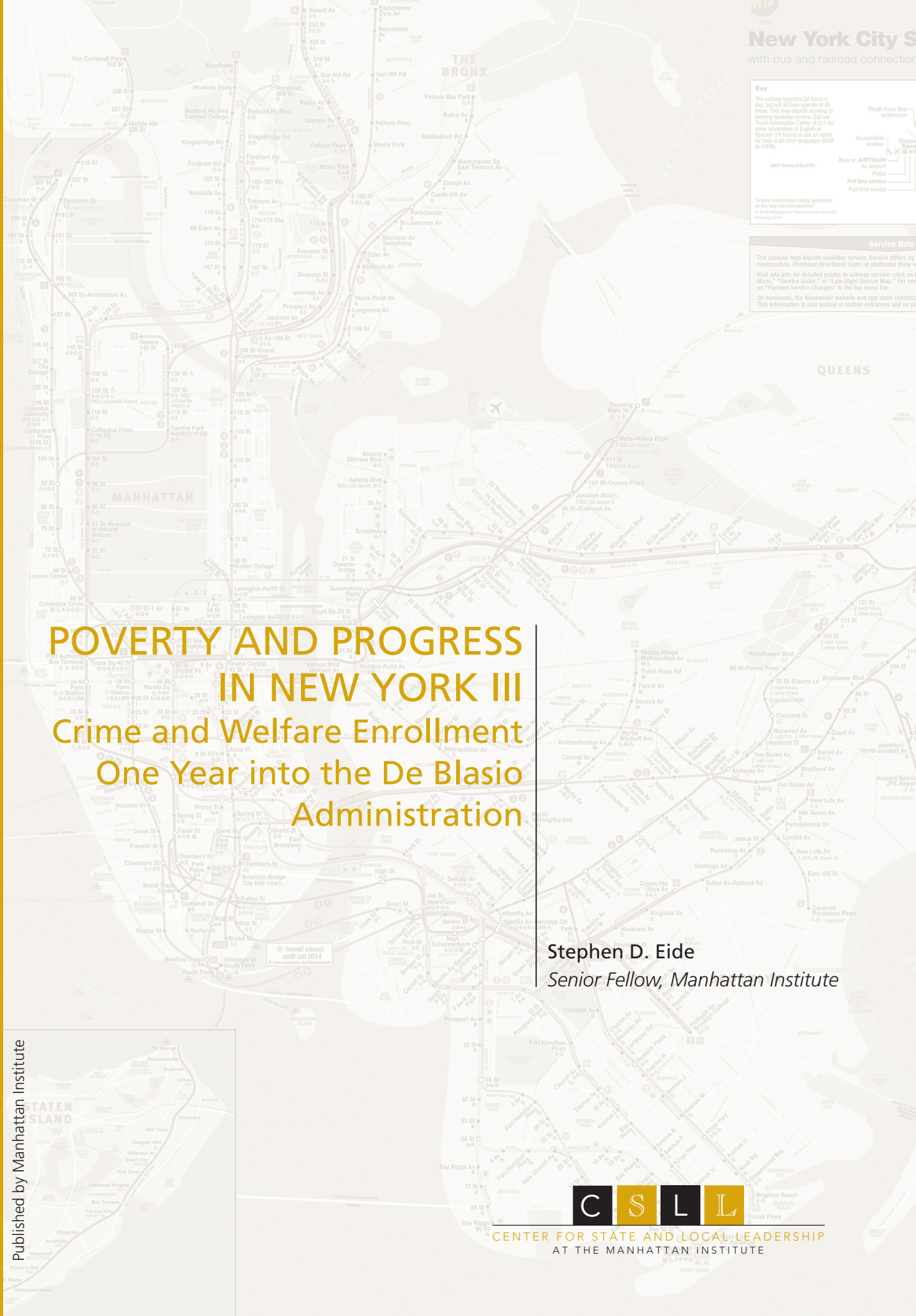


# POVERTY AND PROGRESS IN NEW YORK III Crime and Welfare Enrollment One Year into the De Blasio Administration

Stephen D. Eide  
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**Key**

The subway operates 24 hours a day, but not all lines operate at all times. This map depicts morning to evening weekday service. Call our Travel Information Center at 511 for more information in English or Spanish (24 hours) or ask an agent for help in all other languages (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.).

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To show service more clearly, geography on this map has been modified.  
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February 2014

**Service Notes**

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**Station**

Station Name  
Station Hours  
Station Access  
Station Transfer

**Service**

Bus or AIRTRAIN to airport  
Police  
Full time service  
Past time service  
Rush hour line extension  
Accessible station

Cover image: New York City Subway Map © Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Used with permission.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Mayor Bill de Blasio assumed office in January 2014, promising to “take dead aim at the Tale of Two Cities ... [and] put an end to economic and social inequalities that threaten to unravel the city we love.” With respect to public safety, this promise translated into a determination to continue the low crime rates of recent years through a modified version of the Giuliani and Bloomberg approaches to policing.

On welfare, de Blasio made a sharper break from the past. The overarching goals remain greater economic mobility and less government dependence. But these goals are to be achieved through a less “punitive” approach toward enforcing eligibility requirements and “more effective” employment programs that emphasize education and training over work experience.

This paper is the third installment in a series that has been tracking the effect of de Blasio’s policies at the neighborhood level. Focusing on the effect of initiatives on policing and public assistance, it examines how conditions in the poorest neighborhoods in the five boroughs have changed during 2014, the first year of the de Blasio administration. The paper also investigates citywide trends in arrests, data regarding potential racial bias in the police department, and rates of dependence on social assistance programs. Main findings include:

### **Welfare**

- New York City ended 2014 with more people on welfare than it began. Midyear, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) announced major changes to the city’s public assistance program; by the end of 2014, enrollment had grown by about 16,000 since the HRA announcement.
- This increase has come during a time of relative prosperity for the local economy, which added more than 90,000 jobs in 2014. Significant growth came in low-wage industries likely to hire welfare recipients. Throughout New York City’s history, the general tendency has been for welfare enrollment to decline as job numbers grow.
- Enrollment in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) proved more responsive to improved economic conditions, steadily declining throughout 2014.
- The number of public assistance recipients remains very low, by historical standards.

### **Policing**

- The year 2014 saw annual declines in six out of seven major crime categories. Murders reached historical lows.
- There are exceptions to the general good news on crime: 28 precincts saw at least one more murder in 2014 than in 2013; and total crime was up in 14 precincts. The lowest-income neighborhoods in the five boroughs remain far more dangerous than their high-income counterparts.
- In the ten lowest-income neighborhoods in the five boroughs, eight saw two or three more murders in 2014 than in 2013. Two experienced more total crime in 2014 than in 2013.
- Misdemeanor arrests, though higher than they were ten years ago, are currently on a downward trend. This includes arrests for many, though not all, “Broken Windows,” or quality-of-life, offenses such as drug possession.
- Civilian Complaint Review Board complaints and allegations of unnecessary or excessive use of force by police are trending down. The year 2014 saw fewer complaints against the NYPD than all but three of the last 16 years.
- Use of force in making misdemeanor arrests is extremely rare (2.2 percent) and trending down.
- With respect to allegations of racial bias, a comparison between victim-initiated and police-initiated misdemeanor arrests shows that police do not arrest minorities at a higher rate when acting on their own judgment than when responding to specific victim complaints.
- Crime is overwhelmingly more of a problem for poor minority neighborhoods, where the greatest demand for policing, measured by 911 calls, is found.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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POVERTY AND PROGRESS  
IN NEW YORK III  
CRIME AND WELFARE ENROLLMENT  
ONE YEAR INTO THE DE BLASIO  
ADMINISTRATION

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Stephen D. Eide

INTRODUCTION

During the 1960s and 1970s, several New York City neighborhoods fell into a state of decay that made them international symbols of America's urban crisis. The South Bronx, East New York, and Brownsville were as notorious as Detroit is now. Neighborhood leaders denounced city government's unresponsiveness and the inadequacy of public services, such as sanitation, police, fire control, and housing.

Today, fewer question New York's "governability." Members of the city's ascendant progressive movement charge that government has become overly assertive in certain areas and needs reining in. Major policy debates are under way about whether the de Blasio administration should adopt more lenient approaches toward policing and welfare.

This paper contributes to these debates by scrutinizing public safety and welfare data both citywide and for the poorest neighborhoods in the five boroughs.<sup>1</sup> With respect to policing, the overriding question is: Has the de Blasio administration delivered on its promise of a "fairer, safer city"? With respect to welfare, the question is: How have policy changes and economic conditions affected enrollment trends?

## I. CRIME

Crime remains in decline in New York City. Six out of seven “index” crime categories registered fewer instances in 2014 than 2013 (**Figure 1**). In terms of murders, a case could be made that not only did the de Blasio administration outperform the Bloomberg administration (however slightly—there were two fewer murders in 2014 than in 2013) but all previous administrations over at least the last half-century (**Figure 2**).<sup>2</sup>

The news on crime was not good in every detail: 2014 saw about 100 more shooting victims than 2013; 28 precincts saw at least one more murder in 2014 than in 2013; and total crime was up in 14 precincts (NYC has 77 police precincts). City-wide, the lowest-income neighborhoods remain far more dangerous than their high-income counterparts (**Figure 3**).

**Figure 4** reports crime trends in the lowest-income neighborhoods in the five boroughs for 2013 and 2014. Two such neighborhoods saw total crime rise, and eight experienced more murders in 2014 than in 2013.

Though the NYPD has crime trends generally headed in the right direction, many observers have called

for a change in strategy—specifically, targeting quality-of-life, or “Broken Windows,” policing. Broken Windows<sup>3</sup> attempts to meld crime prevention and order maintenance, the two traditional functions of police, into a unified policy. It is premised on a belief that governments can reduce murder and other serious crimes by addressing low-level crimes such as public urination and graffiti. Throughout the past two decades, the NYPD’s use of Broken Windows policing, along with other tactics like the data-and-accountability CompStat system, has coincided with a historic, across-the-board drop in crime citywide.

Broken Windows is often confused with zero tolerance or full enforcement policing. Architect George Kelling prefers to characterize it as “a tactic within

Figure 1. Crime in NYC, 2013–14

	2014	2013	# Change	% Change
Murder	333	335	-2	-0.6%
Rape	1,352	1,378	-26	-1.9%
Robbery	16,539	19,128	-2,589	-13.5%
Felonious Assault	20,207	20,297	-90	-0.4%
Burglary	16,765	17,429	-664	-3.8%
Grand Larceny	43,862	45,368	-1,506	-3.3%
Grand Larceny Auto	7,664	7,400	264	3.6%

Source: NYPD

Figure 2. NYC Murders, 1963–2014

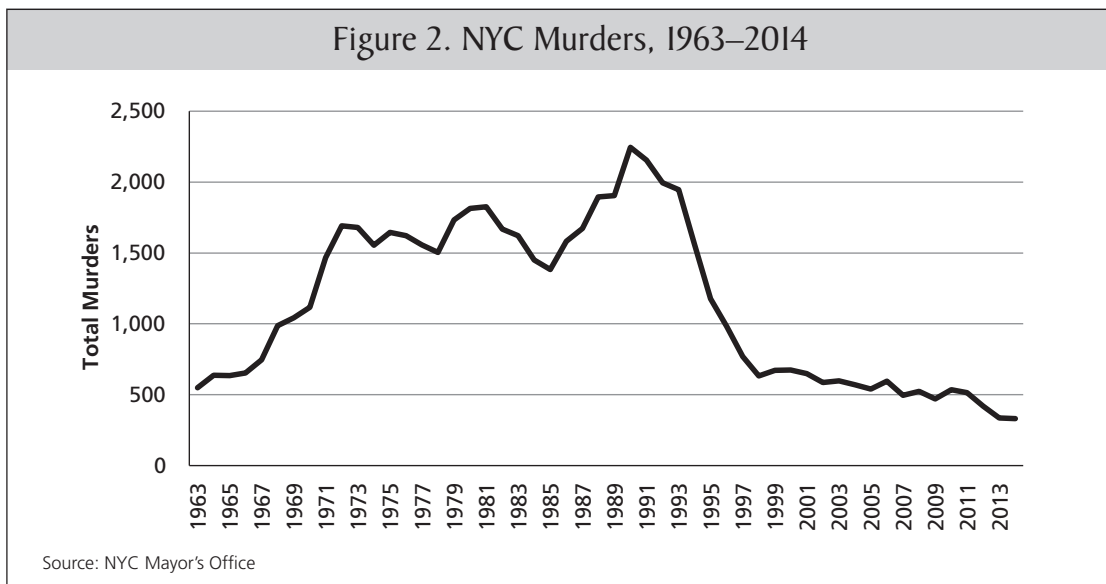




Figure 3. Crime Rate in Lowest- and Highest-Income Neighborhoods Across NYC\*

Community District	2010–12 Median Household Income	Precinct(s)	Lowest Income					Total Crimes per 100,000 Pop.	Neighborhood
			Current Population	2014 Murders	2014 Murders per 100,000 Pop.	2014 Total Crimes	2014 Total Crimes per 100,000 Pop.		
Bronx 1		40							
Bronx 2	\$20,867	41	157,954	11	7.0	2,940	1,861	Mott Haven, Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose	
Brooklyn 16	\$27,166	73	126,303	18	14.3	1,879	1,488	Brownsville & Ocean Hill	
Brooklyn 13	\$29,712	60	103,483	10	9.7	1,465	1,416	Brighton Beach & Coney Island	
Brooklyn 5	\$31,986	75	154,460	21	13.6	3,751	2,428	East New York & Starrett City	
Manhattan 11	\$31,079	25 and 23	119,618	9	7.5	2,047	1,711	East Harlem	
Manhattan 10	\$36,112	28 and 32	136,557	7	5.1	1,828	1,339	Central Harlem	
Queens 4	\$44,412	110	143,553	8	5.6	1,613	1,124	Elmhurst & South Corona	
Queens 3	\$46,119	115	185,815	6	3.2	1,888	1,016	Jackson Heights and North Corona	
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$31,533</b>		<b>140,055</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>1,884</b>	<b>1,452</b>		
			Highest Income						
Bronx 10	\$51,912	45	123,140	0	0.0	1,149	933	Co-op City, Pelham Bay & Schuylerville	
Bronx 8	\$53,595	50	107,360	1	0.9	973	906	Riverdale, Fieldston & Kingsbridge	
Brooklyn 18	\$61,273	63 and 69	202,762	6	3.0	2,364	1,166	Canarsie & Flatlands	
Brooklyn 2	\$71,754	79 and 84	127,080	12	9.4	2,706	2,129	Brooklyn Heights & Fort Greene	
Brooklyn 6	\$87,896	76 and 78	113,036	1	0.9	1,960	1,734	Park Slope, Carroll Gardens & Red Hook	
Manhattan 1		1							
Manhattan 2	\$111,579	6	151,858	2	1.3	2,783	1,833	Battery Park City, Greenwich Village & Soho	
Queens 11	\$74,143	111	120,614	0	0.0	881	730	Bayside, Douglaston & Little Neck	
Queens 13	\$76,168	105	198,944	7	3.5	1,743	876	Queens Village, Cambria Heights & Rosedale	
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$72,949</b>		<b>125,110</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1,852</b>	<b>1,050</b>		

\*Precinct and community borders for Manhattan 11 and 10 are approximate. Staten Island neighborhoods are not included because their community district and precinct borders vary too significantly to allow for accurate per-capita crime calculations.  
Source: NYPD and NYC Department of City Planning

Figure 4. Murders and Crime in Ten Lowest-Income Neighborhoods in Five Boroughs, 2013 vs. 2014\*

Community District	Precinct(s)	Murders 2013	Murders 2014	# Change	% Change	Total Crime 2013	Total Crime 2014	# Change	% Change
Bronx 1	40	8	7	-1	-12.5%	1,902	1,646	-256	-13.5%
Bronx 2	41	2	4	2	100.0%	1,760	1,294	-466	-26.5%
Manhattan 10	28 and 32	9	7	-2	-22.2%	1,920	1,819	-101	-5.3%
Manhattan 11	23 and 25	7	9	2	28.6%	2,173	2,047	-126	-5.8%
Brooklyn 16	73	15	18	3	20.0%	2,094	1,879	-215	-10.3%
Brooklyn 5	75	18	21	3	16.7%	3,902	3,751	-151	-3.9%
Brooklyn 13	60	8	10	2	25.0%	1,421	1,465	44	3.1%
Queens 3	115	3	6	3	100.0%	1,760	1,888	128	7.3%
Queens 4	110	6	8	2	33.3%	1,747	1,613	-134	-7.7%
Staten Island 1	120	4	7	3	75.0%	1,601	1,165	-436	-27.2%
<b>City</b>		<b>335</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>	<b>111,335</b>	<b>106,722</b>	<b>-4,613</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>

\*The borders of Staten Island 1 and Precinct 120 do not precisely align.  
Source: NYPD

community policing strategy<sup>4</sup> that emphasizes prevention and intervention over reaction and passivity.<sup>5</sup> All things being equal, total misdemeanor arrests will be higher through the application of Broken Windows, but more arrests for lower-level crimes are not the point. Not all cities and police departments that implement Broken Windows experience the same arrest rates. Arrests were crucial in eliminating “squeegee men” from New York City streets; addressing subway graffiti required other, non-law enforcement tactics after arrests proved futile.<sup>6</sup> The two most noteworthy Broken Windows-related initiatives of the de Blasio administration are cracking down on “showtime” subway performers and easing up on the possession of small amounts of marijuana.<sup>7</sup>

Demands to “end” Broken Windows intensified during the second half of 2014. Protests reached a climax in December, following the non-indictment of a police officer involved in the death of Eric Garner, a Staten Island man who had been resisting arrest for selling untaxed cigarettes. East New York Assembly member Charles Barron recommended firing Police Commissioner William Bratton.<sup>8</sup> The New York Civil Liberties Union and numerous other advocacy organizations have made scaling back Broken Windows central to their police-reform agenda.<sup>9</sup> Even some defenders of the NYPD and others on the political right now doubt the appropriateness of Broken Windows for a city so much safer than in the early 1990s, when the tactic was first adopted.<sup>10</sup>

As a candidate, Mayor de Blasio ran on a largely police-reform platform, but he has also long been on record as pro-Broken Windows. Even before being elected, he referred to himself as “someone who

does believe in the core notions of the Broken Windows theory.”<sup>11</sup> De Blasio reaffirmed this position by appointing William Bratton, Broken Windows’ most famous practitioner, to be his police commissioner,<sup>12</sup> as well as in several statements during the recent debate over policing policy.<sup>13</sup>

Broken Windows and all other elements of New York’s policing revolution, many of which de Blasio and Bratton have committed to preserving, adhere to a uniform standard of law and order for all neighborhoods. Historically in America, many poor minority communities suffered from a lack of police protection and under-enforcement of the law, in addition to the better-known threat of racially motivated police brutality.<sup>14</sup> In modern-day New York City, it remains true that, across virtually all crime categories, minorities are victimized at disproportionately high rates (**Figure 5**).

Demand for policing correlates closely with poverty in New York. Aside from Midtown South (a tourist-heavy commercial area), poor minority neighborhoods dominate the rankings of the top five busiest precincts (**Figure 6**). Comparing the ten lowest- and highest-income community districts across the five boroughs shows that demand (measured by 911 calls received) is much greater in the former than in the latter (**Figure 7**).

Broad, quantitative measures of current demand to address disorder in New York City, as distinct from crime, are not easy to locate.<sup>15</sup> As community policing, Broken Windows policy is supposed to be implemented through local precincts developing standards in cooperation with the neighborhoods that they serve. Standards of order will differ by

Figure 5. Minority Victimization Rates in NYC, 2013

	Share of City's Population	Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter Victims	Rape Victims	Robbery Victims	Felonious Assault Victims	Misdemeanor Assault and Related-Offense Victims	Shooting Victims
White Non-Hispanic	32.8%	7.2%	17.7%	16.7%	12.8%	14.4%	2.8%
Black Non-Hispanic	22.6%	62.9%	40.8%	33.4%	46.7%	42.4%	74.4%
Hispanic Origin	28.9%	25.2%	34.5%	36.7%	34.3%	36.1%	21.6%

Source: NYPD's 2013 "Crime and Enforcement Activity in New York City" Report

neighborhood, though it may be useful to note that high- and low-income neighborhoods register 311 complaints for graffiti at rates close to their respective shares of the city's total population (**Figure 8**).

Total arrests and misdemeanor arrests, though higher than they were ten years ago, have been on a downward trend since 2010 (**Figure 9**). In 2014, arrests for many, if not all, quality-of-life misdemean-

**Figure 6. Five Busiest Precincts in NYC, 2014\***

Precinct	Total 911 Calls	Neighborhood	Poverty Rate	White Non-Hispanic
75	118,107	East New York	31.5%	4.7%
40	116,479	South Bronx	43.2%	1.9%
14	110,318	Midtown South	14.4%	67.7%
43	104,718	Soundview, Castle Hill	29.0%	2.5%
73	100,966	Brownsville	36.7%	1.9%
<b>City</b>			<b>21.0%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>

\*Economic and demographic figures for Midtown South are approximate.  
Source: NYPD, NYC Department of City Planning, Furman Center

**Figure 7. 911 Calls in Lowest- and Highest-Income Neighborhoods in Five Boroughs, 2014\***

Community District	2010–12 Median Household Income	Lowest Income		911 calls	Calls per 100,000
		Precinct(s)	Current Population		
Bronx 1		40	157,954	169,082	107,045
Bronx 2	\$20,867	41	126,303	100,966	79,940
Brooklyn 16	\$27,166	73	103,483	68,021	65,732
Brooklyn 13	\$29,712	60	154,460	118,107	76,464
Brooklyn 5	\$31,986	75	119,618	149,631	125,091
Manhattan 11	\$31,079	25 and 23	136,557	122,207	89,492
Manhattan 10	\$36,112	28 and 32	143,553	64,071	44,632
Queens 4	\$44,412	110	185,815	67,314	36,226
Queens 3	\$46,119	115			
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$31,533</b>			<b>109,537</b>	<b>78,202</b>
Highest Income					
Bronx 10	\$51,912	45	123,140	54,755	44,466
Bronx 8	\$53,595	50	107,360	42,974	40,028
Brooklyn 18	\$61,273	63 and 69	202,762	92,543	45,641
Brooklyn 2	\$71,754	79 and 84	127,080	146,216	115,058
Brooklyn 6	\$87,896	76 and 78	113,036	77,709	68,747
Manhattan 1		1	151,858	109,035	71,801
Manhattan 2	\$111,579	6			
Queens 11	\$74,143	111	120,614	36,207	30,019
Queens 13	\$76,168	105	198,944	69,588	34,979
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$72,949</b>			<b>73,649</b>	<b>45,054</b>

\*Precinct and community borders for Manhattan 11 and 10 are approximate. Staten Island neighborhoods are not included because their community district and precinct borders vary too significantly to allow for accurate per-capita crime calculations.  
Source: NYPD and NYC Department of City Planning

**Figure 8. 311 Graffiti Complaints, Lowest-Earning and Highest-Income Neighborhoods in Five Boroughs**

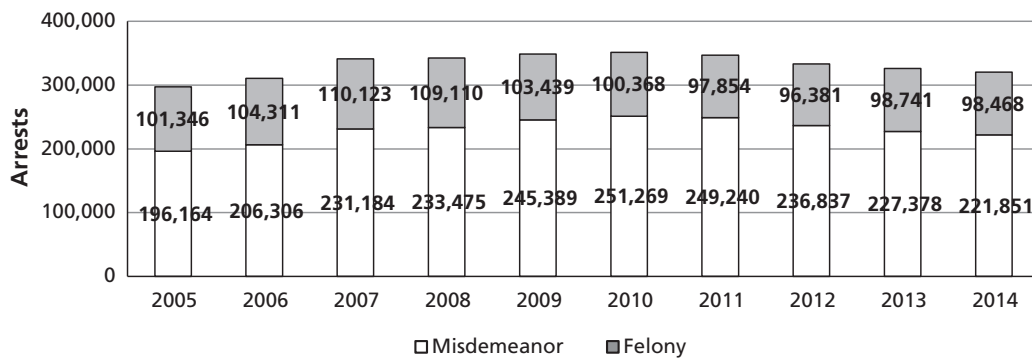
	Lowest Income						Total	% of Total Complaints	% of Total City Population
	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	Average			
Bronx 1	339	208	263	222	385	283	1,417	1.7%	1.1%
Bronx 2	203	231	346	301	309	278	1,390	1.7%	0.6%
Brooklyn 16	219	204	168	233	57	176	881	1.1%	1.1%
Brooklyn 13	59	59	120	76	51	73	365	0.4%	1.3%
Brooklyn 5	628	185	166	241	253	295	1,473	1.8%	2.2%
Manhattan 11	185	105	52	208	294	169	844	1.0%	1.5%
Manhattan 10	192	79	80	307	249	181	907	1.1%	1.4%
Queens 4	259	145	365	1,005	386	432	2,160	2.6%	2.1%
Queens 3	259	169	336	663	235	332	1,662	2.0%	2.1%
Staten Island 1	135	144	184	91	103	131	657	0.8%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>								<b>14.2%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>

	Highest Income						Total	% of Total Complaints	% of Total City Population
	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	Average			
Bronx 8	178	105	116	61	155	123	615	0.8%	1.2%
Bronx 10	361	252	267	362	319	312	1,561	1.9%	1.5%
Brooklyn 2	262	198	220	179	269	226	1,128	1.4%	1.2%
Brooklyn 6	257	261	299	266	229	262	1,312	1.6%	1.3%
Brooklyn 18	117	67	111	185	221	140	701	0.9%	2.4%
Manhattan 2	334	425	505	413	661	468	2,338	2.9%	1.1%
Manhattan 1	75	53	64	69	184	89	445	0.6%	0.7%
Queens 13	192	85	94	240	226	167	837	1.0%	2.3%
Queens 11	74	84	43	170	132	101	503	0.6%	1.4%
Staten Island 3	36	52	96	73	68	65	325	0.4%	2.0%
<b>Total</b>								<b>12.1%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>

Source: Nycopendata.socrata.com

**Figure 9. NYC Felony and Misdemeanor Arrests, 2005–14**



Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

**Figure 10. Arrests for Misdemeanor Quality-of-Life Offenses, NYC, 2010–14**

Offense	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change, 2010–14	% Change, 2010–14
Marijuana possession	51,598	51,733	40,187	29,183	26,216	-25,382	-49.2%
Controlled substance possession	22,748	23,534	22,240	20,851	20,986	-1,762	-7.7%
Marijuana sale	5,563	5,196	5,470	5,495	5,696	133	2.4%
Drug paraphernalia possession	2,146	2,189	2,011	1,660	1,349	-797	-37.1%
Graffiti	978	1,498	1,039	1,123	2,187	1,209	123.6%
Prostitution-related offenses	4,045	4,239	3,951	3,588	2,851	-1,194	-29.5%

Source: NYPD

or offenses were fewer than they had been in recent years (**Figure 10**).

The debate over the Garner incident frequently conflated demands for accountability with demands for policy overhaul. Data show that the Garner tragedy was anomalous. Use of force in misdemeanor arrests is extremely rare and has been growing steadily rarer still (**Figure 11**).

Allegations of force against officers are currently on a downward trend. In 2014, complaints filed with the city’s Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) were fewer than in all but three of the previous 16 years (**Figure 12**).

Critics sometimes characterize Broken Windows as a racially-biased tactic because it leads to minorities being arrested at rates above their share of the city’s

**Figure 11. Force Used in Misdemeanor Arrests, NYC, 2010–14**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change, 2010–14
Total Arrests	292,219	286,739	272,218	265,405	259,933	-32,286
Force Used	6,477	6,294	5,861	5,148	4,235	-2,242
% Force Used	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%	1.6%	-0.6%

Source: NYPD

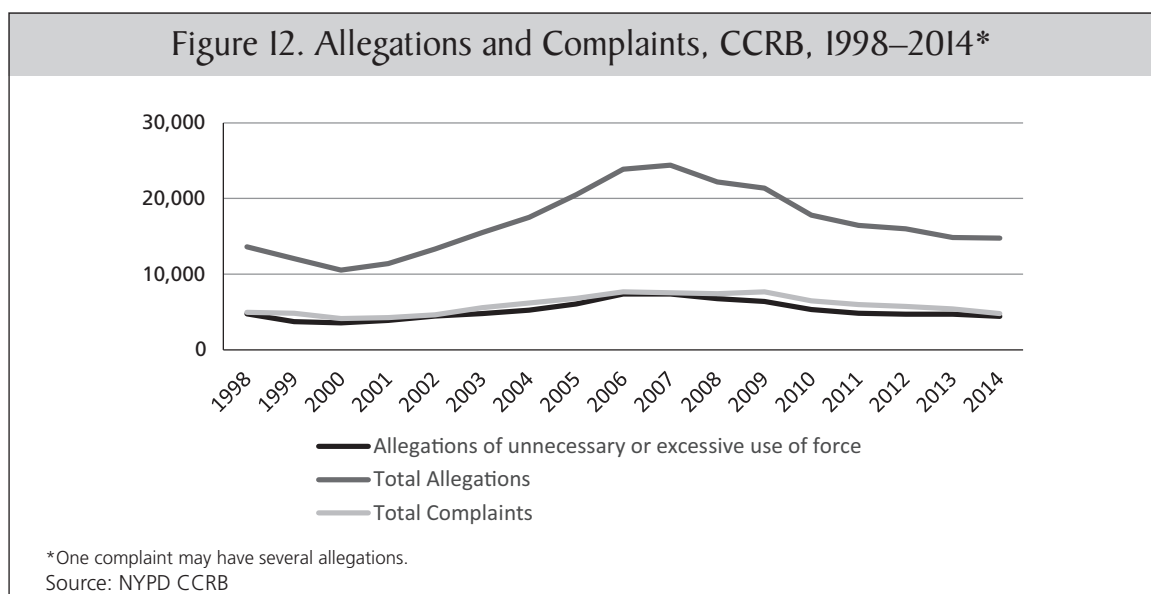


Figure 13. Crime Suspects and Arrestees by Race, NYC, 2013

	Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter		Rape		Robbery		Felonious Assault		Shootings		
	Citywide	Suspect	Arrestee	Suspect	Arrestee	Suspect	Arrestee	Suspect	Arrestee	Suspect	Arrestee
White Non-Hispanic	32.8%	5.8%	6.5%	9.9%	6.0%	4.0%	5.1%	8.7%	8.9%	2.2%	2.3%
Black Non-Hispanic	22.6%	55.0%	54.0%	53.0%	46.0%	69.7%	62.4%	55.9%	52.2%	74.7%	72.5%
Hispanic Origin	28.9%	35.5%	36.5%	33.4%	42.1%	25.0%	29.8%	31.5%	33.7%	22.0%	24.0%

Source: NYPD's 2013 "Crime and Enforcement Activity in New York City" Report

population. A similar charge was behind the New York Civil Liberties Union's successful litigation to curtail the NYPD's use of the stop, question, and frisk tactic. However, defenders of the NYPD and other police departments often argue that the disparate racial makeup of arrest rates simply reflects the underlying reality that minorities commit a disproportionate share of crime (Figure 13).<sup>16</sup>

Another way to evaluate whether racial bias is behind Broken Windows is to examine the racial makeup of misdemeanor arrest outcomes. Misdemeanor arrests may be divided into those initiated by a specific complaint against the arrestee by a victim (victim-initiated) and those initiated by police (police-initiated). Arrests for Broken Windows, or quality-of-life, crimes generally fall into the latter category because prostitution, drug, and graffiti are widely regarded as "victimless" crimes. When an officer apprehends someone based on identification by a victim as having been a perpetrator, it should be assumed that the officer is not acting out of any bias. A comparison with police-initiated arrests—when officers make an arrest based on their having witnessed the crime in question—shows that racial outcomes do not significantly differ based on whether police act on their own, or in response to a specific victim's complaint (Figure 14).

## II. WELFARE

The de Blasio administration has taken a much more emphatically progressive position on welfare than policing. For his HRA commissioner, Mayor de Blasio appointed Steven Banks, attorney-in-chief of the Legal Aid Society and longtime critic of New

York City's welfare policies. At his appointment, Banks remarked, "I've been at the Legal Aid Society through five mayoral administrations, and this is the first one I'm not going to bring a lawsuit against."<sup>17</sup>

A \$10 billion, 14,000-employee operation, the HRA's chief responsibility is to administer the massive cash assistance, food stamp (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP), and Medicaid programs. In May, Banks announced his intention to make major changes to the city's administration of the federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and state safety net programs. These are collectively referred to as cash or "temporary" assistance. Cash assistance provides monthly grants of about \$506, on average, for single individuals and \$828 for a family of three. State and federal law requires that, in general, unemployed able-bodied adults "participate in public assistance work activities" in exchange for their benefits.<sup>18</sup> The law also establishes a framework for what qualifies as a "work activity," and sets a work activity participation rate that HRA must ensure its clients meet. The HRA assigns work activities based on what it believes is most likely to move beneficiaries permanently off welfare.

For Banks, the overall goal of providing poor New Yorkers with cash benefits is the same as it was under Giuliani and Bloomberg: to help beneficiaries "achieve increased economic security by obtaining employment, moving off the caseload and out of poverty."<sup>19</sup> Banks has, however, laid out a number of strategic changes that he believes will make the cash assistance program more effective. Shortly after taking office, he reviewed exist-

Figure I4. Victim-Initiated vs. Police-Initiated Misdemeanor Arrests, NYC

Victim-Initiated					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Arrestee Race	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests
Black Non-Hispanic	48.1%	48.7%	47.9%	44.7%	44.6%
Hispanic	33.6%	34.4%	34.6%	35.5%	35.6%
White Non-Hispanic	13.0%	12.0%	12.4%	13.5%	13.6%
Other	4.3%	3.9%	4.1%	4.8%	5.1%
Unknown	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Police-Initiated					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Arrestee Race	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests
Black Non-Hispanic	49.5%	47.0%	48.1%	48.4%	48.2%
Hispanic	34.6%	34.0%	33.2%	34.1%	33.6%
White Non-Hispanic	11.1%	13.7%	13.1%	11.5%	12.4%
Other	3.6%	4.2%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Unknown	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.8%	1.5%
Disparity					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Arrestee Race	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests	% of Total Arrests
Black Non-Hispanic	1.4%	-1.7%	0.2%	3.7%	3.6%
Hispanic	1.0%	-0.4%	-1.4%	-1.4%	-2.0%
White Non-Hispanic	-1.9%	1.7%	0.7%	-2.0%	-1.2%

Source: NYPD

ing HRA outcomes and found that one-fourth of former clients who leave cash assistance for work reenroll within one year. He also claims that HRA had been overstating its job placement numbers by almost 50 percent.<sup>20</sup> In his assessment, “[HRA] employment programs ... have not been as effective as they could be in connecting or reconnecting New Yorkers to the workforce and at minimizing the chances that they will need to return to cash assistance.”<sup>21</sup>

Banks believes that the best way to reduce dependency is a combination of education, training, and less zeal in enforcing program rules and requirements. His changes took concrete form in the HRA’s “Biennial Employment Plan,”<sup>22</sup> released in October. Penalties for noncompliance, such as missing a scheduled appointment, are much less likely to lead to sanctions or case closings. “[I]ncreasing the number of clients in training and education programs”<sup>23</sup> is now a major priority of the HRA under Banks, who will phase out

Figure I5. NYC Trends in Cash Assistance Enrollment, 2014

	Jan 14	May 14	Dec 14	Jan-Dec 2014		May-Dec 2014	
				# Change	% Change	# Change	% Change
Total recipients	339,721	336,403	352,596	12,875	3.8%	16,193	4.8%
Children	173,563	169,488	175,154	1,591	0.9%	5,666	3.3%
Adults	166,158	166,915	177,442	11,284	6.8%	10,527	6.3%

Source: HRA

**Figure 16. Cash Assistance Enrollment in Lowest-Income NYC Neighborhoods, 2014**

Community District	January	May	December	Jan–Dec Change	May–Dec Change
Bronx 1	12,114	12,268	12,809	695	541
Bronx 2	6,903	6,844	7,277	374	433
Manhattan 10	8,043	8,127	8,878	835	751
Manhattan 11	9,171	9,398	9,802	631	404
Brooklyn 16	11,593	11,495	12,185	592	690
Brooklyn 5	15,310	15,165	16,030	720	865
Brooklyn 13	4,080	4,163	4,683	306	520
Queens 3	3,380	3,340	3,133	-247	-207
Queens 4	2,895	2,895	2,921	26	26
Staten Island 1	10,039	9,794	10,767	728	973

Source: HRA

**Figure 17. SNAP Enrollment in Lowest-Income NYC Neighborhoods, 2014**

Community District	January	May	December	Jan–Dec Change	May–Dec Change
Bronx 1	48,516	47,325	46,928	-1,588	-397
Bronx 2	24,763	24,055	24,207	-556	152
Manhattan 10	37,719	36,753	36,485	-1,234	-268
Manhattan 11	45,617	44,770	44,685	-932	-85
Brooklyn 16	40,292	38,327	38,033	-2,259	-294
Brooklyn 5	71,128	66,744	65,412	-5,716	-1,332
Brooklyn 13	33,827	32,689	33,372	-455	683
Queens 3	33,606	31,787	30,300	-3,306	-1,487
Queens 4	33,291	31,249	30,151	-3,140	-1,098
Staten Island 1	40,870	39,440	40,230	-640	790

Source: HRA

**Figure 18. Medicaid Enrollment through HRA in Lowest-Income NYC Neighborhoods, 2014\***

Community District	January	May	December	Jan–Dec Change	May–Dec Change
Bronx 1	60,613	57,471	52,243	-8,370	-5,228
Bronx 2	31,730	29,875	26,876	-4,854	-2,999
Manhattan 10	48,397	45,369	40,472	-7,925	-4,897
Manhattan 11	57,236	54,584	50,301	-6,935	-4,283
Brooklyn 16	48,688	45,809	42,098	-6,590	-3,711
Brooklyn 5	94,988	89,159	79,146	-15,842	-10,013
Brooklyn 13	50,376	48,454	45,303	-5,073	-3,151
Queens 3	76,791	72,216	62,541	-14,250	-9,675
Queens 4	81,197	76,670	67,374	-13,823	-9,296
Staten Island 1	57,317	53,824	49,395	-7,922	-4,429

\*These figures understate total neighborhood-level Medicaid enrollment because they only include Medicaid enrollment through HRA.  
Source: HRA



the Work Experience Program (WEP). Originally a Giuliani initiative, WEP allowed beneficiaries to fulfill their work requirement by placing them in unpaid jobs in mostly city agencies. In place of WEP, Banks proposes “additional job search, work study, or internships for cash assistance clients with recent work histories or with advanced degrees ... and internships & work study for those in college.”

Testifying before the city council in May 2014, Banks said that his proposed changes “may” cause caseloads to rise at first but that the long-term impact could be managed, thanks to “more effective employment programs that lead to stable jobs.”<sup>24</sup> In Banks’s view, welfare enrollment under Bloomberg was artificially low because of “churn” caused by overly stringent and/or erroneous administration.<sup>25</sup> Whether as a result of Banks’s initiatives or other factors, the cash assistance caseload began trending up almost immediately after Banks’s May 2014 announcement. Since reaching a historical low in May 2014, total enrollment has grown by about 16,000, mostly adults (**Figure 15**).

**Figures 16, 17, and 18** show the annual and May–December changes for cash assistance, as well as Medicaid and SNAP, for the poorest neighborhoods in the five boroughs.

An increase in 16,000 is not yet evidence that New York is on pace for a return to the pervasive and long-term government dependency common throughout decades past. On an annual basis, cash assistance enrollment increased four times during Bloomberg’s three terms while declining by about 25 percent overall. Enrollment growth thus far under de Blasio is roughly within budgetary projections<sup>26</sup> and still quite low by historical standards (**Figure 19**). Only approximately one-third of the total cash assistance caseload will be subject to Banks’s changes regarding work requirements. Most cash assistance recipients are children and adults deemed incapable of working (though Banks has also pledged to “improve assessing and identifying all clients with barriers to work”).

A recent Independent Budget Office analysis of HRA data found that Banks’s policies have effected measurable changes in the number of cash assistance cases under or facing sanctions (down); the rate of household heads enrolled in an education, training, or job search program (up); the number of cases classified as “temporarily unengagable” (up); and participation in WEP (down).<sup>27</sup>

It seems unlikely that economic conditions, instead of policy changes, would be driving en-

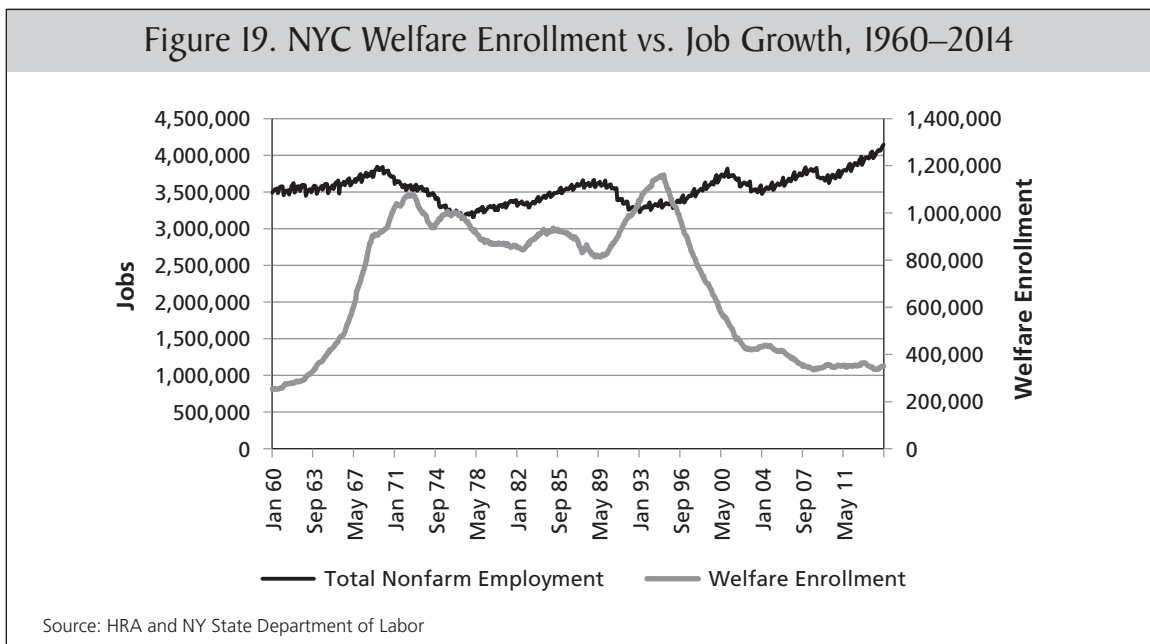


Figure 20. Job Growth in Low-Wage Industries, NYC, 2014

Industry	Jobs Added, Dec 2013–Dec 2014	Average Wage*
Retail Trade	9,800	\$36,547
Health Care and Social Assistance	24,900	\$48,175
Accommodation and Food Services	15,200	\$29,767

\*2012  
Source: NYC Economic Development Corporation and NYS Department of Labor

rollment increases. New York is now seeing dependence rise during a time of increased local prosperity, some of which has clearly reached poor New Yorkers. According to data from the state Department of Labor, in the Bronx, the poorest borough, there were 10,000 more jobs in December 2014 than there were one year earlier. Many of the more than 90,000<sup>28</sup> jobs gained by the local economy over the last year have come in lower-paying industries likely to hire cash assistance recipients (Figure 20).

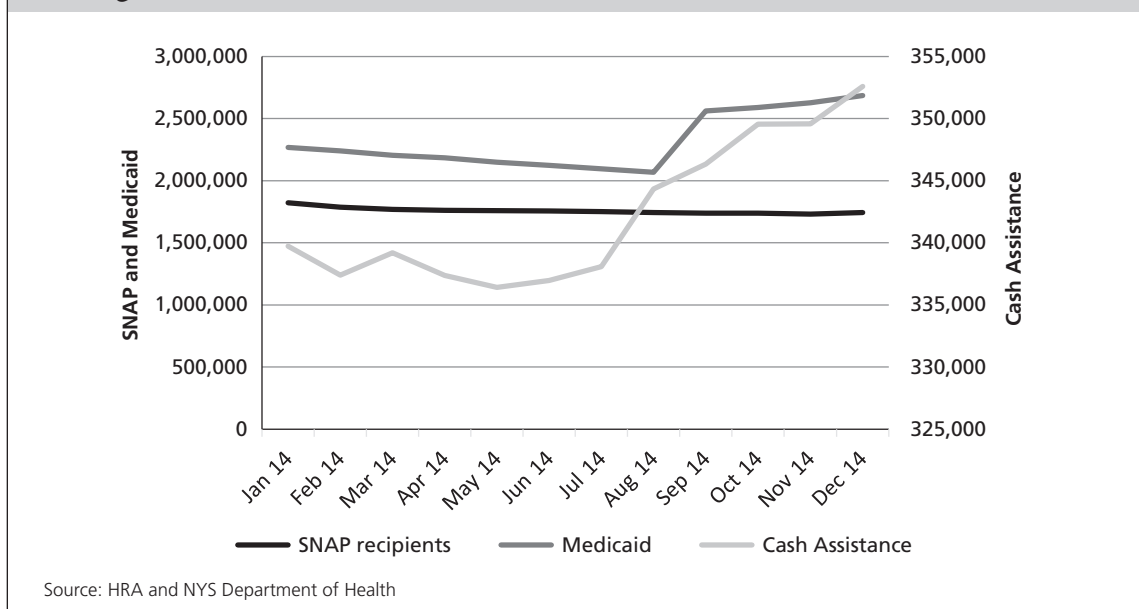
In New York State, since May, welfare enrollment has declined outside New York City (Figure 21). SNAP enrollment in New York City declined during 2014 (Figure 22); Medicaid rose, thanks to continued implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act. The SNAP decline is striking because, shortly after taking office, Banks expanded eligibility for able-bodied adults aged 18–50 without dependents by securing a federal waiver from work requirements.<sup>29</sup> Banks has suggested that this past year’s SNAP decline is at least partly due to an improved economy.<sup>30</sup>

Figure 21. Change in Temporary Assistance Enrollment, NYS Outside NYC, May–Dec 2014

	Jan 14	May 14	Dec 14	# Change, Jan–Dec, 2014	% Change, Jan–Dec, 2014	# Change, May–Dec, 2014	% Change, May–Dec, 2014
Temporary Assistance Recipients	227,283	233,740	229,174	1,891	0.8%	-4,566	-2.0%

Source: NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Figure 22. SNAP, Medicaid, and Cash Assistance, NYC, Jan–Dec 2014



## CONCLUSION

Mayor de Blasio recently noted: “Economic expansions do not go on forever.”<sup>31</sup> Welfare enrollment growth during the current times of expansion suggests the possibility of yet stronger growth during contraction. As **Figure 23** (as well as Figure 19) shows, welfare enrollment and job growth have generally trended in different directions throughout New York City’s history. Since 1960, only two five-year durations have seen welfare enrollment and jobs grow in concert. As noted, Banks has predicted that his policies will lead to more economic mobility and less government dependence, over the long term. Whether the de Blasio administration will be as successful in addressing government dependency as it has been with driving down crime remains to be seen.

**Figure 23. Rates of Job Growth and Welfare Enrollment, NYC, 1960–2014**

		Job Growth	Welfare Enrollment
1960–65	# Change	-8,800	156,568
	% Change	-0.3%	62.0%
1965–70	# Change	265,800	518,880
	% Change	7.6%	126.8%
1970–75	# Change	-445,000	48,981
	% Change	-11.9%	5.3%
1975–80	# Change	-50,100	-106,446
	% Change	-1.5%	-10.9%
1980–85	# Change	176,200	53,344
	% Change	5.4%	6.1%
1985–90	# Change	127,900	-100,217
	% Change	3.7%	-10.8%
1990–95	# Change	-271,500	326,818
	% Change	-7.6%	39.7%
1995–2000	# Change	343,000	-528,381
	% Change	10.4%	-45.9%
2000–05	# Change	-100,200	-197,965
	% Change	-2.8%	-31.8%
2005–10	# Change	101,100	-68,709
	% Change	2.9%	-16.2%
2010–14	# Change	330,400	-15,733
	% Change	9.1%	-4.4%

Source: HRA and NYS DOL

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The neighborhoods examined in this report are: Mott Haven and Hunts Point in the South Bronx (Bronx Community Districts 1 and 2); Brownsville, Coney Island, and East New York in Brooklyn (Brooklyn Community Districts 16, 13, and 5); East Harlem and Central Harlem in Manhattan (Manhattan Community Districts 11 and 10); Elmhurst and Jackson Heights in Queens (Queens Community Districts 4 and 3); and Stapleton on Staten Island (Staten Island Community District 1). These are the poorest neighborhoods in their respective boroughs, in terms of median household income.
- <sup>2</sup> NYC mayor's press office, "Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Bratton Announce 2014 Saw Fewest Murders in Recorded City History; Lowest Murders, Robberies, Burglaries in 10 Years," January 5, 2015.
- <sup>3</sup> George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," *The Atlantic*, March 1982.
- <sup>4</sup> Patt Morrison, "'Broken Windows' Policing Isn't Broken, Says Criminologist George L. Kelling," *Los Angeles Times*, January 6, 2015.
- <sup>5</sup> George Kelling, "'Broken Windows' and Police Discretion," National Institute of Justice, October 1999, pp. 9–20.
- <sup>6</sup> George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles, *Fixing Broken Windows* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 115–17, 141–43.
- <sup>7</sup> NYC mayor's press office, "Transcript: Mayor de Blasio, Police Commissioner Bratton Announce Change in Marijuana Policy," November 10, 2014; and idem, "Reactions to Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Bratton's Announcement of Policy Change to Reduce Marijuana Possession Arrests," November 10, 2014.
- <sup>8</sup> Rikki Reyna and Joseph Stepansky, "Pols, Locals Rally in Brooklyn Against Illegal Chokeholds and 'Broken Windows' Theory of Policing," *New York Daily News*, August 11, 2014; and "Assemblyman-Elect Charles Barron," interview with *City & State*, December 14, 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> New York Civil Liberties Union, "NYCLU Releases Police Reform Platform for New York State," December 12, 2014; and Ben Max, "Reform Agendas Behind Garner Protests Emerge," *Gotham Gazette*, December 11, 2014.
- <sup>10</sup> Thomas A. Reppetto, "'Broken Windows': Why NYC Cops Are Headed Back into Patrol Cars," *New York Post*, December 10, 2014; idem, "Open Season on Cops & No End in Sight," *New York Post*, October 16, 2014; and Kevin D. Williamson, "Restraining and Restraint," *National Review*, December 4, 2014.
- <sup>11</sup> Azi Paybarah, "Bill de Blasio Believes in the 'Core Notions' of Broken-Windows Policing," *Capital New York*, September 5, 2013.
- <sup>12</sup> Ben Fractenberg, "Broken Windows and Stop-and-Frisk 'Here to Stay,' Bratton Says," *Dnainfo.com*, January 5, 2015.
- <sup>13</sup> Office of the Mayor, "Transcript: Mayor de Blasio Holds Impromptu Press Gaggle After Meeting with the Justice League NYC," December 19, 2014; and "De Blasio said today that Broken Windows 'has been a crucial element in reducing crime' ": Azi Paybarah, "De Blasio on Broken Windows, After Gentrification-Focused Speech," *Capital New York*, February 4, 2015.
- <sup>14</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma, Volume II: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, 1996; orig., 1944), p. 542; Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), pp. 46–50; and James Q. Wilson, *Varieties of Police Behavior* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 157–65 and 298.
- <sup>15</sup> On urban neighborhoods' concerns about disorder more generally, see Wesley G. Skogan, *Disorder and Decline: Crime and the Spiral of Urban Decay in American Neighborhoods* (New York: Free Press, 1990).
- <sup>16</sup> "It makes good headlines to say [racial profiling] is occurring, but I don't think you can validate it until you look into the circumstances they were stopped in.... Now if you want to get into the essence of why certain groups are stopped more than others, then you only need to go to the crime reports and see which ethnic groups are listed more as suspects. That's the crime data the officers are living with": Bernard Parks, former chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, quoted in Michelle Conlin, "Off Duty, Black Cops in New York Feel Threat from Fellow Police," *Reuters*, December 23, 2014.
- <sup>17</sup> Yoav Gonen, "De Blasio Picks Ex-Thorn to Run HRA," *New York Post*, March 1, 2014.

- <sup>18</sup> New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, “New York State Temporary Assistance and Food Stamp Employment Policy Manual,” June 25, 2009.
- <sup>19</sup> Steven Banks, “Testimony on Biennial Employment Plan,” p. 3.
- <sup>20</sup> “HRA’s Biennial Employment Plan,” executive summary.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> “HRA Announces New Employment Plan Focused on Jobs That Move Clients Out of Poverty,” HRA press release, October 1, 2014; and HRA, “Temporary Assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment Plan January 1, 2014–December 31, 2015.”
- <sup>23</sup> Michelle Chen, “‘Welfare-to-Work’ Has Failed, So New York City Is Trying Something New,” *The Nation*, October 8, 2014.
- <sup>24</sup> “Policy reforms to address inappropriate denials, case closings, and sanctions may lead to monthly caseload ‘growth’ as a result of fewer interruptions or delays in eligibility among children and adults who previously would have been churned on and off the caseload during the year”: “Steven Banks Testimony, 2015 Executive Budget Hearing Joint Hearing of the New York City Council Finance and General Welfare Committees,” May 19, 2014, pp. 4–5.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>26</sup> “In 2015, 350,297 persons are projected to receive cash assistance on average each month, a decrease of 12,157 from the projected 2014 average”: Office of Management and Budget, “The City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2015,” May 8, 2014.
- <sup>27</sup> Paul Lopatto, “The Public Assistance Caseload: More Job Training, Fewer Punitive Actions Under the De Blasio Administration?,” Independent Budget Office, February 12, 2015.
- <sup>28</sup> New York City Economic Development Corporation, “Economic Snapshot: A Summary of New York City’s Economy,” January 2015.
- <sup>29</sup> HRA press office, “Human Resources Administration Commissioner Banks Announces Reforms to Fight Poverty and Hunger, Prevent Homelessness, Improve Access to Employment, Reduce Unnecessary Bureaucracy, Address Staff Workload, and Avoid Financial Penalties for the City,” May 19, 2014.
- <sup>30</sup> “After growing for many years, beginning in 2013, the number of people receiving SNAP assistance in New York City has been slowly declining. National usage has also been declining over the same period. There are two factors that appear to be associated with this national and local decline. First is the improvement in the economy, which has resulted in some people’s income increasing enough so that they no longer meet the federal requirements to qualify for SNAP. Further analysis of the New York City numbers also shows that there has been no decline in the number of people receiving both public assistance and SNAP. The decline has been among those only receiving SNAP benefits, many of whom are working. This data indicates that their income may have increased so they no longer qualify for federal food assistance under the United States Department of Agriculture’s rules implementing the federal statute”: Steven Banks, “Testimony to the New York City Council General Welfare Committee Hearing on Hunger in New York,” November 24, 2014.
- <sup>31</sup> NYC mayor’s press office, “Transcript: Mayor de Blasio Presents Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget,” February 9, 2015.





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