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The Start of a New Revolution: Addressing Government Failure in Ending Homelessness in NYC

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The Start of a New Revolution: Addressing Government Failure in Ending Homelessness in NYC

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Abstract

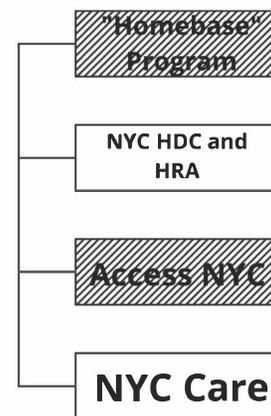
Homelessness is a serious issue in New York City. This project involved research to establish the causes of the homelessness problem in NYC, investigate current solutions currently being implemented by the city, and finally to develop a detailed proposal about a community-based approach to homelessness.

The guiding research questions include: What are the major causes and effects of homelessness in New York City? What are the challenges and shortcomings of existing New York City programs addressing homelessness? What elements should a successful community-based organization include in order to address these shortcomings? What are the underlying biases and moralistic assumptions that keep the general public from supporting homeless initiatives?

Personal Objective

"As part of the initial research to establish the problem, I watched 'How Do Homeless Women Cope With Their Periods?' by [Bustle](#) and 'What Beauty Is Like For Homeless Women On The Streets' by [Refinery 29](#). Both of these videos are about how female homelessness is being treated in the world. I believe that both men and women need protection, but women who are homeless are more vulnerable. Further, in my experience when I walk through the streets or the train station, I see that most homeless people need a place that is warm and safe and a place where they don't feel alone. Based on these two things, I realize that even though the government claims that they are helping homeless people, they aren't doing so sufficiently because then the problem wouldn't continue to exist. People are losing jobs and homes, and the government should have a plan to help people so they don't become homeless. Everyone needs a place to stay, and I was encouraged to do this project because we are all human beings that deserve love, care, and a warm place. No one deserves to be homeless."
--Lovely Joseph

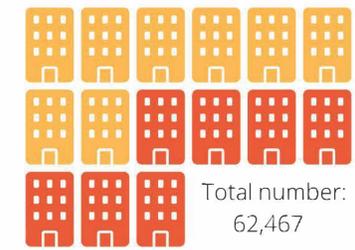
Key Findings



Existing Programs in NYC



Major Causes of Homelessness



Total number:
62,467

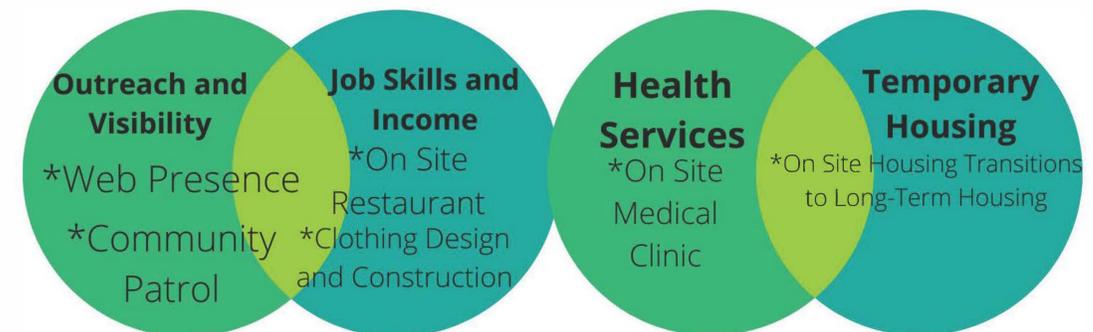
"In April 2015, New York City sheltered 59,285 homeless people (including both single individuals and members of families), and an estimate based on a street survey done in February of that year indicates that there were an additional 3,182 persons living in public spaces" (Main 2).



"In my job they take of anyone who doesn't have a house and people who don't have others to take care of them. We take care of the homeless, give them food, clothe, and clean them. They also help find houses for the homeless people."
--Yolette Joseph, Riverdale Nursing Home

Methodology

- Literature Review
 - Best keyword and search practices, academic library resources, assessing sources for appropriateness and impact, and developing logical conclusions and next steps by synthesizing research gathered were used to develop an overview of the existing literature on homelessness. This facilitated reflection on current homelessness programs in NYC and their shortcomings.
- Qualitative Data Gathering and Analysis
 - Reviewing and reflecting on documentary coverage of homelessness and its impact on those of different genders, races, and abilities created a foundational understanding of the issue and best options for developing an effective proposal.
- Field Research
 - Field research, including place-based observation and community outreach, was used to develop guiding questions and hypotheses and to establish the problem and develop potential solutions.
- Expert Interviews
 - Interviews with those working in community and health services provided an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs.



The Comprehensive Plan

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Conclusion

The research completed during this project has provided a clearer overview of the homelessness problem in New York City as well as the potential solution that might best address the problem while keeping in mind the strengths and shortcomings of existing programs.

The conclusions will lead to a formal proposal and implementation of a community-based solution with multiple elements, including a self-sustaining structure with outreach, a restaurant, health services, clothing, temporary housing, and job skills training. Even if someone has done bad things, it doesn't mean they deserve homelessness. People do bad things to others because bad things have happened to them—it is a cycle. This project is designed to break this cycle.

The project has also supported the following learning outcomes for the student participant, who is in her first-semester at New York City College of Technology: Basic inquiry, research, and communication techniques facilitated an increased ability to value knowledge and learning, communicate in diverse settings and groups, understand and employ both quantitative and qualitative analysis to describe and solve problems, gather, interpret, evaluate, and apply information discerningly from a variety of sources, transform information into knowledge, and knowledge into judgment and action, assume responsibility for social justice, and show ability to contribute actively by applying knowledge to the identification and analysis of societal and professional problems to enact solutions.