

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/understanding-family-homelessness-in-new-york-city-an-in-depth-study-of-families-experiences-before-and-after-shelter>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Families are accessing homeless shelters in record numbers in cities across the United States, and New York City is no exception. After a 10-year period of relative stability, the number of homeless families in New York City grew by 22 percent in 2001 and by another 35 percent in 2002. By 2003, there were more than 9,000 families living in the city's homeless shelters on any given night. In response to this record demand for family shelter, in spring 2003 the Vera Institute of Justice collaborated with the New York City Department of Homeless Services, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and the New York City Housing Authority to conduct a series of research projects on homeless families including mapping sources of homelessness, conducting a unique survey of homeless families residing in shelters, and analyzing patterns of recidivism among families who leave shelters. This report describes the key findings from this research and is intended to help city officials and service providers shift responses to homelessness towards more cost-effective and preventive approaches, which are less disruptive for families.

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