

## New York Secures the Most Affordable Housing Units in 27 Years

By CHARLES V. BAGLIJAN. 11, 2017

About 25 percent of the 478 units in 555Ten, a tower on 10th Avenue in Manhattan, were set aside for low- and moderate-income residents. About one-fifth of the apartments that the de Blasio administration built or preserved in 2016 were for those earning less than \$25,000. Credit Christopher Lee for The New York Times

Despite the loss of a key housing program, the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio will announce Thursday that it built or preserved 21,963 units of housing in 2016 for poor and working-class New Yorkers, the most since 1989.

The total includes 6,844 apartments in newly constructed buildings, according to data provided by city housing officials. The announcement will be made at a news conference in Brooklyn.

These apartments are earmarked for families and individuals who meet income requirements, with about 35 percent of the units set aside for three-person households making no more than \$40,800.

“I want people struggling out there to know that this is still your city,” Mr. de Blasio said Wednesday. “We are fighting to keep New York a place that seniors, the middle class and families trying to make it to the middle class can actually afford.”

Although the real estate market has softened in recent months, many New Yorkers have found it difficult or impossible to find homes within their means. Mr. de Blasio, a Democrat, made affordable housing a centerpiece of his administration — even before he took office in 2014 — pledging to build or preserve 200,000 units over the next decade.

Over the past three years, the capital funding for the city’s housing agency has doubled, rising to \$798 million this year, from \$400 million in 2014.

But affordable housing remains a challenge, given the city’s increasing population, the demand for housing at all income levels and a wave of luxury development that has washed over nearly every neighborhood in the city. And the administration has had little success in reducing the city’s homeless population, which climbed above 60,000 people last year.

The administration has smarted from claims by advocates for low-income housing that too many apartments are being given to moderate-income New Yorkers, rather than to the truly poor, who still make up a sizable portion of the population.

In response, the de Blasio administration has increasingly sought to earmark more affordable apartments for New Yorkers with what are called very low and extremely low incomes. About one-fifth of the apartments — far above the 8 percent goal set in the city’s housing plan — built or preserved in 2016 were for those earning less than \$25,000.

“This is an important and ambitious plan,” said Benjamin Dulchin, the executive director of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development. “It is truly impressive to see the city not just

meeting, but surpassing its goals for low-income people.” But, he added, more of the apartments should be set aside for the poorest New Yorkers.

Even as the city builds more housing every year, thousands of affordable apartments exit the city’s housing programs as agreements expire — unless the city intervenes. In addition, a city program that provided developers with substantial property tax breaks for designating 20 percent of their units for low- and moderate-income renters expired last year. Attempts to revive the 421-a incentive have failed.

“We need every tool we can lay our hands on to address the housing crisis, which is not going away,” said Alicia Glen, Mr. de Blasio’s deputy mayor for economic development. “That is especially true given the climate in Washington and the likely impact of tax reform.”

In the past three years, the de Blasio administration has provided financing for projects that built or preserved a total of 62,506 apartments that are affordable to poor and working-class tenants, according to housing officials.

Of the units built or preserved last year, more than 30 percent were in Manhattan, with about 29 percent each in the Bronx and Brooklyn.

The only time the city built or preserved more housing was in 1989, when Mayor Edward I. Koch completed 23,136 affordable units.

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