



Pursuit of Media: Using Public Opinion to Inform Media Messages

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Background

- **Worked with non-partisan research group Public Agenda**
- **Conducted focus groups and in-depth random telephone survey of 1,002 New Yorkers from across the city (across all demographics)**
- **Funded by grants from The Rockefeller Foundation and Fannie Mae Foundation**
- **Public Agenda consulted with DHS but had complete independence in the research design and analysis.**

Purpose:

- **To assess perceptions on issues and policies surrounding homelessness**
- **To inform DHS, other city, state and national policy leaders, the media, and public on attitudes and understanding surrounding homelessness**

Key Findings:

- **88% favor placing homeless people who need additional assistance in supportive housing**
- **83% support rental subsidies for regular apartments**
- **85% approve of having their tax dollars pay for housing for the homeless**
- **48% believe NYC government's main priority should be intervening to keep individuals and families in permanent housing, with shelters only as a last resort**
- **96% say that benefits for the homeless should be conditional on such things as getting training, employment, and/or substance abuse and mental health treatment (72% strongly agree and 24% somewhat agree)**

Implications for New York and Nationally:

“For too long, policies and practices around the country related to homelessness have been tantamount to putting a Band-Aid on a gunshot wound. This independent research tells us we are very much on track with the direction of our programs.

New Yorkers see the importance of moving beyond a system of temporary shelters to one that includes comprehensive prevention services and concrete options for rental assistance and permanent housing.”

**Robert V. Hess, Commissioner
NYC Dept. of Homeless Services**



NYC Department of Homeless Services



Implications for New York and Nationally:

- **Support for Policies/Highlight Policies**
- **Challenges**
 - **Dispelling Myths**
 - **Definitional Disconnect about Who is Homeless**

More Information

- **Go to Public Agenda Web site to download report at www.publicagenda.org**
- **Contact DHS Communications Office, 212-361-7973**
 - Linda Bazerjian, Director of Communications
 - Tanya Valle-Batista, Press Secretary