

The City of New York  
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Department of Housing Preservation  
and Development  
Jerilyn Perine, Commissioner

## **Selected Findings of the 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey**

The following is a summary of the initial findings of the 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS).

### **Table of Contents**

**Housing Inventory**

**Vacancies**

**Incomes**

**Rents**

**Housing and Neighborhood Condition**

**Crowding**

**Tables 1-14**

**Mayor's Press Release**

**Letter from HPD to City Council**

**Letter from Census Bureau to HPD**

### **Housing Inventory**

1. The number of housing units in New York City increased by 44,000 units, from 2,995,000 in 1996 to 3,039,000 in 1999. The number of rental units was 2,018,000, comprising 66 percent of the housing stock, in 1999 (**Table 1**).
2. Vacant units, both rental and owner, decreased substantially between 1996 and 1999: vacant units available for rent decreased by 21 percent, from 81,000 to 64,000; vacant units available for sale decreased by 28 percent, from 24,000 to 17,000. At the same time, the number of vacant units not available for sale or

rent decreased substantially by 19 percent, from 110,000 in 1996 to 89,000 in 1999 (**Table 1**).

3. Rent controlled units numbered 53,000, or 2.7 percent of the occupied rental stock in 1999. The number of rent controlled units declined by 18,000, or by 26 percent, from 71,000 units in 1996 (**Table 2**).
4. There were 1,046,000 rent stabilized units (occupied and vacant), comprising 52 percent of the rental stock in 1999. This number is little changed from 1996, when it was 1,052,000 (**Table 2**).

## Vacancies

1. The 1999 HVS reports a citywide decrease of 17,000 vacant-for-rent units, lowering the vacancy rate for units available for rent in the City during the period between February and May of 1999 to 3.19 percent, down from 4.01 percent during a similar period in 1996. The 1999 vacancy rate is significantly lower than 5 percent and, thus, meets the legal definition of a housing emergency in the City. (**Table 3**)
2. Between 1996 and 1999, the rental vacancy rate declined in all boroughs, except Staten Island. The rate in the Bronx decreased from 5.43 percent to 5.04 percent; in Brooklyn, it dropped from 4.20 percent to 3.26 percent; in Manhattan, it fell from 3.47 percent to 2.57 percent; and, in Queens, it declined from 3.28 percent to 2.11 percent. On the other hand, the rate increased significantly in Staten Island from 4.17 percent to 5.82 percent (**Table 3**).
3. The vacancy rate for rent stabilized units was 2.46 percent in 1999, a substantial decline from 1996, when it was 3.57 percent (**Table 4**).
4. The vacancy rate for low-rent units decreased considerably between 1996 and 1999. The vacancy rate in 1999 for units with asking rents of less than \$400 was 1.26 percent, down from the 1996 vacancy rate of 3.21 percent, using inflation-adjusted asking rents (changing 1996 rents into April 1999 dollars). The vacancy rate for units with a monthly asking rent level of \$400-\$499 fell from 3.31 percent to 2.53 percent. The rate for units in the \$500-\$599 level decreased from 3.89 percent to 2.86 percent (**Table 5**).
5. The vacancy rate for asking rents between \$600 and \$699 also decreased considerably from 4.58 percent in 1996 to 3.44 percent in 1999, while the rate for units with asking rents in the \$700-\$799 level did not change much in the three-year period. However, as the citywide rental vacancy rate declined during the period, vacancy rates for the next two higher levels of asking rent also declined markedly. The rate decreased from 5.52 percent to 3.75 percent for the \$800-\$899 level and from 4.06 percent to 2.74 percent for the \$900-\$999 level (**Table 5**).

6. The rental vacancy rates for the two higher levels of asking rents between \$1,000 and \$1,749 remained stable, while the rate for the highest rent level, \$1,750 and over, increased significantly, from 3.40 percent in 1996 to 5.70 percent in 1999 (**Table 5**).
7. The number of vacant units not available for sale or rent was 89,000 in 1999, a significant decline from 1996, when it was 110,000. Of these, the number undergoing or awaiting renovation was 32,000, or 36 percent of the total number of unavailable units, relatively stable since 1996, when it was 31,000. On the other hand, the number of unavailable units in the category of occasional, seasonal, or recreational use declined substantially by 48 percent, from 33,000 to 17,000, during the same three-year period. Of units in this category, 63 percent were in cooperative or condominium buildings; about 80 percent of these units in cooperative or condominium buildings were located in Manhattan (**Table 6**).

## Incomes

(Note that incomes are reported for 1998, while housing data are for 1999.)

1. The median income for all households (renters and owners combined) increased considerably from \$29,600 to \$33,000, or by 11.5 percent, between 1995 and 1998. The inflation-adjusted median income (changing 1995 dollars into 1998 dollars) for all households increased by 4.2 percent during the three-year period (**Table 7**).
2. The median income of renter households increased by 8.8 percent, from \$23,892 in 1995 to \$26,000 in 1998. However, after adjusting for inflation, the median income of renter households increased slightly by 1.7 percent (**Table 7**).
3. The median income of homeowners was \$53,000 in 1998, a 9.1-percent increase over 1995, when it was \$48,562. After adjusting for inflation, however, the median income of homeowners increased by just 2.0 percent (**Table 7**).
4. The median income of rent controlled households was \$17,000 in 1998. This median income increased by 18.3 percent from the inflation-adjusted median income in 1995 (**Table 8**).
5. The median income of rent stabilized households was \$27,000 in 1998, about the same as their inflation-adjusted median income in 1995 (**Table 8**).
6. The median income of renter households in pre-1947 rent stabilized units was \$25,600 in 1998, almost the same as their inflation-adjusted income in 1995. On the other hand, the 1998 median income of renter households in post-1947 rent stabilized units was \$30,400, an inflation-adjusted decrease of 6.9 percent since 1995 (**Table 8**).

7. The proportion of renter households with incomes below the poverty level dropped noticeably from 26.3 percent in 1995 to 24.5 percent in 1998 (**Table 9**).

## Rents

1. The median monthly gross rent, which includes fuel and utility payments, increased by 9.4 percent, from \$640 in 1996 to \$700 in 1999. However, the inflation-adjusted increase in median gross rent (changing 1996 rent into April 1999 dollars) was 3.1 percent (**Table 10**).
2. The median monthly contract rent, which excludes tenant payments for fuel and utilities, increased by 8.0 percent, from \$600 in 1996 to \$648 in 1999. This was a 1.9-percent increase, after adjusting for inflation (**Table 10**).
3. The number of low-rent units declined and the number of high-rent units increased noticeably between 1996 and 1999. In April 1999 dollars, the number of units with monthly gross rents of less than \$400 declined by 6.5 percent; at the same time, the number of units with monthly gross rents between \$400 and \$599 decreased by 10.6 percent (**Table 11**).
4. On the other hand, the number of units with monthly gross rents of \$1,000 or more increased by 16.5 percent, while the number of units with monthly gross rents of \$1,750 or more increased by 34.0 percent (**Table 11**).
5. The median gross rent-income ratio fell from 30.0 percent in 1996 to 29.2 percent in 1999 (**Table 12**).

## Housing and Neighborhood Condition

Housing and neighborhood condition in the City measured by the HVS improved markedly between 1996 and 1999. Moreover, these conditions in 1999 were the best since the HVS started covering them.

1. Building condition improved considerably.

The percent of renter-occupied units in dilapidated buildings was just 1.0 percent in 1999, a further improvement over 1996, when the dilapidation rate was 1.3 percent. The 1999 rate was the lowest in the 35-year period since the first HVS in 1965 (**Table 13**).

2. Housing maintenance condition improved substantially.
  - a. The proportion of renter-occupied units with no maintenance deficiencies increased from 42.1 percent in 1996 to 45.5 percent in 1999 (**Table 13**).
  - b. The proportion of renter-occupied units with no heating breakdowns rose from 80.4 percent in 1996 to 83.7 percent in 1999 (**Table 13**).

### 3. Neighborhood quality improved greatly.

- a. The proportion of renter households near buildings with broken or boarded-up windows on the street declined significantly from 11.4 percent in 1996 to 8.8 percent in 1999 (**Table 13**).
- b. The proportion of renter households that rated the quality of their neighborhood residential structures as "good" or "excellent" increased substantially from 63.9 percent to 68.6 percent between 1996 and 1999 (**Table 13**).

### **Crowding**

The crowding situation became somewhat more serious in 1999, compared to 1996. The proportion of renter households that were crowded (more than one person per room) in 1999 was 11.0 percent, a slight increase over 1996, when the crowding rate was 10.3 percent (**Table 14**).

**Table 1**  
**New York City Housing Inventory, 1996 and 1999**

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>	<b>Percent Change</b> <u>1996-1999</u>
<b>Total housing units</b>	2,995,276	3,038,796	+1.5%
<b>Total rental units</b>	2,027,421	2,017,701	-0.5
Occupied	1,946,165	1,953,289	+0.4
Vacant, available for rent	81,256	64,412	-20.7
<b>Total owner units</b>	857,765	932,123	+8.7
Occupied	834,183	915,126	+9.7
Vacant, available for sale	23,581	16,997	-27.9
<b>Vacant units, not available for sale or rent</b>	110,090	88,973	-19.2

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

## Table 2

### Rental Housing Inventory by Rent Regulation Status New York City, 1996 and 1999

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>Percent Change</u> <u>1996-1999</u>
<b>Total rental units</b> (occupied and vacant available)	2,027,421	2,017,701	-0.5%
<b>Rent controlled</b>	70,572	52,562	-25.5
<b>Rent stabilized</b>	1,052,300	1,046,377	-0.6
Pre-1947 stabilized	763,956	769,079	+0.7
Post-1947 stabilized	288,344	277,298	-3.8
<b>Private nonregulated<sup>(a)</sup></b>	575,666	602,861	+4.7
<b>All other renter units<sup>(b)</sup></b>	328,883	315,901	-3.9

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.  
Notes:

(a) "Private nonregulated" consists of units which were never rent controlled or rent stabilized, units which were decontrolled, including those in buildings with five or fewer units, and unregulated rentals in cooperative or condominium buildings.

(b) Includes Public Housing, Mitchell-Lama, In Rem, HUD regulated, Article 4, Loft Board.

**Table 3**  
**Vacant Units Available for Rent by Borough**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

	<b>Vacant Units</b>		<b>Net Vacancy Rate<sup>(a)</sup></b>	
	<b>Available for Rent</b>			
	<b>1996</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1999</b>
Total	81,256	64,412	4.01%	3.19%
Bronx <sup>(b)</sup>	18,825	17,385	5.43	5.04
Brooklyn	25,937	19,819	4.20	3.26
Manhattan <sup>(b)</sup>	20,185	14,816	3.47	2.57
Queens	14,020	9,109	3.28	2.11
Staten Island	2,289 <sup>(c)</sup>	3,283	4.17 <sup>(c)</sup>	5.82

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

Notes:

(a) The vacancy rate is calculated by dividing vacant available for rent units that are not dilapidated by the sum of vacant available for rent units that are not dilapidated and renter-occupied units.

(b) Marble Hill included in The Bronx.

(c) The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey is a sample survey. Since the number of vacant units available for rent in this category is small, the sampling error of the vacancy rate is likely to be large. Thus, interpretation of the vacancy rate should be done with caution.

**Table 4**  
**Rent Stabilized Vacant Units and Vacancy Rates**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>
All Vacant for Rent Units	81,256	64,412
Rent Stabilized Units	37,549	25,790
Pre-1947 Stabilized	29,381	20,069
Post-1947 Stabilized	8,168	5,720
	<b><u>Net Vacancy Rate</u><sup>(a)</sup></b>	
	<b><u>1996</u></b>	<b><u>1999</u></b>
All Rental Units	4.01% <sup>(b)</sup>	3.19% <sup>(b)</sup>
Rent Stabilized Units	3.57	2.46
Pre-1947 Stabilized	3.85	2.61
Post-1947 Stabilized	2.83	2.06

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

Notes:

(a) The vacancy rate is calculated by dividing vacant available for rent units that are not dilapidated by the sum of vacant available for rent units that are not dilapidated and renter-occupied units.

(b) The standard error of the vacancy rate for all renter units was 0.21 percent in 1996 and 0.19 percent in 1999.

**Table 5**  
**Number of Vacant Units Available for Rent and Net Vacancy Rate**  
**by Monthly Rent Level in 1999 Dollars**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

Monthly Rent <sup>(b)</sup> Level	Vacant Units Available for Rent		Net Vacancy Rate <sup>(a)</sup> (Percent)	
	1996	1999	1996	1999
	Total	81,256	64,412	4.01%
Less than \$400	11,528	3,884	3.21	1.26
\$400 to \$499	7,536	5,203	3.31	2.53
\$500 to \$599	12,771	8,510	3.89	2.86
\$600 to \$699	15,556	11,176	4.58	3.44
\$700 to \$799	13,673	13,685	5.61	5.35
\$800 to \$899	7,116	6,661	5.52	3.75
\$900 to \$999	4,801	3,107	4.06	2.74
\$1,000 to \$1,249	3,980	4,600	3.43	3.33
\$1,250 to \$1,749	2,463 <sup>(c)</sup>	3,149	3.13	3.41
\$1,750+	(d)	4,438	3.40 <sup>(c)</sup>	5.70
\$2,000+	(d)	4,054	5.00 <sup>(c)</sup>	7.13

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

Notes:

(a) The vacancy rate is calculated by dividing vacant available for rent units that are not dilapidated by the sum of vacant available for rent units that are not dilapidated and renter-occupied units.

(b) Asking rents for vacant units and contract rents for occupied units. The ratio of the April 1999 over the April 1996 Consumer Price Index values (CPI-U) for New York-Northeast New Jersey-Long Island (176.0/166.0) was used to convert nominal 1996 rents into rents measured in 1999 dollars.

(c) Since the number of units is small, interpret with caution.

(d) Too few units to report.

**Table 6**  
**Number of Vacant Units Unavailable for Rent or Sale**  
**by Reason of Unavailability, 1996 and 1999**

<u>Reason Unavailable</u>	<u>1996</u>		<u>1999</u>		<u>Percent Change 1996-1999</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Total	110,090	100.0%	88,973	100.0%	-19.2%
Dilapidated	6,356	6.0	4,542	5.2	-28.5
Rented, Not Yet Occupied	6,807	6.4	5,049	5.7	-25.8
Sold, Not Yet Occupied	3,850	3.6	5,385	6.1	+39.9
Undergoing Renovation	16,988	15.9	19,121	21.8	+12.6
Awaiting Renovation	14,112	13.2	12,870	14.6	-8.8
Held for Occasional, Seasonal or Recreational Use	32,929	30.8	17,229	19.6	-47.7
Used / Converted to Non-Residential Use	2,151 <sup>(a)</sup>	2.0	(b)	2.1 <sup>(a)</sup>	(b)
In Legal Dispute	8,180	7.7	5,990	6.8	-26.8
Awaiting Conversion / Being Converted to Coop / Condo	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Held Pending Sale of Building	(b)	1.8 <sup>(a)</sup>	3,160	3.6	(b)
Owner's Personal Problems (age, illness, etc.)	8,054	7.5	5,276	6.0	-34.5
Held for Planned Demolition	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Held for Other Reasons	4,795	4.5	7,019	8.0	+46.4
Reason not reported	3,342	-	(b)	-	-

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.  
Notes:

(a) Since the number of units is small, interpret with caution.

(b) Too few units to report.

**Table 7**  
**Median Household Incomes**  
**New York City, 1995 and 1998**

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1998</u>	<b>Percent Change</b> <b><u>1995-1998</u></b>
<b><u>In current dollars</u></b>			
All households	\$29,600	\$33,000	+11.5%
All renters	\$23,892	\$26,000	+8.8
All owners	\$48,562	\$53,000	+9.1
CPI <sup>(a)</sup>	162.2	173.6	+7.0
<b><u>In 1998 dollars</u></b>			
All households	\$31,680	\$33,000	+4.2%
All renters	\$25,571	\$26,000	+1.7
All owners	\$51,975	\$53,000	+2.0

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

Note:

(a) Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for New York-Northeast New Jersey-Long Island (1982-84=100), yearly average, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

**Table 8**  
**Median Renter Household Incomes by Rent Regulation Status**  
**New York City, 1995 and 1998**

	(Constant 1998 dollars)		
	<u>1995</u>	<u>1998</u>	<b>Percent Change</b>
			<u>1995-1998</u>
All Renters	\$25,571	\$26,000	+1.7%
Rent Controlled	\$14,372	\$17,000	+18.3
Rent Stabilized	\$27,132	\$27,000	-0.5
Pre-1947 Stabilized	\$25,687	\$25,600	-0.3
Post-1947-Stabilized	\$32,644	\$30,400	-6.9
Private nonregulated <sub>(a)</sub>	\$32,109	\$35,350	+10.1

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

Note:

(a) "Private nonregulated" consists of units which were never rent controlled or rent stabilized, units which were decontrolled, including those in buildings with five or fewer units, and unregulated rentals in cooperative or condominium buildings.

**Table 9**  
**Renter Households With Incomes Below Poverty Level**  
**New York City, 1995 and 1998**

<u>Renter Households</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1998</u>
Below 100% of poverty level	26.3%	24.5%

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Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

**Table 10**  
**Median Rents, All Renter-Occupied Units**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

<u>In current dollars</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>Percent Change</u> <u>1996-1999</u>
Median gross rent	\$640	\$700	+9.4%
Median contract rent	\$600	\$648	8.0
CPI <sub>(a)</sub>	166.0	176.0	6.0
<b><u>In April 1999 dollars</u></b>			
Median gross rent	\$679	\$700	+3.1
Median contract rent	\$636	\$648	+1.9

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.  
Notes:

(a) Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers for New York-Northeast New Jersey-Long Island (1982-84=100), April of each year, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

**Table 11**  
**Monthly Gross Rent in Renter-Occupied Housing**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**  
 (Constant April 1999 dollars)

<b>Monthly Gross Rent April 1999 Dollars<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>1996</b>		<b>1999</b>		<b>Percent Change 1996-1999</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>Total</b>	1,946,165	100.0%	1,953,289	100.0%	+0.4%
<b>Less than \$400</b>	286,781	15.0	268,228	13.9	-6.5
Less than \$300	182,770	9.6	174,539	9.0	-4.5
\$300-\$399	104,011	5.4	93,689	4.9	-9.9
<b>\$400-\$599</b>	427,550	22.3	382,411	19.9	-10.6
\$400-\$499	157,215	8.2	147,815	7.7	-6.0
\$500-\$599	270,335	14.1	234,596	12.2	-13.2
<b>\$600-\$999</b>	893,514	46.7	922,952	47.9	+3.3
\$600-\$699	313,818	16.4	310,000	16.1	-1.2
\$700-\$799	254,687	13.3	271,928	14.1	+6.8
\$800-\$899	185,908	9.7	201,625	10.5	+8.5
\$900-\$999	139,101	7.3	139,399	7.2	+0.2
<b>\$1000 or more</b>	304,998	15.9	355,248	18.4	+16.5
\$1,000-\$1,249	155,885	8.1	168,479	8.7	+8.1
\$1,250-\$1,499	55,982	2.9	66,997	3.5	+19.7
\$1,500-\$1,749	32,966	1.7	39,154	2.0	+18.8
\$1,750+	60,165	3.1	80,618	4.2	+34.0
<b>Not Reported/No rent</b>	33,321	--	24,448	--	--

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.  
 Note:

(a) Constant 1999 dollars are derived by multiplying 1996 rents by the ratio of the April 1999 CPI over the April 1996 CPI (176.0/166.0). Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for New York-Northeast New Jersey-Long Island (1982-84=100), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

**Table 12**  
**Median Gross Rent / Income Ratios**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>
Gross Rent / Income Ratio	30.0%	29.2%

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Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

**Table 13**  
**Housing and Neighborhood Condition**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

<b><u>Housing Condition</u></b>	<b><u>1996</u></b>	<b><u>1999</u></b>
Renter-occupied units in dilapidated buildings		
Number	25,561	19,006
Percent	1.3%	1.0%
Renter-occupied units in buildings with <b>no</b> building defects	88.6%	89.1%
Renter-occupied units with 5 or more of 7 maintenance deficiencies <sup>(a)</sup>	6.1%	4.4%
Renter-occupied units with <b>no</b> maintenance deficiencies <sup>(a)</sup>	42.1%	45.5%
Renter-occupied units with heating breakdowns (4 or more times)	8.2%	6.5%
Renter-occupied units with <b>no</b> heating breakdowns	80.4%	83.7%
<b><u>Neighborhood Condition</u></b>		
Renter household opinion of good/excellent neighborhood quality	63.9%	68.6%
Renter household opinion of poor neighborhood quality	7.5%	5.7%
Renter households with any buildings with broken or boarded-up windows on same street	11.4%	8.8%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.

Note:

(a) Maintenance deficiencies include: 1) additional heating required in winter; 2) heating breakdown; 3) cracks or holes in interior walls, ceilings, or floors; 4) presence of rodents; 5) presence of broken plaster or peeling paint; 6) toilet breakdown; 7) water leakage into unit.

**Table 14**  
**Crowding Rates in Renter-Occupied Units**  
**New York City, 1996 and 1999**

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>
Crowded renter households of 1.01 or more persons per room	10.3%	11.0%
Severely crowded renter households of 1.51 or more persons per room	3.5%	3.9%

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Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996 and 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Surveys.



**The City of New York  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Release #057-00**

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

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***MAYOR GIULIANI RELEASES INITIAL FINDINGS OF  
1999 NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AND VACANCY SURVEY***

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Richard T. Roberts today released the **initial results of the 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS)**. The results show a citywide decrease of 17,000 vacant-for-rent units, lowering the 1999 rental vacancy rate to 3.19 percent, from 4.01 percent in 1996. The vacancy rate, which is significantly lower than the 5-percent threshold mandated by state law, justifies the continuation of rent control and rent stabilization.

Conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the City of New York between February and May of 1999, the survey also reports that the City's total inventory of residential units was over 3 million for the first time. The inventory increased by 44,000, from 2,995,000 in 1996 to 3,039,000 in 1999. The 1999 HVS also reports that housing and neighborhood physical conditions in the City improved over 1996. These conditions were the best since the HVS started covering comparable conditions in the 1970s. The 1999 dilapidation rate was just 1.0 percent, the lowest ever in the 35-year period since the first HVS in 1965. Housing maintenance condition and neighborhood quality improved greatly over the last 3 years.

"This survey shows that the City has made tremendous strides in improving the condition of housing and the quality of life in New York's neighborhoods," said Mayor Giuliani. "During the last several years, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has increased affordable housing opportunities and helped revitalize neighborhoods for New Yorkers. HPD initiatives have sought to halt and reverse the deterioration and abandonment of the existing housing stock and to generate new housing opportunities. HPD returns properties the City acquired through tax foreclosure to responsible private

owners and builds public-private partnerships and programs that help revitalize neighborhoods by promoting investment and involving neighborhood resources. We will continue to work aggressively to address the housing needs of New Yorkers."

Commissioner Roberts said, "Initial findings of this housing survey demonstrate that although there is more work to do in providing rental housing in New York City, our current policies have improved the quality of existing housing and produced additional affordable housing opportunities for the residents of New York City."

The Housing and Vacancy Survey, which is produced every three years, is the principal source of data required for determining the City's rental vacancy rate, the supply of housing accommodations, and the condition of such accommodations and for understanding other urgent housing situations in the City. The survey excludes "Special Places," such as institutions, group quarters, dormitories, and commercial hotels.

The final report on the 1999 Housing and Vacancy Survey will be released early next year by HPD, which commissioned the survey.

Initial findings of the survey also indicate that:

- Residential building condition improved markedly. The percent of renter-occupied units in dilapidated buildings was just 1.0 percent in 1999, a further improvement over 1996, when the dilapidation rate was 1.3 percent.
- Housing maintenance condition improved extensively. The proportion of renter-occupied units with no maintenance deficiencies increased from 42.1 percent in 1996 to 45.5 percent in 1999.
- The proportion of renter-occupied units with no heating breakdowns rose markedly from 80.4 percent in 1996 to 83.7 percent in 1999.
- Neighborhood quality improved greatly. The proportion of renter households near buildings with broken or boarded-up windows on the same street declined from 11.4 percent in 1996 to 8.8 percent in 1999.
- The proportion of renter households that rated the quality of their neighborhood residential structures as "good" or "excellent" increased markedly from 63.9 percent to 68.6 percent between 1996 and 1999.
- The crowding situation became somewhat more serious in 1999. The proportion of renter households that were crowded (more than one person per room) in 1999 was 11.0 percent, a slight increase over 1996, when the crowding rate was 10.3 percent.
- Between 1996 and 1999, the rental vacancy rate declined in all boroughs, except Staten Island. The rate in the Bronx decreased from 5.43 percent to 5.04 percent; in Brooklyn, it dropped from 4.20 percent to 3.26 percent; in Manhattan, it fell from 3.47 percent to 2.57 percent; and, in Queens, it declined from 3.28 percent to 2.11 percent. On the other hand, the rental vacancy rate increased significantly in Staten

Island from 4.17 percent to 5.82 percent.

- The vacancy rate in 1999 for units with asking rents of less than \$400 was 1.26 percent, down from the 1996 vacancy rate of 3.21 percent, using inflation-adjusted asking rents (changing 1996 rents into April 1999 dollars). The vacancy rate for units with a monthly asking rent level of \$400-\$499 fell from 3.31 percent in 1996 to 2.53 percent in 1999. The vacancy rate for units in the \$500-\$599 level decreased from 3.89 percent to 2.86 percent.
- The vacancy rate for asking rents between \$600 and \$699 also decreased considerably from 4.58 percent in 1996 to 3.44 percent in 1999, while the rate for units with asking rents in the \$700-\$799 level did not change much in the three-year period. However, as the citywide rental vacancy rate declined during the period, vacancy rates for the next two higher levels of asking rent also declined markedly. The rate decreased from 5.52 percent to 3.75 percent for the \$800-\$899 level and from 4.06 percent to 2.74 percent for the \$900-\$999 level.
- The rental vacancy rates for the two higher levels of asking rents between \$1,000 and \$1,749 remained stable, while the rate for the highest rent level, \$1,750 and over, increased significantly, from 3.40 percent in 1996 to 5.70 percent in 1999.
- The median income for all households (renters and owners combined) increased considerably by 11.5 percent, from \$29,600 in 1995 to \$33,000 in 1998. The inflation-adjusted median income (changing 1995 dollars into 1998 dollars) for all households increased by 4.2 percent.
- The median income of renter households increased by 8.8 percent, from \$23,892 in 1995 to \$26,000 in 1998. However, after adjusting for inflation, the median income of renter households increased slightly by 1.7 percent during the three-year period.
- The median income of homeowners was \$53,000 in 1998, a 9.1 percent increase over 1995, when it was \$48,562. After adjusting for inflation, however, the median income of homeowners increased by just 2.0 percent.
- The proportion of renter households with incomes below the poverty level dropped noticeably from 26.3 percent in 1995 to 24.5 percent in 1998.
- The median monthly gross rent, which includes fuel and utility payments, increased by 9.4 percent, from \$640 in 1996 to \$700 in 1999. However, the inflation-adjusted increase in median gross rent (changing 1996 rent into April 1999 dollars) was 3.1 percent.
- The median monthly contract rent, which excludes tenant payments for fuel and utilities, increased by 8.0 percent, from \$600 in 1996 to \$648 in 1999. This was a 1.9-percent increase, after adjusting for inflation.
- The median gross rent-income ratio fell from 30.0 percent in 1996 to 29.2 percent in 1999.



City of New York  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
100 GOLD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10038

RICHARD T. ROBERTS  
Commissioner

February 16, 2000

Honorable Peter F. Vallone  
Speaker and Majority Leader  
New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Vallone:

As required by subdivision three of section one of the Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act, enclosed is a letter from the United States Bureau of the Census containing results of the 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS) and selected findings of the 1999 HVS prepared by the Division of Housing Analysis and Research of HPD's Office of Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard T. Roberts".

Richard T. Roberts  
Commissioner

c: Joseph Rosenberg, Deputy Commissioner



**Breaking New Ground**  
[nyclink.org/hpd](http://nyclink.org/hpd)  
FAX (212) 267-2565



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Bureau of the Census**  
Washington, DC 20233-0001

February 16, 2000

Dr. Moon Wha Lee  
Assistant Commissioner of Housing  
Analysis and Research  
Office of Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Department of Housing Preservation  
and Development  
100 Gold Street  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Dr. Lee:

In accordance with our contract, I am writing to let you know the rental vacancy rate and its associated standard error for New York City. We derived these data from the 1999 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) conducted between February and May of last year.

Rental Vacancy Rate and 1 Standard Error.....3.19 percent (+/- 0.19)

The rental vacancy rate is calculated by dividing vacant available for rent units (that are not dilapidated) by renter occupied units plus vacant for rent units (that are not dilapidated).

The method we use to calculate the rental vacancy rate is the same as used in every previous NYCHVS. Each survey, including the 1999 survey, excludes housing units in "special places". Special places include hospitals, jails, mental institutions, college dormitories, etc.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Fronczek  
Chief, Financial and Market  
Characteristics Branch  
Housing and Household Economic  
Statistics Division  
Census Bureau