

# Housing Tops New Yorkers' 2025 Local Election Priorities

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Ahead of the November 4, 2025 local elections—when voters will choose a new mayor and City Council members—we surveyed 2,000 New York City residents and asked which two issues they most wanted city leaders to focus on. New Yorkers were clear about their top priorities: **reducing housing costs and curbing homelessness.**

Other response options included making subways and buses safer, improving public schools, making public transit more affordable, making childcare more affordable, addressing climate change and preparing for extreme weather, protecting immigrants, and other—each selected by 15 percent of respondents or fewer.

By prioritizing housing costs and homelessness, New Yorkers are crying out for housing reform and relief.

Top Five Issues	% of Respondents
Reducing the cost of housing	50%
Reducing street homelessness	30%
Reducing crime in neighborhoods	24%
Expanding access to mental health care and crisis services	20%
Supporting small businesses and local economic growth	17%

*Note: Percentages reflect the share of respondents who selected each item as one of their top two priorities.*

## In their own words: Housing and the struggle to get ahead

Responses to an open-ended question provide additional context for New Yorkers' top priorities for the next administration. When asked what they wish elected officials understood about getting ahead financially, many respondents pointed to challenges related to housing costs.

### “Rent is the most expensive bill for most people”

Some respondents specifically mentioned the price of housing, calling for elected officials to “control the housing cost.” Even some who lived in subsidized housing raised this concern. As one respondent stated, “I wish that elected officials understood that public housing and even low income housing is still very high for renters to be able to afford.”

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**“My rent keeps going up, but my paycheck does not”**

Others contrasted housing costs with stagnant wages, offering statements like, “I wish they knew the struggle to pay rent while making minimum wages” and “The rent can’t keep going up if wages don’t go up.”

**“When your monthly rent is over half of your monthly salary, it’s impossible to get ahead”**

Finally, some respondents connected housing affordability to broader well-being. One New Yorker described the relationship between housing costs and food security: “I think that it is hard for them to understand

that having to pay an insane amount of money for very small apartments puts people in a big disadvantage and sometimes at risk of not even being able to feed themselves.” Another pointed to the emotional and financial impact of long commutes from more affordable areas: “It is extremely difficult for entry level and mid level salary earners to live [in New York]. Living further away and having long commutes impacts a person’s mentality as well therefore negatively contributing [to] their finances.”

Taken together, these responses point to why reducing housing costs was the top priority for half of New Yorkers—and to a reality that, for some people, is captured in one respondent’s words: “We are all so much closer to homelessness than anyone realizes.”

**About the survey:** For more than 20 years, the Community Service Society of New York has surveyed New Yorkers on housing, employment, benefits, finances, and policy views. The 2025 Annual Survey of Housing and Economic Security surveyed 4,000 adults statewide, including 2,000 New York City residents, between September 9 and October 2, 2025. Surveys were offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Haitian Creole via online panels, phone, and text recruitment. Results were weighted by

region to reflect the demographic composition of New York State adults. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.19$  for NYC respondents.

Among the New York City sample, 31% were at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 26% were between 201 and 400% of FPL, and 43% were above 400% of FPL. The borough distribution was 30% Brooklyn, 28% Queens, 21% Manhattan, 15% Bronx, and 6% Staten Island.

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