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### **In the face of homelessness crisis, advocates release citywide mapping tool to combat source of income discrimination**

*Unlock NYC and Neighbors Together launch an interactive tool to map source of income discrimination in New York City.*

New York City, NY: We are facing a humanitarian crisis, with unprecedented rent hikes and homelessness rates not seen since the Great Depression. Source of income (SOI) discrimination perpetuates homelessness by preventing New Yorkers on rental assistance from moving out of shelters and into permanent, stable housing. Today, Unlock NYC and Neighbors Together announced the launch of the Mapping SOI Discrimination tool, which visualizes over 1,500 SOI discrimination reports crowdsourced since January 2018. With the help of this new tool, policymakers, advocates, and members of the public may check the number of reports of source of income (SOI) discrimination by council district, explore prevalent denial tactics in their neighborhood, and compare rates of discrimination across the city.

The SOI Mapping tool reveals that tenants have faced discrimination in all five boroughs, and every single City Council district. Despite their best efforts, tenants with rental assistance vouchers face denials everywhere they look. Even after winning an increase to voucher payment standards in 2021, voucher holders are still locked out of high-income neighborhoods. As an example, Lower Manhattan had fewer reports, indicating that voucher holders are less likely to apply for apartments in wealthy neighborhoods.

An online soft launch of the mapping tool was held on March 6 for City Council members and advocates by Unlock NYC and Neighbors Together. Members of the organizations

shared their housing journey stories and explained the rampant discrimination voucher holders face every day when seeking housing. “Now, as I’m looking for a new place, I have to feel this way all over again. I have so much dread. Dealing with [another housing search] is going to send me back mentally...it’s just another setback”, said **Nailah, a member of the Unlock NYC Leadership Collective and a member-leader with Neighbors Together with a FHEPS voucher** .

Speaking to Council Members on how to deter brokers and landlords from discrimination against voucher holders, advocates spoke to the need to increase funding for the NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), the enforcement agency responsible for protecting tenants from SOI discrimination. “CCHR is a very important tool to ending source of income discrimination...because it’s not just about educating landlords, it’s also about landlords knowing there will be consequences.” **said Jasmine, a member-leader with Neighbors Together with a CityFHEPS voucher holder.** We urge our leaders to invest in New York City and house our neighbors. We are calling on the Mayor to double down on combating SOI discrimination by restoring funding to CCHR to pre-2019 levels, and to create flexible remote work policies and competitive salaries to attract a qualified workforce at critical social service agencies.

As part of Neighbors Together and Unlock NYC's effort, the map is intended to be used by policy makers as a tool to promote fair housing practices and advocate for policy changes that address source of income discrimination. **The Source of Income Discrimination mapping tool can be accessed by visiting <https://weunlock.nyc/data/soi-map>.**

About Unlock NYC: At Unlock NYC, we are creating fair, accountable, and effective housing searches by designing user-friendly tools so that New Yorkers with rental assistance vouchers can protect their right to a home.

About Neighbors Together: Neighbors Together is a soup kitchen and community center located in the heart of Brooklyn. Our mission is to end hunger and poverty in some of the lowest income areas of New York City through serving meals, providing social services, and engaging our members in organizing and advocacy efforts.