



## Federal Homeless Czar Gives City \$2.8 Million To Create New Housing

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*George W. Bush's point man to help the homeless was in the city Friday, and he didn't come empty handed. NY1's Sandra Endo has the details in the following report.*

Marcia Laughran is a traveling nurse who treats the homeless. Her examination room is a medical van run by Project Renewal. The van scours the city's homeless population offering free healthcare.

Now, the federal government is supporting the group's efforts, with a boost of \$2.8 million.

"This is the first investment in the 10-year effort that we're making to end that form of homelessness; to move people off the streets of our country, to move long-term stayers out of those shelters and into housing," said Philip Mangano, the Director of the Federal Homelessness Council.

Mangano is the president's homeless czar. He coordinates 15 federal agencies with the goal of eliminating homelessness nationwide.

This is the first time Washington is doling out money for homeless services in a coordinated way. This grant is partly from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Housing.

"We need to create alternative paths for folks to move to permanency, and this grant is a great innovation that is being introduced by the leadership of the federal government," said the city's Homeless Services Commissioner, Linda Gibbs.

Project Renewal also works with the city to provide shelter, permanent housing and support services for the city's homeless.

"The goal of the project is to get people to become active and productive members of our community," said Project Renewal Executive Director Ed Geffner.

The new grant would only amount to 40 units of housing for the street homeless population. Right now there are roughly 1,800 people on the street on a given night.

But now the door is open to a new funding source for eliminating homelessness, with an active advocate in Washington

"The reality is that we now have a housing strategy for every profile of

homelessness. There is no profile of homelessness which we cannot house," said Mangano.

The mayor's management report shows the city placed 130 more single adults into permanent homes last year. That's a two percent increase from the year before, but still below target.

Advocates say the city needs to create far more units of housing.

"To set the threshold and say within the next 5 to 7 years we'll create 10,000 thousand units of supported housing, that would be a miracle and would make a dramatic difference in what we see on city streets," said Mary Brosnahan-Sullivan of the Coalition for the Homeless.

The Department of Homeless Services plans to keep track of the changing needs of the city. It's planning for its second overnight count of street homeless, this time in Brooklyn, Staten Island and Manhattan, sometime in February.

- *Sandra Endo*