



**Breaking The Cycle
Drop Corp**



Five Points for An Effective and Compassionate Path Forward for NYC's Neighbors (Housed and Unhoused)

We believe that Mayor Adams assumed leadership of NYC with every intention of taking a swift and humane approach to improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers, including our brothers and sisters who are struggling to escape the streets.

*Together, Brooklyn-based Breaking the Cycle Drop Corp (BCDC) and the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW) offer the following **Five Points** to bring this catastrophe immediately under control and forestall similar failings in our city's future.*

Point One: Expand the Network of Providers

Dramatically expand the supply of willing providers to offer services, shelter, and support by issuing an emergency supplemental funding notice to NEW providers only. These grants must include upfront funding for small and emerging groups without a match or a reimbursement requirement. This funding can be for shelter space as small as one household at a time.

Point Two: Widen the Distribution Mechanism (Restore "No Wrong Door")

Expand the response network by taking a no wrong door approach. Deputize professionals throughout the city to verify homelessness and expedite the 2-1-1, 3-1-1 response. With one simple on-line tutorial, professionals in hospitals, sanitation, schools, MTA transportation, and therapists could be certified as an extension of coordinated entry and trained as "Expanded City Housing Outreach" or ECHO professionals. Once certified, they can identify people in need and immediately access help for them. To keep track of all of their great work, these ECHO professionals can have access to a part of HMIS to enter their engagement and activities. We trust that professionals throughout NYC and city employees will be willing to act in this capacity of verifying homeless status and helping to access and distribute resources and that many would be willing to get this simple training and certification. As a reward for the willingness of every qualified New Yorker for helping to identify, respond, and refer people in need, city employees will receive a small Premium pay increase in their paycheck upon certification. Others could be offered a small stipend upon certification as an expression of the city's gratitude.

A person with ECHO certification is qualified to tap homeless services, resources, and expedite the 3-1-1 process by eliminating the need for further eligibility determination.

Point Three: Arm Each NYPD Team on a Distress Call/Welfare Check with a trained Mental Health Professional loaned by FEMA (if necessary)

Ensure that police are never in the position to have to respond alone, without a trained mental health professional. The city must restore a mental health response to mental health issues using immediate access to inpatient treatment. The NYPD should never be left to deal with a mental health crisis without proper assistance – this puts the citizen and the officer at risk.

Point Four: Lead the Nation Forward Out of this Human Catastrophe

New York City is not alone in witnessing and struggling to contain this tsunami of homelessness. But New York City can and must have the courage to lead their peers forward out of this darkness. Mayor Adams and, by extension, the Executive of the State, Governor Hochul, must demand that President Biden declare a Major Disaster Declaration under The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121–5207 (the Stafford Act) §401 which states in part that: "All requests for a declaration by the President that a major disaster exists shall be made by the Governor of the affected State." Mayor Adams must welcome FEMA and any other federal entity necessary to immediately attend to all people who are suffering on the streets, visible and invisible – tucked into the subways, tunnels, and elsewhere. Tapping the Stafford Act will allow the City to eliminate bureaucratic barriers to addressing all of the housing and therapeutic needs within encampments until no New Yorker has to be subjected to living in fear, alone and exposed to the grave dangers of street. We will fully support Mayor Adams as he leads this federal team on the way to a full restoration of common sense, compassion, and normalcy.

Point Five: Save the next generation by ending youth homelessness

Over the past decade the Administration for Children's Services has made great strides to preserve and reunify vulnerable families. In fact, largely due to the work of NYC's Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom's seminal article, *"Narrowing the Front Door to NYC's Child Welfare System,"* For the remaining young people who reach adulthood alone, having not been reunified with family or found permanency through adoption, ACS must completely delink emancipation planning from engagement with the Department of Homeless Services. Youth who are under the care and custody of a public child welfare agency should never have to know about shelters unless they plan to volunteer there for high school service hours. Instead, transition planning must focus on housing options that include but are not limited to FUPY/FYI Housing Choice Vouchers available "on demand" perfectly timed with emancipation and coupled with work and school. Delinking ACS from DHS begins the process of denormalizing homelessness as an option for young adults. People say that New York problems are cyclical, but we refuse to allow the next generation of New Yorkers to be subjected to failures wrought upon the city by mission creep, complacency, and bureaucracy. We believe that Mayor Adams can put NYC on the path to be the city that inspires hope for people around the world once again.