



**AFRICAN
COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER**

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AFRICAN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER URGES MAYOR TO END “CRUSADE” AGAINST THE RIGHT TO SHELTER, FOLLOWING CALLAHAN SETTLEMENT DECISION

NEW YORK, N.Y. After nearly a year of deliberation and negotiations, the Legal Aid Society and Coalition for the Homeless have reached a settlement with the City of New York that preserves the right to shelter, a historic mandate that has ensured safe shelter for New Yorkers for decades. African Communities Together commends the diligent efforts of the Legal Aid Society and Coalition for the Homeless in their fight to preserve this right. However, while the settlement prevents the Adams administration from completely gutting the right to shelter, we at African Communities Together are disappointed to see that the settlement permits discrimination against asylum seekers by preventing them from accessing shelters in the same capacity as longtime New Yorkers.

According to the terms of the settlement, single adult new arrivals over the age of 23 will continue to only be allowed to remain in shelters for 30 days. Only in instances where new arrivals can prove that “extenuating circumstances” exist, can they remain in shelters beyond the initial 30-day period. This places a significant burden on individuals to prove an already clear need for shelter. The city should be increasing access to shelter, not diminishing it, and these limitations have proven to be an unnecessary and ineffective method of addressing shelter capacity issues. We are also deeply concerned about the implementation of the settlement provisions and the amount of discretion given to the City in determining what constitutes an “extenuating circumstance”. Mayor Adams has made his intentions clear; to quickly reduce the amount of asylum seekers in city shelters, no matter how detrimental the methods may be to the stability and safety of these new arrivals. For these reasons, we are skeptical that good faith efforts will be made in determining the existence of “extenuating circumstances” that would allow longer shelter stays.

Nonprofit and community-based organizations have repeatedly presented Mayor Adams and Governor Hochul with cost-effective and sustainable housing solutions that would address the current shelter capacity issues and provide more long-term, stable housing options for all New Yorkers. Yet, instead of working diligently to effectively execute these solutions, the Mayor continues to rely on shortsighted policies that have only resulted in more people on the streets.



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We call on the Mayor and Governor Hochul to cease this crusade against the right to shelter and instead prioritize commonsense policies such as: expanding accessibility to rental assistance programs such as CityFHEPS; investing in the proper redevelopment of vacant government properties into stable affordable housing; and resolving issues with the State's Migrant Relocation Assistance Program so that more families can be properly relocated and stabilized. The City can no longer continue to work in a silo and develop policies that do not center and prioritize the lived experiences of all New Yorkers, and we urge the Adams administration to work closely with impacted families and community-based organizations to develop thorough and equitable solutions.