
United for Housing's Recommendations of Housing and Homelessness Policies for the First 100 Days

The first 100 days is a benchmark of initial progress for a new administration. Mayor-elect Eric Adams, who will inherit a housing emergency, should use the period before April 10 to take action on housing and demonstrate that he is willing to do what it takes to finally address New York City's worsening housing crisis. United for Housing, a coalition comprised of 90+ housing policy organizations and experts, is ready to support the new administration develop policies that will lead to early achievements around affordable housing and homelessness.

Below is a list of proposals that will set the stage for an administration that is fighting the housing and homelessness crisis with a comprehensive plan using all available resources, including upstream solutions to prevent crises, improving coordination and government efficiency, expanding programs that work, and measuring progress to ensure accountability.

1. **Allocate \$4 billion in the capital budget for housing, including \$2.5 billion for HPD and \$1.5 billion for NYCHA:** This was the main recommendation of the United for Housing campaign, and Mayor-elect Adams promised to step up and dedicate \$4 billion to make progress addressing the housing emergency. He should make good on that promise within the first 100 days. The new mayor's preliminary budget will be due in late January or early February and the executive budget is due in April or early May. The new mayor should increase the housing capital funding according to the commitment in the first year's budgets to start the housing plan on a strong footing.
 - a. **Reset the relationship between OMB and HPD:** Use this opportunity of budget planning with HPD and OMB to reset their relationship and ensure HPD has autonomy for underwriting deals moving forward and OMB's oversight role is limited and appropriate.
2. **Allocate \$200 million for new rental assistance in the budget:** The United for Housing report also called for \$200 million in additional funding for rental assistance for households facing or at risk of homelessness. Mayor-elect Adams should include that funding in the first year's budgets to quickly start addressing the city's homelessness crisis. In order to serve more people, the new mayor should consider expanding eligibility to the working poor, undocumented households, and more homeless people in shelter systems outside of DHS.
3. **Appoint a single deputy mayor for housing and homelessness:** During the first 100 days, the new mayor will be appointing senior staff, including deputy mayors and commissioners. Mayor-elect Adams should rethink city administration and create a new position – the Deputy Mayor of Housing and Homelessness. As United for Housing has outlined, this new position would better coordinate city policy and integrate housing approaches with homelessness solutions. The new mayor should announce the new position and appoint an appropriate person to take on this new portfolio. The new candidate should be fully-empowered to immediately work to improve coordination and goal alignment around reducing homelessness and housing instability among all agencies that have a role, including revitalizing the interagency taskforce on homelessness to be led by the first deputy mayor's office with participation from all agencies that interact with individuals experiencing homelessness.
4. **Announce a process to develop a new housing plan:** Mayor-elect Adams does not need to release a new housing plan within the first 100 days. We would much prefer that he take the time needed to develop a thoughtful plan that has meaningful outside input. The plan should be comprehensive and include efforts to address affordable housing, NYCHA and homelessness. That will mean consulting with people with lived experience of housing insecurity and experts like those in our coalition – and we'd like Mayor-elect Adams to

commit to include our coalition so that we can help inform the housing plan.

5. **Set early goals to address the housing and homelessness crisis:** While we want the administration to take the time to develop a thoughtful new housing plan, Mayor-elect Adams should lay out goals to fight the housing crisis in the first 100 days that will set the stage for the housing plan, including goals to increase housing for homeless and extremely low income households, increase the homeownership rate and decrease the racial homeownership gap, and an all-hands-on-deck commitment to address homelessness. In addition, Mayor-elect Adams should choose metrics that will be made public and measure progress against the housing crisis, including metrics suggested by United for Housing.
6. **Prepare for expiration of eviction moratorium:** New York state's eviction moratorium expires on January 15, 2022. Available data suggests however that almost [600,000 households](#) in New York were still behind on their rent in October and the state has committed almost all of the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funding. The state saw a sharp decline in eviction filings at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to the protection of the moratorium. In fact, eviction rates in the city and state are at historic lows. As the protections weaken however rates of filings are increasing and without action, there will be a wave of evictions after the moratorium expires. The city should increase outreach, expand HomeBase homelessness prevention and one-shot payments and prepare streamlined rental assistance and legal assistance to keep people in their homes. The city should also work alongside the state to urge the federal government to reallocate unspent ERAP funding from other states to New York.
7. **Announce plans to fully utilize new federal funding:** New York City has received substantial federal housing funding in the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act and could receive additional funding through the Build Back Better Act. Mayor-elect Adams can take steps to ensure all existing funding is spent efficiently to meet urgent housing needs.
 - a. **Act swiftly to utilize Section 8 vouchers to avoid recapture:** New York City received roughly 8,000 emergency Section 8 vouchers in the American Rescue Plan Act but the city has been slow to utilize them. The new administration will need to move quickly, including maximizing partnerships with nonprofit partners to provide enhanced housing counseling and work with the real estate sector to identify available apartments for lease-ups to avoid recapture of unused vouchers by the federal government. The City should also advocate to the federal government for waivers and changes to voucher rules that create unnecessary barriers to households qualifying for assistance.
 - b. **Announce a priority modernization pipeline for federal NYCHA funds:** Congress is finalizing negotiations around infrastructure funding that could include robust funding for repairs at NYCHA. Mayor-elect Adams should work with NYCHA to plan a prioritized pipeline for the funding so that the agency is prepared to spend the money quickly.
 - c. **Maximize impact of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Build Back Better Act housing funds:** The city is slated to receive significant new resources for housing, climate, and infrastructure in the federal funding bill passed by Congress. The administration should incorporate input from external partners like our coalition to allow these funds to maximize benefits, including ideas for new programs.
8. **Announce details of the plan to convert hotels:** Mayor-elect Adams announced during the campaign a pledge to turn thousands of hotel units into housing for people experiencing homelessness. He should fill in the details on that plan, including allocating funding, exploring City regulatory relief through zoning and building code changes, and calling for the passage of State legislation to amend the Multiple Dwelling Law (MDL) to allow hotels to be converted quickly and efficiently.

9. **Immediately rebuild staffing capacity at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):** The new administration will need to address critical vacancies at HPD and related agencies which are affecting housing programs including slowing down the city's affordable housing development pipeline. The most pressing needs are in development, where staffing is down 13% in September compared to before the pandemic and is 75% of appropriated levels, and in rental subsidy programs. Addressing this early will keep HPD development and voucher allocation moving and will correct an issue left by the previous administration. The new administration can look for creative solutions to immediately hire staff, potentially including utilizing HDC flexibility, and using temporary workers, outside consultants and outside counsel where necessary. Offices that are needed to carry out the goals of this plan to increase affordable housing and fight homelessness should also be exempt from hiring freezes to ensure sufficient staffing to carry out the housing plan.

10. **Meet with New Yorkers on their housing needs:** Mayor-elect Adams can show a commitment to the people impacted by the housing crisis by meeting with them directly early in his administration. This would include meeting with NYCHA tenants, touring affordable housing, and meeting with people currently experiencing homelessness. What he learns at these meetings can help to meaningfully inform the development of his housing plan.