Growing Homelessness

Homelessness is a severe form of housing insecurity. Measuring homelessness is difficult because homelessness can be temporary, episodic or even hidden, individuals are mobile and definitions of homelessness can vary.<sup>1</sup> The most commonly used data are the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) Point-in-Time count of the homeless population, ordinarily conducted on a single day in January of each year. The most recent count was conducted in January 2024, with the data being released at the end of December 2024.<sup>2</sup>

Nationally, homelessness reached a new peak with a total of 771,480 experiencing homelessness in 2024.<sup>3</sup> There were 158,019 homeless New Yorkers— about 1 in 5 of the nation’s homeless (up from about 1 in 7 last year). In all other states but California, where there were 187,000 homeless, there were fewer than 32,000 homeless. New York’s rate of homelessness, at about 8 per 1,000 people, was higher than all states except Hawaii and the District of Columbia and about four times greater than the rest of the nation.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1**  
**Rates of Homelessness Per 1,000 in Population by State, 2024**

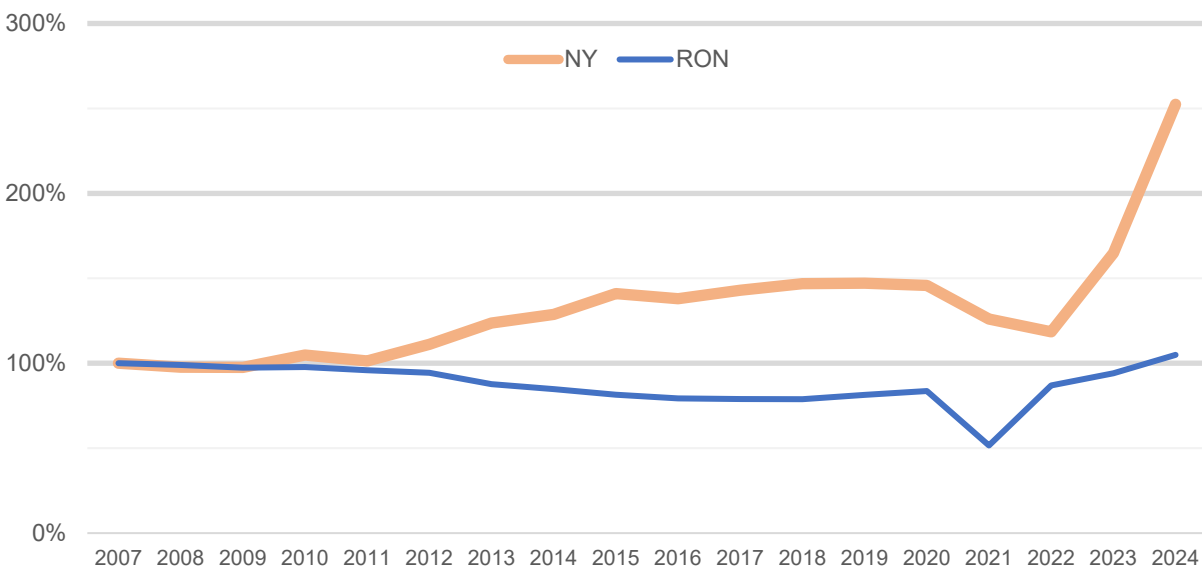


Sources: HUD; U.S. Census Bureau

Between January 2023 and January 2024, homelessness in New York State jumped 53.1 percent – more than four times the rate in the rest of the nation. Only three other states (Hawaii, Illinois and Massachusetts) experienced greater increases in the last year.

From 2011 to 2019, homelessness was growing in New York even as it was steadily declining in the rest of the nation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness declined in New York between 2020 and 2022 but accelerated sharply in the next two years, increasing exponentially faster than the rest of the nation. Between 2022 and 2024, homelessness more than doubled in New York – while growing by 20.7 percent in the rest of the nation. A key reason for New York’s increase has been the mass arrival of asylum seekers, although HUD does not quantify how many homeless are asylum seekers. New York was surpassed by only one state during this time – Illinois, where homelessness grew 180 percent.

**Figure 2**  
**Growth in Homelessness Since 2007, New York and the Rest of the Nation (RON), (2007=100%)**



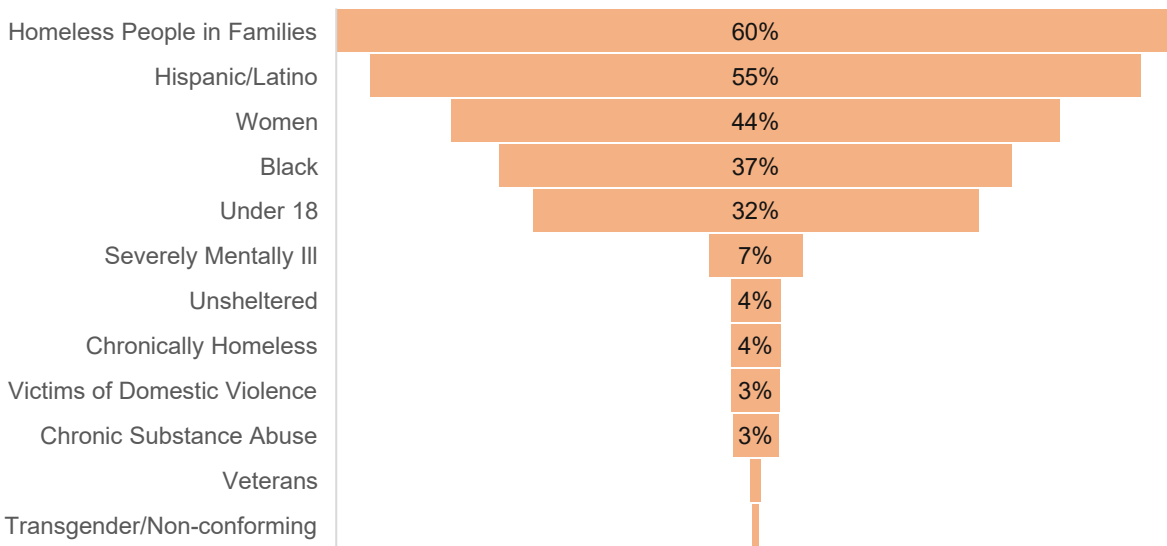
Source: HUD

## The Demographics of Homelessness

A driver of the increases in New York between 2022 and 2024 has been a near tripling of the number of homeless people in families, which grew from 34,805 in 2022 to 95,457 in 2024. Homeless people in families now constitute 60.4 percent of the overall homeless. Concerningly, 32.1 percent of New York’s homeless are under the age of 18, one of the highest shares in the nation. The number of homeless children has more than doubled between 2022 (20,299) and 2024 (50,773).

People experiencing homelessness in New York in 2024 were disproportionately Hispanic or Black. The share of Hispanic or Latino homeless grew from 33.7 percent in 2021 to 55.5 percent in 2024. Ten percent suffered from severe mental illness or chronic substance abuse. Additional characteristics are noted in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**  
**Share of Total Homeless in New York State by Characteristic, 2024**



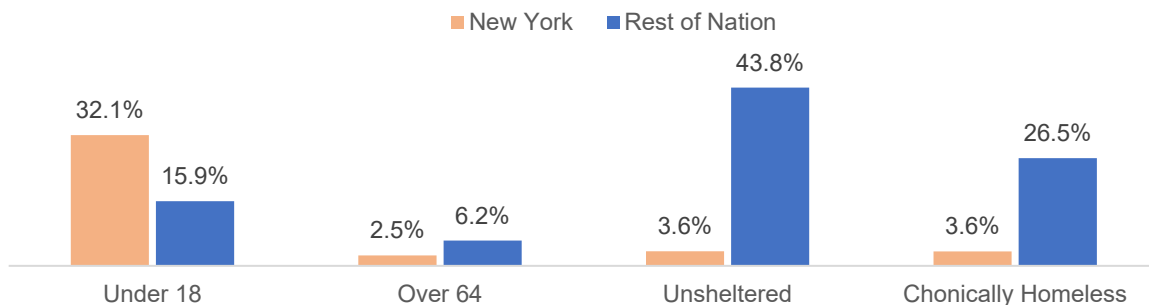
Note: Shares are not mutually exclusive. Values for Veterans and Transgender/Non-conforming categories are each below 1 percent. HUD does not provide information on asylum seekers.

Source: HUD

On the other hand, New York has the lowest share of unsheltered (3.6 percent) in the nation; in stark contrast, 43.8 percent of homeless in the rest of the nation are unsheltered. A key reason for New York’s high shelter rate is litigation that created enforceable rights to shelter in New York City.<sup>5</sup> New York also had among the lowest shares of senior homelessness (2.5 percent) and chronically homeless (3.6 percent) among all states.<sup>6</sup> New York’s single-year (2023-2024) and long-term (2007-2024) declines in chronic homelessness have been among the greatest in the nation.

Veteran homelessness continues to remain low (less than 1 percent), as New York has had among the [greatest long-term declines](#) in veteran homelessness since 2009; however, New York had among the highest single-year increases in the nation for veterans experiencing homelessness in 2024.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 4**  
**Share of Total Homeless by Characteristic, New York and the Rest of the Nation, 2024**



Source: HUD

## Regional Analysis

The spike in New York’s homelessness between 2022 and 2024 was driven by New York City, which constituted 93 percent of the state’s increase in the total number of homeless. The homeless in New York City doubled during this time, with increases particularly acute among families and Hispanics/Latinos, consistent with the influx of asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, Figure 5 indicates that the problem is not confined to New York City; the rest of the state’s regions also experienced increases ranging from 11 percent in the Poughkeepsie/Dutchess County Continuum of Care (CoC) to 138 percent in Glens Falls, Saratoga Springs/Saratoga, Washington, Warren, Hamilton Counties CoC.<sup>8</sup> Some areas which previously had few homeless people have faced surges in homelessness in the last two years.

With a few exceptions, the increases were driven by families with children. The number of families in homelessness doubled in 8 CoCs and the number of homeless under age 18 doubled in 10.

**Figure 5**  
**Increase in Number of Homeless by New York State Continuum of Care, 2022 to 2024**

Continuum of Care	Number of Homeless, 2024	Percent Change, 2022 - 2024		
		Overall Number	Under 18	People in Families
Glens Falls, Saratoga Springs/Saratoga, Washington, Warren, Hamilton Counties	529	138%	169%	205%
Newburgh, Middletown/Orange County	779	130%	158%	161%
New York City	140,134	127%	170%	196%
Jamestown, Dunkirk/Chautauqua County	219	103%	141%	150%
Troy/Rensselaer County	270	82%	147%	193%
Buffalo, Niagara Falls/Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming Counties	1,549	81%	59%	69%
Syracuse, Auburn/Onondaga, Oswego, Cayuga Counties	1,192	67%	136%	149%
Binghamton, Union Town/Broome, Otsego, Chenango, Delaware, Cortland, Tioga Counties	800	66%	53%	72%
New York Balance of State	948	56%	32%	41%
Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence Counties	200	54%	1900%	1133%
Utica, Rome/Oneida, Madison Counties	369	51%	109%	73%
Kingston/Ulster County	617	51%	70%	54%
Rochester, Irondequoit, Greece/Monroe County	1,056	41%	51%	70%
Columbia, Greene Counties	158	39%	-20%	-9%
Ithaca/Tompkins County	210	38%	50%	38%
Elmira/Steuben, Allegany, Livingston, Chemung, Schuyler	686	38%	67%	68%
Albany City & County	1,011	38%	66%	62%
Nassau, Suffolk Counties	4,002	32%	20%	24%
Franklin, Essex Counties	56	30%	50%	67%
Schenectady City & County	362	25%	105%	97%
Rockland County	130	23%	130%	124%
Yonkers, Mount Vernon/Westchester County	1,611	19%	17%	22%
Wayne, Ontario, Seneca, Yates Counties	426	15%	16%	19%
Poughkeepsie/Dutchess County	705	11%	30%	40%
<b>New York State Total</b>	<b>158,019</b>	<b>113%</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>174%</b>

## Reasons for Recent Growth

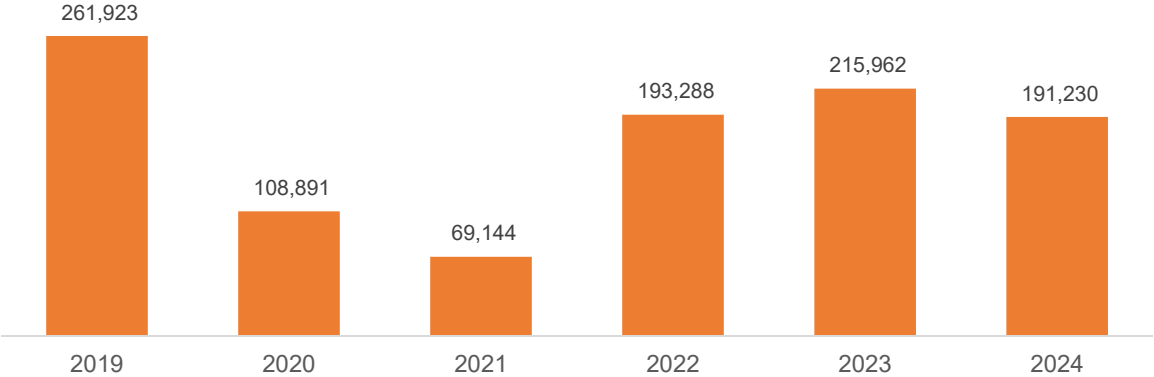
The reasons for homelessness are numerous. According to HUD, New York’s increase in homelessness between 2023 and 2024 was attributable to increases in eviction proceedings, lack of affordable housing, increased rents, and the influx of asylum seekers, among other factors. HUD notes that New York City officials indicated asylum seekers “accounted for 88 percent of the increase in sheltered homelessness in New York City.”<sup>9</sup>

According to the Office of the State Comptroller, between the spring of 2022 and December 8, 2024, New York City reported more than 225,700 asylum seekers had come through its intake system.<sup>10</sup> While in January 2022 there were 45,343 people in New York City shelters run by the Department of Homeless Services, by January 2024 there were 89,119, of which 34,057 were asylum seekers. New York City was housing approximately 68,000 asylum seekers in total in January 2024, the month in which asylum seekers in City shelters peaked.<sup>11</sup> New York City’s strategy for dealing with this influx also entailed relocating some migrant families to areas outside the city, including neighboring counties but also other urban areas in the state, potentially influencing homelessness in these areas, as well.

As in the Office of the State Comptroller’s report on [The Housing Insecurity Crisis](#), more than 38 percent of New York households, or 2.9 million, were cost burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income toward household costs in 2022.<sup>12</sup> Rates of burden are particularly high for renters, with at least 40 percent of rental households burdened across the State’s regions. Increasingly, rental burdens rates have risen across all income groups in the last decade.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York enacted a moratorium on rental evictions for tenants suffering financial hardship and failing to pay rent due to the public health emergency. The moratorium was in effect until January 15, 2022, and was also complemented by the temporary suspension of certain eviction proceedings and rental assistance for low-income and moderate-income tenants to help them recover from rental arrears. While these protections and resources reduced eviction filings statewide, they rebounded strongly in 2022 and continued to grow in 2023, before declining slightly in 2024 to 191,230, according to the New York State Unified Court System.

**Figure 5**  
**Eviction Filings, 2019 – 2024**



Source: New York State Unified Court System

## Housing the Homeless

Concurrently with homeless count, HUD also releases a Housing Inventory Count (HIC), which is an inventory of programs providing beds and units to people experiencing homelessness. They include five types of housing: emergency shelters, transitional housing, Safe Havens, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing. Consistent with the grouping presented by HUD, data for emergency shelters, transitional housing and Safe Havens will be presented collectively under the category “emergency housing.”

According to the HIC, New York has greatest number of total year-round emergency housing beds – 127,759 across emergency shelters, transitional housing, and safe havens – far surpassing second place California, with a combined 75,938 beds. This number is comprised predominantly of beds in emergency shelters (122,091), which is largely a result of shelter mandates in New York City. New York does not have as many safe haven beds as other large states.

In addition to these emergency housing beds, New York is second to California in the number of permanent supportive housing units (52,462 vs 78,758) and in the number of other permanent housing beds (21,672 vs. 26,059).

The number of year-round beds for rapid rehousing in New York, 4,887, lags several other large states. California has more than 28,000, Texas has almost 11,000 and Florida has over 7,500. While New York has increased this type of housing by 60 percent since 2015, that increase has been less than the rest of the nation, where these types of year-round beds grew by nearly 148 percent.

**Types of Housing for the Homeless**

Emergency Shelter is a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter.

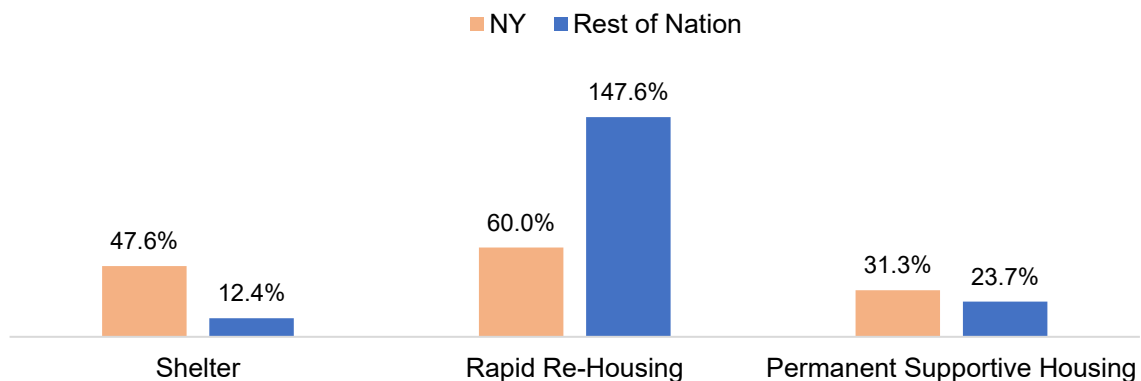
Rapid Re-Housing is designed to provide temporary housing assistance, moving the homeless quickly out into permanent housing in which they may be able to remain after the assistance ends.

Safe Havens provide private or semi-private temporary shelter and services to people experiencing severe mental illness and are limited to serving no more than 25 people within a facility.

Transitional Housing provides a place to stay combined with supportive services for up to 24 months.

Source: HUD HIC

**Figure 6**  
**Growth in Year-Round Beds, 2015 – 2024**



Source: HUD HIC

As noted in [The Housing Insecurity Crisis](#), the State is implementing a five-year \$25 billion housing plan “to create or preserve 100,000 affordable homes” across New York, including making multi-year investments for homeless housing and assistance and for affordable housing. However, little detail is available to track goals, accomplishments and the status of resources committed.

## Conclusion

The influx of asylum seekers has been a key reason for growth in the number of homeless in New York City, and even in some downstate counties, and [recent reports](#) indicate a decline in the asylum seeker census from a peak in January 2024, when the Point-in-Time counts were conducted. The number of asylum seekers is projected to continue to decline in the coming year by the City. Nevertheless, asylum seekers have not been the only driving factor, particularly in other places of the state which have also experienced increases in homelessness.

While the State devotes substantial resources to affordable housing production and housing assistance, the surge in homelessness merits additional consideration of policies that can mitigate evictions and provide housing assistance, particularly to families with children. The State should greatly enhance reporting around resources allocated for housing assistance to allow for a fuller understanding of the effectiveness of current programs and an informed discussion of where additional resources may be merited, particularly with respect to expanding rental assistance.

In addition, the State should continue funding for legal representation for low-income households facing eviction; this has helped low-income New York City tenants remain in their homes, and can be scaled up to other parts of the state where high eviction filings are also a concern.



# Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> National Institutes of Health, “The Methodology of Counting the Homeless,” *Homelessness, Health and Human Needs*, 1988, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK218229>.
- <sup>2</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count - HUD Exchange, <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/pit-hic/#2024-pit-count-and-hic-guidance>.
- <sup>3</sup> Since the PIT estimates have been conducted. This figure includes the 50 states and U.S. territories (Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa.) Homelessness in the territories totaled 3,624 in 2024 and was less than 0.5 percent of the U.S. total. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, *The 2024 Annual Homelessness Report to Congress*, December 2024, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>.
- <sup>4</sup> Using PIT estimates and vintage population estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau for July 2024. Analysis does not include the U.S. territories.
- <sup>5</sup> For more information, see discussion in Office of the State Comptroller, *New Yorkers in Need: The Housing Insecurity Crisis*, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/new-yorkers-need-housing-insecurity-crisis#endnote-048-backlink>.
- <sup>6</sup> Chronic homelessness occurs continuously for one year or more or has been experienced at least four times in the last three years, so that the combined length of time experiencing homelessness is at least 12 months.
- <sup>7</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, *The 2024 Annual Homelessness Report to Congress*, December 2024, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>.
- <sup>8</sup> “Continuums of Care”, or CoCs, are groupings of counties established by HUD to serve and assist homeless people. Generally the areas within a CoC are contiguous.
- <sup>9</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, *The 2024 Annual Homelessness Report to Congress*, December 2024, p. 10, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>.
- <sup>10</sup> Office of the State Comptroller, *Review of the Financial Plan of the City of New York*, December 2024, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-21-2025.pdf#page=32>.
- <sup>11</sup> New York City sheltered asylum seekers in facilities run by DHS and by other cities agencies and authorities. Non-DHS shelters are not subject to the same level of detailed reporting as DHS.
- <sup>12</sup> Report shows 38.9 percent in 2022; in 2023 that figure was 38.6 percent.

## Contact

Office of the New York State Comptroller  
110 State Street  
Albany, New York 12236

(518) 474-4044

[www.osc.state.ny.us](http://www.osc.state.ny.us)

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