

Spotlight on

# Forced Moves and Eviction in New York City

A first look at the experiences and trajectories of  
New Yorkers who are forced out of their housing.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Forced moves, such as evictions, have drawn attention in recent years as research has highlighted the toll that displacement takes on families and neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> Data on these types of moves, however, particularly at the individual and local level, remain scarce. The Poverty Tracker is the first local survey to capture information on evictions and other types of moves in New York City alongside data on poverty, material hardship, health problems, and a host of other measures of well-being. Further, this information is collected both before and after a move, allowing us to understand the potential consequences of forced displacement and other types of moves on individuals and neighborhoods. This report employs this new and unique data to take a first look at the experiences and trajectories of this population of New Yorker's how forced moves play a role in widening the opportunity gaps between neighborhoods. We also examine the efficacy of housing policies in curbing rates of forced moves at a time when lawmakers in Albany and New York City are contemplating reforms to the soon-to-be expired statewide rent-stabilization laws and the city's recently enacted "Right to Counsel" eviction prevention program.

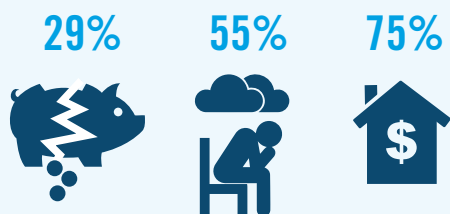
### We find that:



Over **100,000** New Yorkers are forced out of their housing within a year by evictions, building foreclosures, building sales, or building condemnations.

*Nearly one in seven of these is a child under age 13.*

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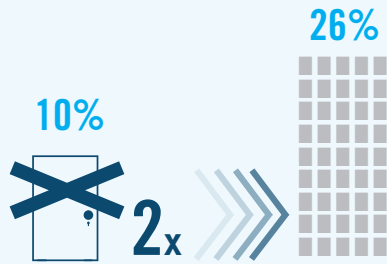
Compared to other renters, those who are forced to move are more disadvantaged across a host of measures of well-being collected by the Poverty Tracker: prior to moving, they are more likely to be in poverty (29%),<sup>2</sup> experience a material hardship (55%) such as running out of food or having utilities cut off due to nonpayment, and be rent burdened (75%).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*.

<sup>2</sup>We measure poverty using the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). A family is considered in poverty if their annual post-tax cash and transfer income falls below the SPM threshold for their household size. For example, being in poverty is defined as having an annual income below \$15,268 for individuals who rent their apartment, and below \$32,943 for a family of four with two children who rent.

<sup>3</sup>Rent burdened is defined as spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent.

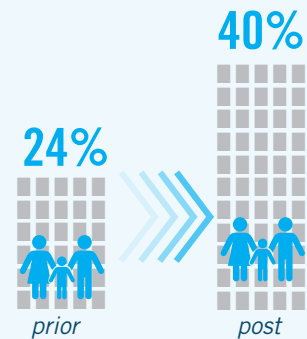


Evictions play a role in concentrating poverty in New York City. Renters who are evicted are more likely to live in a high-poverty neighborhood after moving than renters who did not move, regardless of where they lived prior.

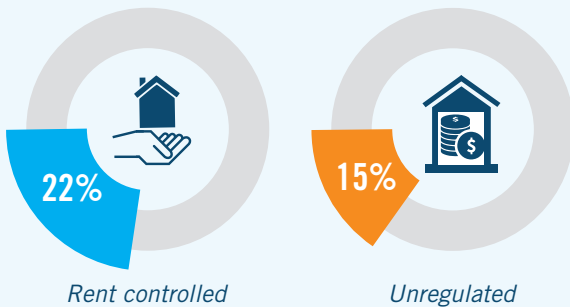
*Only 10 percent of evicted New York City families live in a high-poverty neighborhood at the time of eviction. After an eviction, the picture changes and the likelihood that evicted families live in high-poverty neighborhoods increases more than two-fold to 26 percent.*

Other types of moves related to high housing costs also concentrate poverty and disadvantage. Like forced movers, renters who move because they found more affordable housing face higher levels of disadvantage and end up in higher poverty neighborhoods after moving.

*Households that moved voluntarily because they found a more affordable apartment were the most likely to end up in a high-poverty neighborhood at (40 percent). Prior to moving, only 24 percent of these renters lived in a high-poverty neighborhood.*



*Forced Moves*



Rental protections help curb rates of forced relocation but are not fully protective. Moving is slightly less common among families with rent control and stabilization (12 percent) versus households in unregulated apartments (14 percent). But among those who move, families with these protections are more likely to be forced out of their housing (22 percent versus 15 percent). Rates of forced moves would likely be even higher among these families absent rental protections, but that does not mean this this group is completely shielded from displacement.

*Among those who move, families with rental protections are more likely to be forced out of their housing (22 percent versus 15 percent).*

This Poverty Tracker analysis reveals that New Yorkers who endure a forced move already face disadvantage on multiple fronts, so these moves serve to concentrate disadvantage and widen the opportunity gap between neighborhoods. This is also true for renters who move to find more affordable housing. These moves — whether forced or voluntary — are serving to concentrate disadvantage and widen the opportunity gap between neighborhoods and dampen prospects for families. Rental protections and affordable housing policies must be bolstered if they are to fully counter the trends and consequences of forced relocation and high housing costs in New York City.

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# Introduction

Recent work by scholar Matthew Desmond and others highlights how the gaps between neighborhoods grow when low-income residents are displaced from higher-income neighborhoods through evictions, foreclosures, or other forms of “forced moves.” While people who are better off voluntarily move to neighborhoods with more opportunity, those who are forced to leave often end up in neighborhoods with lower performing schools, higher crime rates, and fewer job opportunities. Like any form of inequality, neighborhood stratification is a problem with far-reaching consequences, particularly with regard to future income opportunities for young children living in or relocating to neighborhoods with more challenges.<sup>4</sup> Understanding trends in both voluntary and forced relocation is key for policymakers who want to close the opportunity gap between neighborhoods and ensure that New Yorkers have access to stable housing, which is an essential building block for economic and social mobility.

In this brief, we take a first look at the prevalence of forced moves in New York City using data from the Poverty Tracker, one of the only local surveys in the country that captures information on evictions and other types of moves alongside data on poverty, material hardship, health problems, and a host of other measures of well-being. Further, this information is collected both before and after a move. This data allows the Poverty Tracker to trace the trajectories of renters who are forced out of their housing in order to determine whether evictions and other types of forced moves are further concentrating poverty and disadvantage in New York City. Lastly, we examine the current policies that protect renters and these policies’ efficacy in countering broader trends in forced relocation. [More specifically, we answer the following questions:](#)

- How common are forced moves among New York City’s renters?
- How are those who are forced to move faring with regard to the Poverty Tracker’s key measures of disadvantage?
- Are particular demographic groups overrepresented among those who are forced to move?
- Do forced moves in New York City deepen the inequality between neighborhoods?
- Do housing policies like rent control and rent stabilization help protect renters from forced moves?

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<sup>4</sup>Chetty, R. & Hendren, N. (2018). “The impacts of neighborhoods on intergenerational mobility I: Childhood exposure effects.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(3), 1107-1162.

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We begin by explaining how the Poverty Tracker measures forced moves and then turn to our results.

Launched in 2012, the Poverty Tracker is a groundbreaking study of disadvantage in New York City. Unlike typical surveys of poverty that take an annual snapshot, the Poverty Tracker checks in with the same 4,000 households, quarter after quarter, for several years, providing a unique lens on the dynamics of poverty and other forms of disadvantage over time.

## The Poverty Tracker's Measure of Forced Moves

Unstable housing conditions and forced moves are closely tied to experiences of poverty and hardship in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Knowing this, the Poverty Tracker housing module was designed to understand the nature of moving in New York City, particularly moves that are forced.<sup>6</sup> The Poverty Tracker uses the classification of types of moves employed in the Milwaukee Area Renters Study, a project led by Matthew Desmond.

### DESMOND'S TYPOLOGY GROUPS MOVES INTO THE FOLLOWING THREE CATEGORIES:



#### Forced Moves

Moves due to eviction (formal or informal), building foreclosures, building sales, and building condemnations.



#### Responsive Moves

Moves in response to housing or neighborhood conditions, such as rent hikes, neighborhood violence, and maintenance issues.



#### Voluntary Moves

Intentional and unforced moves, often with a quality of life improvement, such as moving closer to work or moving to a larger or more affordable apartment.

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<sup>5</sup>Desmond, M. (2016).

<sup>6</sup>The Poverty Tracker's housing module is included on the 21-month and 33-month Poverty Tracker surveys. The results that we present in this brief are based on a two-year average of reports of moves in the 12 months prior to the 21-month and 33-month surveys.

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In the Poverty Tracker’s housing module, all respondents were asked if they moved in the 12 months prior to the survey. Those who moved were given a list of possible reasons and asked, *did any of the following contribute to your most recent move?*



Moves were categorized as **forced** if respondents gave at least one of the following reasons for moving:

- The landlord told you or the person you were staying with to leave
- You or the person you were staying with missed a rent payment and you thought you might be evicted
- The house or apartment went into foreclosure
- The city condemned the building
- You were evicted
- The landlord was harassing you



Moves were categorized as **responsive** if respondents gave at least one of the following reasons for moving:<sup>7</sup>

- The landlord raised the rent
- The neighborhood was dangerous
- The landlord wouldn’t fix anything and your place was getting run down



Moves were categorized as **voluntary** if respondents gave at least one of the following reasons for moving:<sup>8</sup>

- You wanted to be closer to work/easier commute
- You found a more affordable house or apartment

With this question and with other Poverty Tracker data, we can determine how many New York City families and individuals move per year and the rate of forced moves relative to other types of moves. Our results cover moves that occurred between 2016 and 2017, as well as moves between 2017 and 2018.

For the remainder of the report, we focus on New York City’s renters — about 65 percent of the city’s households. Although some homeowners are also burdened by housing costs and can face forced moves due to foreclosure, overall the city’s renters are both more mobile and more vulnerable to forced moves.

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<sup>7</sup>This group was limited to respondents who did not select any of the reasons for moving that could have been classified as forced.

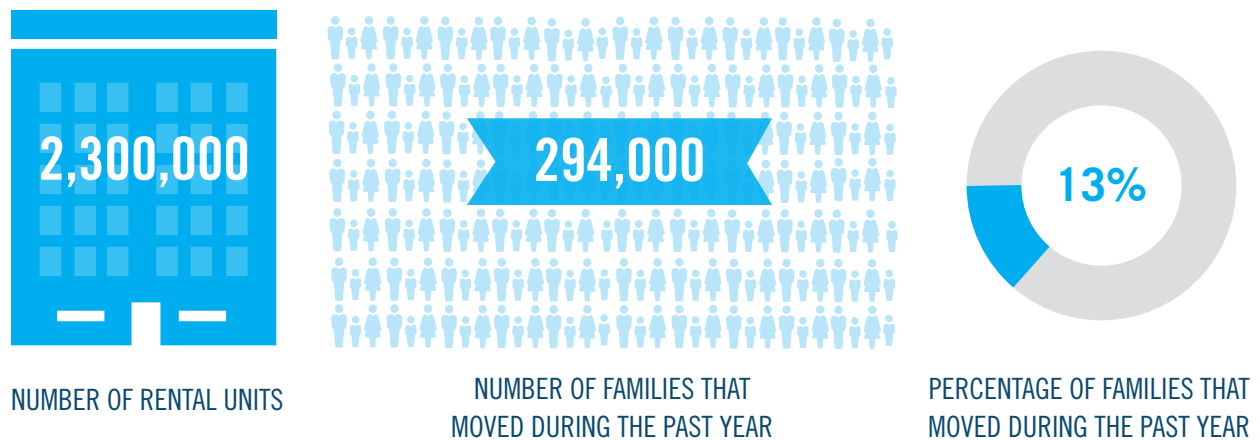
<sup>8</sup>This group was limited to respondents who did not select any of the reasons for moving that could have been classified as forced or responsive.

## How common are forced moves among New York City's renters?

According to the latest Poverty Tracker data, about 13 percent of families<sup>9</sup> in rental housing move within a given year (Figure 1).<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1

### Prevalence of Moving among New York City Families (Two-Year Average)

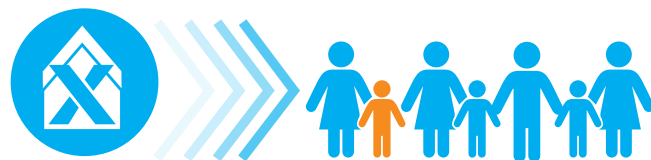


Nineteen percent of these families that move, or about 56,000 families, are forced to move out of their homes (Figure 2). This translates to more than 100,000 New Yorkers being forced to move, and nearly one in seven of these was a child under age 13.<sup>11</sup> Responsive moves are also quite common in New York City, comprising almost 25 percent of moves. Just over half of moves by families in rental housing in New York City are voluntary.

More than

**100,000**

New Yorkers were forced to move within a given year, and nearly **1 in 7** of these was a child under age 13.



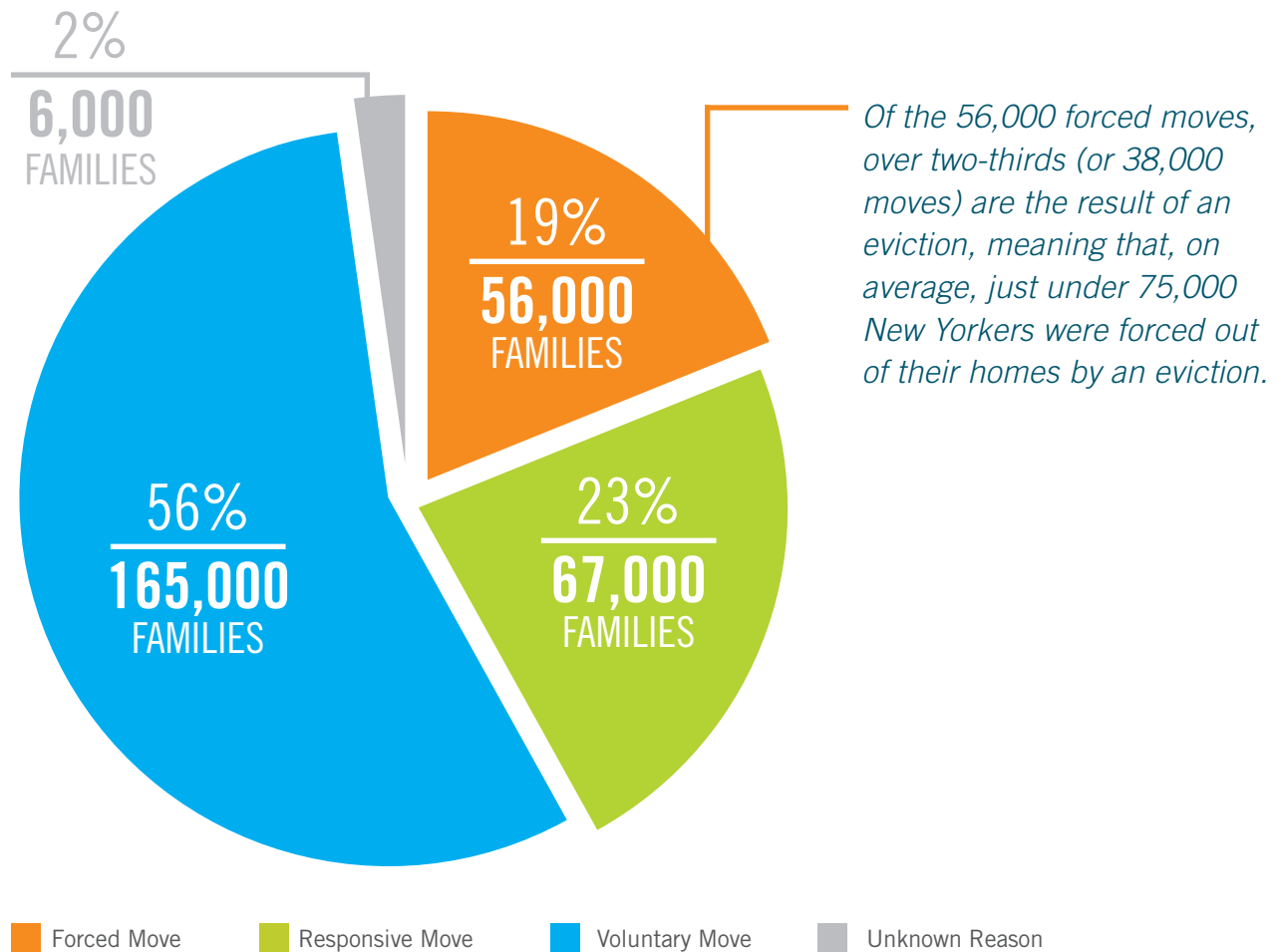
<sup>9</sup>The Poverty Tracker allows us to identify if a respondent moved; we assume that respondents' family members move with them, but know that there are also instances where families are divided during moves (e.g., through divorce). Our weights do not adjust for moves that divide families until the annual survey, but when testing these results with adjusted weights, our topline results remain steady.

<sup>10</sup>This estimate is based on a two-year average of reports of moves by Poverty Tracker respondents on the 21-month and 33-month surveys. (See Appendix C for additional details) The Poverty Tracker estimate is quite close to the estimate from the 2013 New York City sample from the American Housing Survey, which found that about 11 percent of New York City families who rented their housing moved in 2012.

<sup>11</sup>Of the 100,000 New Yorkers who were forced to move, approximately 20,000 were children under 18 and 16,000 were children under 13.

Figure 2

## Prevalence of Forced, Responsive, and Voluntary Moves in New York City among Families in Rental Housing



Of the 56,000 forced moves, over two-thirds (or 38,000 moves) are the result of an eviction, including formal and informal evictions, meaning that, on average, just under 75,000 New Yorkers were forced out of their homes by an eviction in the 12-month periods we examined.<sup>12</sup> The remaining forced moves are driven by building foreclosures, condemnations, sales, and harassment by the landlord (Table 1).<sup>13</sup>



<sup>12</sup>Note that these results only capture evictions that ended in a move; additional families had evictions filed against them but were not forced to move. According to administrative estimates, there were 21,074 evictions and 2,183,064 occupied rental units in New York City in 2017 (authors calculations based on reports in: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/065-18/de-blasio-administration-reports-record-27-decrease-evictions-access-legal-assistance-for> and <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/rentguidelinesboard/pdf/18HSR.pdf>), meaning approximately 1 percent of New York City renters were evicted from their housing unit in that year. In the years before the 21-month and the 33-month Poverty Tracker surveys, 1 percent of Poverty Tracker families in rental housing were formally evicted, on average, meaning that the Poverty Tracker estimates match the rate calculated from administrative data (1 percent).

<sup>13</sup>See the share of forced moves by each type in Appendix A.



Table 1

## Composition of Forced Moves among New York City Rental Families

		
	NUMBER OF FAMILIES	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES THAT MOVED
Evictions (Formal and Informal)	38,000	68%
<i>Formal Eviction Reported</i>	26,000	46%
<i>Informal Eviction Reported</i>	12,000	21%
Other Forced Moves	18,000	32%
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF FORCED MOVES</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

## How are those who are forced to move faring with regard to the Poverty Tracker's key measures of disadvantage?

In Table 2, we present the rates of poverty, material hardship,<sup>14</sup> and health problems — the Poverty Tracker's key measures of disadvantage — for New York City renters who relocated.<sup>15</sup> We disaggregate these measures by type of move and compare these rates to those of New York City renters who did not move. We also look at experiences of mental health (as measured by the Kessler-6 Distress Scale<sup>16</sup>), and rent burden.<sup>17</sup> Note that for movers, these results reference the period before a move. We find that:

Renters who are forced to move are **significantly more likely to have experienced poverty, material hardship, and health problems than those who move for other reasons** (i.e., responsive and voluntary movers). The profile of disadvantage among forced movers is more similar to those renters who did not move. These results suggest that both voluntary and responsive movers are, on average, less disadvantaged than other renters, particularly when it comes to health status. This makes sense, as these movers have made a choice to move and have the resources and ability to do so.

<sup>14</sup>We measure material hardship in five domains: food, housing, bills, medical care, and general financial hardship.

<sup>15</sup>Note that here and for the next two sections of this report we examine the experiences of adult renters (as opposed to families). We focus on adults as the Poverty Tracker collects most information at the individual level.

<sup>16</sup>The measure of mental illness used here is the K-6 nonspecific distress scale. It is used to identify serious mental illness that would meet the criteria of a DSM-IV disorder. Prochaska, J. J., Sung, H. Y., Max, W., Shi, Y. & Ong, M. (2012). Validity study of the K-6 scale as a measure of moderate mental distress based on mental health treatment need and utilization. *International journal of methods in psychiatric research*, 21(2), 88-97.

<sup>17</sup>A renter is defined as rent burdened if their household's total annual rental payments exceed 30 percent of their household's annual cash income.

Renters who are forced out of their housing are **more likely to have faced a mental health issue (22 percent) than both renters who did not move and voluntary movers (9 percent and 7 percent)**. Mental health issues flagged by the Kessler-6 scale include depression and anxiety disorders, among others classified in the DSM-IV.<sup>18</sup> Note that these results are the first of their kind as the Poverty Tracker is the first survey to capture indicators of mental distress alongside data on forced moves and eviction. Due to small sample size, these results should be interpreted with caution, but we will continue to produce this estimate to see if it holds true in future years.

Compared to all other renters, **over half of those who are forced to move were rent burdened before moving**, which speaks to a correlation between the lack of affordable housing and forced relocation. Rent burden, however, is notably high among all renters, including those who move voluntarily.

Table 2

Rates of Disadvantage by Type of Move among New York City Renters

Prior to Move...	Renters Who Moved			Renters Who Didn't Move
	Forced	Responsive	Voluntary	
Poverty	29%	23%	13%	25%
Material Hardship	55%	39%	30%	41%
Health Problems	36%	12%	7%	25%
Serious Mental Illness	22%	13%	7%	9%
Rent Burden	53%	32%	34%	43%

## Are particular demographic groups overrepresented among those who are forced to move?

Like many challenges faced by New Yorkers, forced moves are more common among some groups than others. To identify these groups, we compare the composition of renters who move by type of move to renters who did not move (see Table A2 in Appendix A for this compositional analysis).

<sup>18</sup>Stein, D. J., Phillips, K. A., Bolton, D., Fulford, K. W. M., Sadler, J. Z. & Kendler, K. S. (2010). "What is a mental/psychiatric disorder?" From DSM-IV to DSM-V. *Psychological Medicine*, 40(11), 1759-1765.

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## We find that:

Looking at age, those who are **forced to move** are similar to those renters who do not move, while responsive movers and voluntary movers are generally younger.

The racial composition of the population that is **forced to move** compared to renters who do not move is again largely similar. Among voluntary movers, on the other hand, white New Yorkers are overrepresented. Nearly half of voluntary movers were white, while this population makes up about a quarter of renters who did not move.

Renters with a high school degree or less are overrepresented among those forced to move. **Over half of the adults who are forced to move have a high school degree or less;** this group makes up under half of nonmovers and about a quarter of voluntary movers.

New Yorkers who are foreign born do not appear to be overrepresented in the population of forced movers.

Our findings on the demographic composition of the group of **New Yorkers who are forced to move indicate that they are generally similar to New York City renters who do not move, with the important exception of education levels,** a demographic characteristic that is highly correlated with income levels, poverty, and disadvantage.

## Do forced moves in New York City deepen the inequality between neighborhoods?

Using data from the Milwaukee Area Renters study, Matthew Desmond and Tracey Shollenberger find that “renters who experienced a forced move relocate to poorer and higher-crime neighborhoods than those who move under less-demanding circumstances...implying that involuntary displacement is a critical yet overlooked mechanism of neighborhood inequality.”<sup>19</sup> With Poverty Tracker data, we are able to test if this trend is true of renters in New York who are forced to relocate compared to their neighbors who did not move.

For this analysis, we have pulled out renters who were evicted from the larger category of forced movers. We also pulled out voluntary movers who moved because they found a more affordable apartment from the larger category of voluntary movers, given that their trajectories run counter to what we would have expected of voluntary movers more generally.

In Figure 3, we present the likelihood that a renter will live in a high-poverty neighborhood<sup>20</sup> before and after a move, by type of move. **New York renters who are evicted are, on average, less likely to live in a high-poverty neighborhood before being evicted than the average New York City renter who doesn't move (10 percent vs. 19 percent). After an eviction, the picture changes. The likelihood that a renter lives in a high-poverty neighborhood increases to 26 percent post-eviction** (which is significantly higher than the average New York City renter who does not move). This finding falls in line with reports of tenants being pushed out of gentrifying

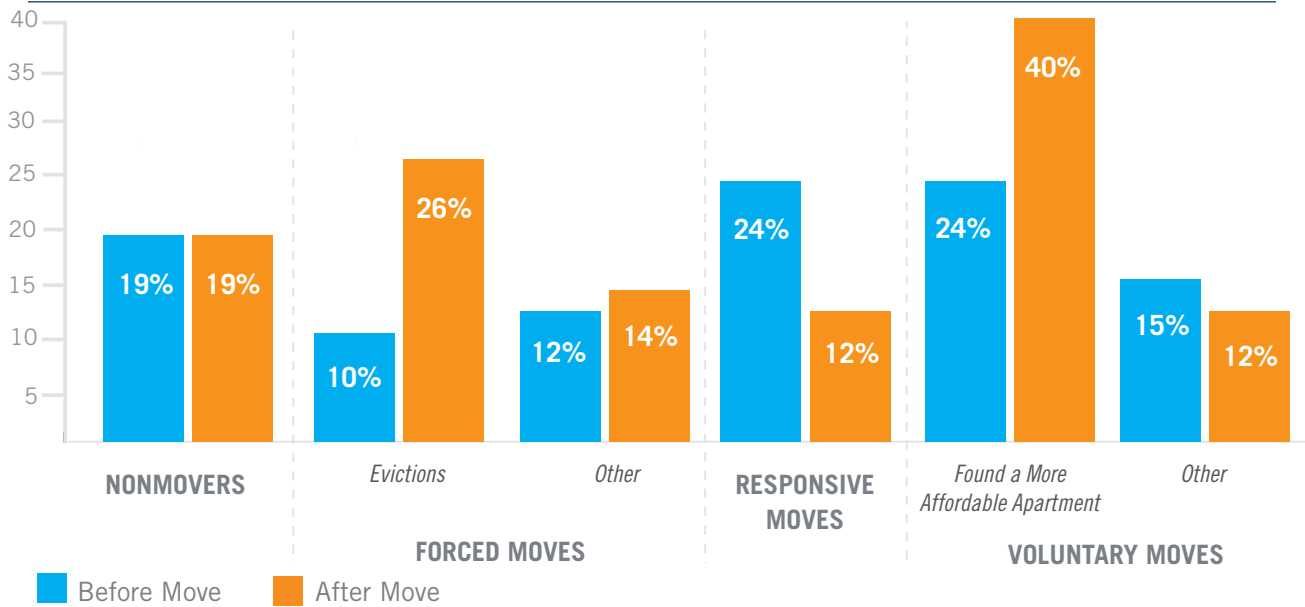
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<sup>19</sup>Desmond, M. & Shollenberger, T. (2015). “Forced displacement from rental housing: Prevalence and neighborhood consequences.” *Demography*, 52(5), 1751-1772.

<sup>20</sup>We define high-poverty neighborhoods as zip codes where more than 30 percent of residents live below the Official Poverty Measure.

Figure 3

Probability of Living in a High-Poverty Neighborhood before and after a Move by Type



neighborhoods. Forced movers who move for reasons other than formal or informal eviction are not significantly more likely to end up in a higher poverty neighborhood, but the sample size for this group is small and these results should be interpreted with caution.

Another finding of note concerns the trajectories of voluntary movers who move because they found a more affordable apartment; this group makes up about **34 percent of households that move voluntarily — translating to roughly 60,000 New Yorkers, a quarter of whom are children under the age of 13.**<sup>21</sup> Renters in this group are already more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods before moving; and the likelihood that they live in a high-poverty neighborhood after moving, regardless of the neighborhood they started in or demographic characteristics, is 40 percent — the highest among all renters. We have also examined these movers’ experiences with disadvantage and found that they are very likely to be rent burdened and in material hardship before moving — among renters who move to find a more affordable apartment, nearly half are in poverty, 48 percent face material hardship, and 75 percent are rent burdened (see Table B1 in Appendix B).

60,000 New Yorkers moved because they found more affordable housing. This group was the most likely to end up in a high-poverty neighborhood after moving (40 percent).

<sup>21</sup>The Milwaukee Area Renters Study from which the typology of forced, voluntary, and responsive moves emerged does not ask renters if they moved because they found a more affordable apartment. For this reason, this type of move has not been formally designated as “responsive” or “voluntary” in the literature, and it could arguably be classified as either. Regardless, the experiences and trajectories of movers in this group are different from other voluntary and responsive movers.

We also find that 62 percent of renters who move for this reason live below 200 percent of the poverty line. These “voluntary movers” are thus not immune to the pressures of the housing market, and their trajectories do not fit the rosier picture of moving to improve one’s quality of life that is thought to typify a voluntary move. Renters who move voluntarily for reasons other than finding a more affordable apartment, however, are less likely to live in a high-poverty neighborhood before moving and typically end up in low-poverty neighborhoods after moving.

Finally, responsive movers (i.e., those who move in response to neighborhood conditions or maintenance issues) begin in significantly higher-poverty neighborhoods before moving, compared to the average renter who does not move, but are significantly less likely to live in a high-poverty neighborhood after a move.

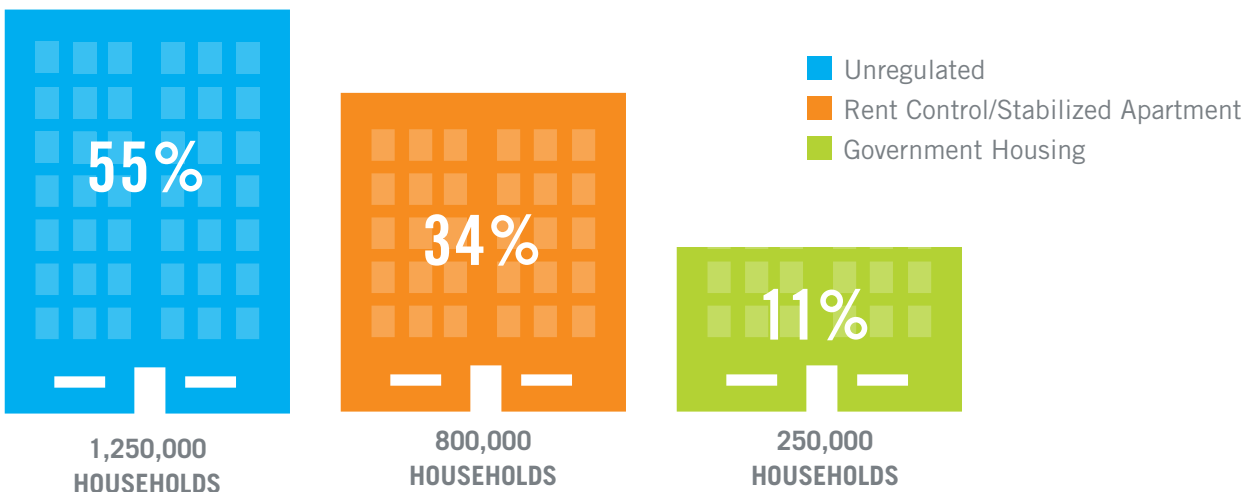
**These results suggest that renters who endure a move due to high housing costs in New York City are more likely to be pushed into higher-poverty neighborhoods when they move; a forced move through eviction is one way that this happens, but simply finding more affordable housing when your own has become unaffordable is another.** Those who have the ability to move in response to neighborhood conditions (responsive movers) and those who move voluntarily for reasons other than housing costs, on the other hand, end up in lower-poverty neighborhoods. Both of these trends appear to be playing a role in deepening inequality between neighborhoods.

## Do rental protections help curb the rates of forced moves?

So far, this report has looked at the experiences and trajectories of renters who are forced to move in New York City in order to better understand the challenges they face and what happens to them after a forced move. Here, we turn to housing policies in New York City in order to understand how they interact with trends in forced relocation. We examine whether rent control and stabilization laws that restrict rents that landlords can charge might limit forced moves and moves more generally. To begin, we categorized families in

Figure 4

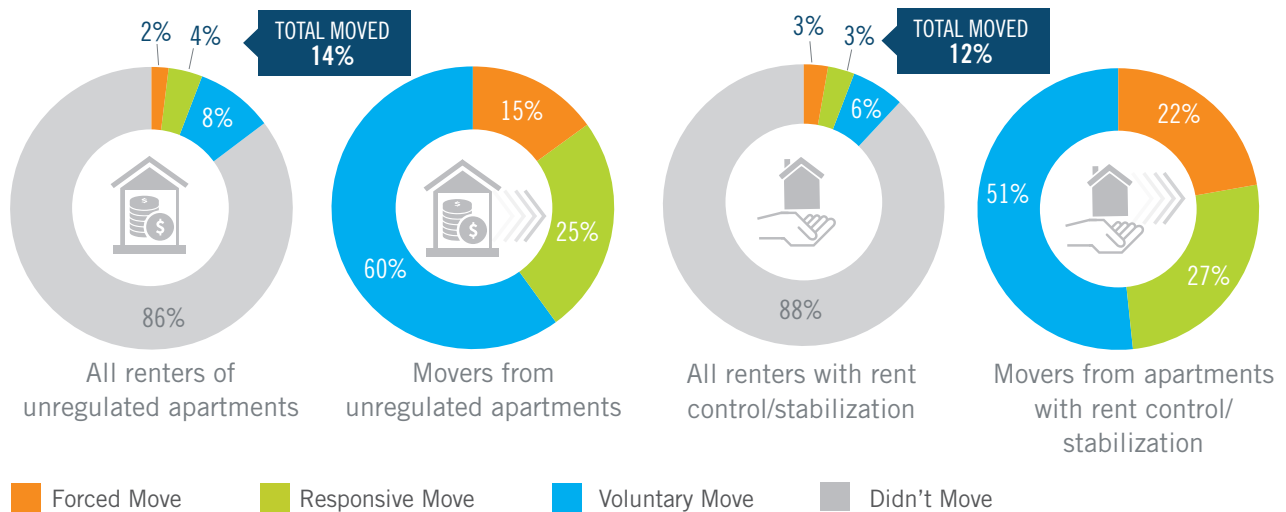
### Prevalence of Rental Protections in New York City



rental housing by type of rental protection or lack thereof. Figure 4 shows that roughly half of New York City families in rental units live in an unregulated apartment, and the other 45 percent have some type of rental protection: 34 percent live in rent controlled or rent stabilized units, and the remaining 11 percent live in government housing (defined as living in a public housing unit or receiving a Section-8 voucher). This might underestimate the share of families with rent control or stabilization, however, given that the Poverty Tracker relies on self-reports, and many may not be fully aware of their status.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 5

### Rental Protections, Moving, and Forced Moves



While 13 percent of New York City families in rental housing moved within the 12-month periods examined, this rate varies by housing type: 14 percent of families in unregulated units moved and 12 percent in rent controlled or stabilized units moved. Though these differences are small, they suggest that families with rent control or stabilized apartments have housing arrangements that are slightly more stable than they would be if their apartments were unregulated (Figure 5).

Families who moved from rent controlled or stabilized apartments are more likely to be forced out of their housing (22 percent) than families moving from unregulated apartments (15 percent).

<sup>22</sup>According to the 2017 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS), for instance, approximately 46 percent of New York City renter-occupied apartments were rent stabilized or controlled. The lower rates of rent control and stabilization reported in the Poverty Tracker may be due to the fact that some respondents are not the leaseholder for their apartment and might be unaware that the apartment is protected by these policies. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hpd/downloads/pdf/about/rent-regulation-memo-1.pdf>

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Looking specifically at families in rental housing who moved, however, we found that 22 percent of moves from rent controlled or stabilized apartments were forced — meaning forced moves were more common among families moving from rent controlled or stabilized apartments than families moving from unregulated apartments; 15 percent of moves from unregulated apartments were forced (Figure 5). On the other hand, rent control and stabilization are associated with lower levels of responsive moves, which makes sense as these policies hold rents down and thus renters are less likely to give up these housing protections in response to neighborhood conditions. When times are tight, however, making a rent payment, even one that is regulated through rent control or stabilization, is a challenge. Anecdotal stories of tenants with rent controlled apartments in gentrifying neighborhoods being pushed out are common, and our results follow this narrative.

Overall, rent control and stabilization appear to be protective, such that tenants are not constantly in search of more affordable housing; rent control and stabilization are also associated with housing stability, evidenced by the fact that families in rent controlled or stabilized apartments are slightly less likely to move than those in unregulated apartments. And while it is highly probable that there would be more evictions among tenants of rent controlled apartments absent rent control, these tenants are still subject to elevated rates of forced moves. This finding is important for policymakers currently considering strengthening New York State’s rent stabilization laws. These efforts present an opportunity to improve how rental regulations can serve to limit forced relocations and thus increase housing stability, an essential building block for escaping poverty.

#### **MOVES AMONG RESIDENTS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSING**

We also found that 4 percent of families in government housing moved in a 12-month period, and evidence suggests that the most common type of move for these families was a responsive move. We have not highlighted these results due to the Poverty Tracker’s small sample size of government housing residents that moved, but we are interested to see if this finding remains true as we collect more data on moves in New York City.

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## Conclusion

This brief takes a first look at New York City renters who are forced out of their housing through evictions and other types of forced moves. The Poverty Tracker is the first local survey to capture data on evictions and other types of moves in New York City alongside data on general demographics, poverty, material hardship, health problems, and a host of other measures of well-being. Further, this information is collected before and after a move. Thus, the data we present here is truly a first look at the composition and actual experiences of this population. We find that before moving, individuals who are forced to move are, on average, more likely to be in poverty, material hardship, suffer health problems, and be rent burdened in comparison with all other renters. And after moving, renters who are forced out of their housing through evictions are more likely to reside in a high-poverty neighborhood than the average renter who does not move, suggesting that evictions play a role in widening inequality between neighborhoods; evicted tenants who are more likely to be in poverty and material hardship often end up moving to neighborhoods where poverty is more common, thus further concentrating disadvantage in New York City. This also appears to be true of New Yorkers seeking more affordable housing, perhaps to avoid an eviction down the road. Lastly, we ask, can rent control and stabilization policy counter these trends? Our results suggest that tenants with rent control are less likely to move compared to market-rent tenants but are more likely to experience a forced move. It is highly probable that forced moves would be more common among this group if their apartment was not under rent control, but that does not mean that they are fully protected from forced relocation. Our findings speak to the need for housing policies that protect vulnerable tenants from housing instability and forced relocation when their rent becomes unaffordable.



# Appendix A.

## Forced Moves by Type

Table A1

### Forced moves by type

Type	Number of Families	Share of Forced Moves
Formal Eviction	26,000	46%
Informal Eviction	12,000	22%
<i>Landlord Told Tenant to Leave</i>	7,000	13%
<i>Missed Rent and Feared Eviction</i>	5,000	9%
Building Condemned	2,000	3%
Building Went into Foreclosure	1,000	1%
Landlord Sold Building	4,000	8%
Landlord Harassed Tenant	6,000	10%
Other Form of Forced Displacement	6,000	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table A2

### Demographic composition of the population of renters who move by type of move

	Renters Who Move			Renters Who Didn't Move
	Forced	Responsive	Voluntary	
<b>Age</b>				
18 to 44	54%	77%	85%	52%
44 to 64	31%	18%	14%	35%
65 +	14%	5%	1%	14%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Black	30%	19%	30%	30%
White	36%	39%	47%	26%
Hispanic	34%	42%	23%	44%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
High School or Less	55%	33%	25%	47%
Some College	14%	27%	27%	27%
College +	31%	40%	48%	27%
<b>Immigration Status</b>				
Foreign Born	51%	51%	46%	51%

## Appendix B.

### Rates of Disadvantage and Demographic Composition of New York City Renters Who Move to More Affordable Housing

Table B1

Rates of disadvantage among New York City renters who move to more affordable housing

Prior to Move...	Forced Movers	Found a More Affordable Apartment	Renters Who Didn't Move
Poverty Status	29%	49%	25%
Material Hardship	55%	48%	41%
Health Problems	36%	3%	25%
Faced a Severe Mental Health Problem	22%	9%	9%
Rent Burdened	53%	75%	43%

Table B2

Demographic composition of New York City renters who move to more affordable housing

	Eviction (Formal and Informal)	Found a More Affordable Apartment	Renters who Didn't Move
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 44	50%	89%	52%
44 to 64	30%	11%	35%
65 +	19%	0%	14%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Black	33%	34%	30%
White	28%	19%	26%
Hispanic	39%	47%	44%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
High School or Less	65%	49%	47%
Some College	15%	28%	27%
College +	20%	23%	27%
<b>Immigration Status</b>			
Foreign Born	49%	50%	50%

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# Appendix C.

## Data and Methods

### Data

All estimates in this report come from the second panel of the Poverty Tracker, a joint effort between Robin Hood and Columbia University. The second panel, which was recruited in 2015, consists of over 4,000 adults in New York City who are, as of this writing, surveyed every three months. Questions specific to forced moves and other types of moves are asked on the 21-month and 33-month surveys. Measures of poverty, material hardship, health, rent burden, and other demographic questions come from the baseline, 12-month, 24-month, and 36-month surveys, which are referred to as the annual surveys.

### Methods

Below, we describe the methods used to answer the different questions addressed in this report.

#### **How common are forced moves among New York City's renters?**

The prevalence of forced moves and other types of moves were calculated after categorizing the types of moves that respondents reported (as discussed in the body of this report). To determine the count of New Yorkers who experienced each type of move, we use the Poverty Tracker's longitudinal weights. For additional details on the construction of the Poverty Tracker's longitudinal weights, see Appendix B in the Spring 2014 Poverty Tracker report. Our reported estimates are based on a two-year average of reports of moves by Poverty Tracker respondents on the 21-month and 33-month surveys.

#### **How are those who are forced to move faring with regard to the Poverty Tracker's key measures of disadvantage?**

To measure the prevalence of poverty, material hardship, health problems, mental health problems, and rent burden among New Yorkers classified as forced movers relative to other renters and those who moved for other reasons, we used data on these forms of disadvantage that was captured on the annual survey prior to the respondent's reported move. Identifying the annual survey that a respondent took prior to a move required some additional analysis, described below.

The questions used to identify movers and the type of move they experienced are on the 21-month and 33-month surveys. The questions on these survey refer to any move in the 12 months prior to the survey. Thus, for a move reported on the 21-month survey, poverty status prior to move, for example, could be measured on the 12-month annual survey or the baseline survey depending on when the move occurred. The same is true for all other measures of disadvantage that are recorded on the annual surveys. To determine the period in which the move occurred, and thus identify which annual survey preceded the move, we looked for

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moves reported at each quarterly survey.<sup>23</sup> For movers identified on the 21-month survey who reported a move between the baseline and 12-month surveys, we used baseline reports of disadvantage as the status prior to moving, while for those who reported a move between the 12-month and 21-month surveys, we used reports of disadvantage from the 12-month survey. The same rule applied for movers identified at the 33-month survey, using the 12-month and 24-month surveys respectively.

### **Are particular demographic groups overrepresented among those who are forced to move?**

To answer this question, we examined the demographic characteristics of the population that was forced to move compared to the composition of the population of New York City renters who did not move in the period in question.

### **Do forced moves in New York City deepen the inequality between neighborhoods?**

For this analysis, we matched respondents with their zip code level poverty rate in the periods before moving and after moving. Data on zip code level poverty rates came from the American Fact Finder tables that source the American Community Survey. We then categorized respondents as living in a high-poverty neighborhood if over 30 percent of residents of their zip code lived below the official poverty line. Using a logistic regression, we predicted the likelihood that a respondent lived in a high-poverty neighborhood in the period after moving using the type of move they experienced as our main explanatory variable. The model also included controls for the neighborhood poverty status of their neighborhood in the period before moving, as well as demographic controls for education, age, race, educational attainment, and immigration status. Using this logistic regression, we produced marginal predictions of the likelihood of living in a high-poverty neighborhood after moving based on the type of move that renters experienced.

### **Do rental protections help curb the rates of forced moves?**

To understand the relationship between rental protections and forced moves, we determined the prevalence of moving among those with rental protections compared to those who do not have rental protections and then determined the prevalence of different types of moves among movers in each group.

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<sup>23</sup>On every quarterly survey, we learn if a respondent moved in the three months prior, but we do not collect information on the type of move (forced, responsive, or voluntary) on these surveys.

<sup>2</sup><https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<sup>3</sup>A binary indicator of living in a high-poverty neighborhood in the period prior to the move.