# Department of Homeless Services' Major Initiatives

1. **Ten-Year Plan: Uniting for Solutions Beyond Shelter**
   The City of New York, in partnership with leaders from the business and nonprofit communities, is developing a ten year strategic plan to end chronic homelessness. This plan will identify a set of shared goals and initiatives that multiple public agencies and the business and nonprofit communities will jointly implement. These initiatives will focus on:

   **• Overcoming street homelessness;**
   **• Implementing a "prevention first, shelter second" agenda;**
   **• Rapid rehousing for those experiencing homelessness; and**
   **• Resource reinvestment.**

   • Despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars each year and having developed the most comprehensive shelter services system anywhere, the City of New York today shelters over 38,000 people – **the largest homeless population in its history**.

   • The City's historic response to homelessness has focused on shelter as a first line of response to any housing-related need. **This has come at the expense of focusing on preventive interventions** that help individuals and families avoid shelter in the first place.

   • Multiple public agencies, nonprofits and businesses today spend time and money combating homelessness. But there is **little coordination in terms of agenda setting, resource sharing, and resource leveraging**.

   • Spending on shelter services has reached an all-time high. Opportunities exist to **shift these resources to prevention, rental assistance, and permanent housing** programs.

   The planning process is being coordinated by three individuals, each of whom will build support and engage leaders and participation from their respective sectors. These co-leads are:
   - **Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**, Senior Vice President & Chief Executive, United Way of New York City
   - **Peter Madonia**, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
   - **William C. Rudin**, Chairman, Association for a Better New York

   An additional 30 individuals representing the public, nonprofit, and business communities serve on a coordinating committee. This committee guides and reviews ideas and recommendations made by four task forces. The four task forces each have focused on one of the following areas: 1) prevention and diversion, 2) outreach, shelter services, and permanency, 3) community-based services and resource reinvestment, and 4) research and quality improvement.

2. **The Special Master Panel**
   In January of last year, more than 20 years of lawsuits involving homeless families and the Department of Homeless Services ended with a two-year settlement ordered by the New York State Supreme Court. The McCain Special Master Panel settlement, which included the creation of a three member oversight panel, has allowed all parties involved to focus on constructive problem-solving rather than relying on court intervention.

   The appointed Panel consists of three well-respected experts. They have the responsibility of evaluating the function of the shelter system for homeless families and making recommendations for improvement, including areas relating to the existing litigation.

One year into the two year settlement, the Panel has hired two staff members and held bi-weekly meetings with DHS and the Legal Aid Society. In addition, each member has met with a wide variety of stakeholders and experts, reviewed and analyzed data and provided oversight on key issues. In November, the Panel produced its first comprehensive report on homelessness prevention which builds on the Mayor's commitment to fundamentally reform services for homeless families. Currently, the Panel is preparing to release a second report which will outline recommendations for DHS' Emergency Assistance Unit, the intake facility for all homeless families.