



## **Policy Brief:**

# **Navigating the shelter system for homeless individuals and families**

## **The Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center**

**This poster will help people navigate the process of entering NYC's shelter system and the requirements they may have to follow once at the shelter. It will also provide information on how a person denied access to the shelter system can get help.**

### **About the advocate**

The Safety Net Project (SNP) provides free legal services to low- and no-income households in order to help these communities have access to fundamental resources like housing and food. Centered on access to housing, legal services, and advocacy, SNP develops, supports, and organizes low-income individuals and families to become community leaders and improve economic justice and human dignity.

### **The issue**

Last year, more than 127,000 homeless men, women, and children slept in NYC's shelter system. Under state law, the city is required to provide shelter to people with no other options. But getting into the shelter system can be a difficult and complex process. And even after being approved, residents must navigate the daily challenges and requirements of shelter living, often without any information about their rights and the services available to them.

### **The impact**

This poster will give homeless individuals and families the information they need to navigate the shelter system and find support. Families who are applying for shelter

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and services will be more prepared for the complicated application process and will have a better chance of being approved. Once in a shelter, they will have information regarding what services should be available to them, their rights, and resources for housing options once they move out.

## **The distribution network**

SNP will use its Safety Net Activists – members who have personal experience with poverty and homelessness – to distribute this project to residents at shelters. They will also distribute it through their weekly legal clinics at soup kitchens and pantries, and will reach out to their network of partner organizations to help distribute the project.



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