ENDING THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

24TH ANNUAL NEW YORK SUPPORTIVE HOUSING CONFERENCE

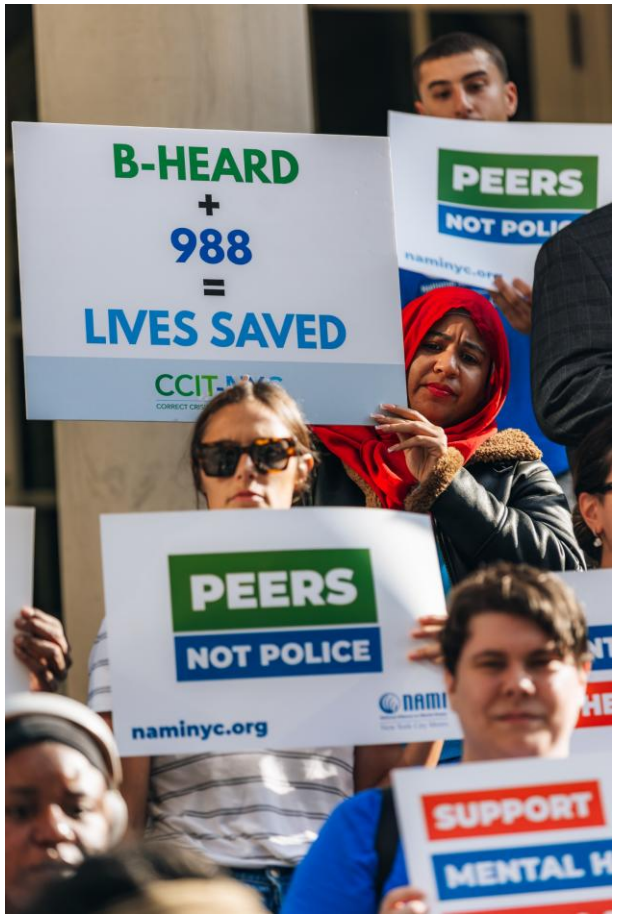
What is CCIT-NYC?

CCIT-NYC
CORRECT CRISIS INTERVENTION TODAY

- Formed in 2012, CCIT-NYC is a coalition of peers (individuals with lived mental health experience), nonprofits, and community members working to transform how New York responds to the 200,000+ annual mental health crisis calls currently handled by the NYPD.
- CCIT-NYC advocates for response systems that are person-centered and health-focused, treating mental health crises like physical emergencies.

What is the Behavioral Emergency Assistance Response Program, or B-HEARD?

- Introduced in 2021, B-HEARD is New York City's non-police mental health crisis response program.
- Teams consists of 2 EMTs/paramedics and a licensed social worker.
- B-HEARD teams operate seven days a week, 16 hours a day in four of the five boroughs.
  - 31 out of 78 police precincts, ~40% of the city
- Collaborative program run by the Mayor's Office of Community Safety, the FDNY, the NYPD, and NYC Health + Hospitals.



What does CCIT-NYC advocate for?

Our model utilizes teams that would consist of one peer trained as a crisis counselor and an emergency medical technician (EMT) and would operate citywide, 24/7.

- We envision 988, not 911, as the primary contact method for dispatching responders.
- We envision interoperability between 911, 988, and 311 and the crisis response teams dispatched via 988 would be able to request police assistance when needed.
- The coordinated crisis response system would include prevention, alternatives to hospitals, and robust follow-up from local service providers to avoid future crises.

Daniel's Law Advocacy: Daniel Prude

On March 23, 2020, Daniel Prude was experiencing an acute mental health crisis when his family called 911 for help.

He was naked in the street and posed no risk to anyone. Yet, Rochester Police responded in force, handcuffed him, placed a hood over his head, and held him face down on the cold pavement until he stopped breathing.

Daniel Prude was mocked and treated cruelly by officers with no understanding of his needs.

Prude was a Black man experiencing an obvious mental health crisis, and he deserved care and dignity – but he was denied both. Instead, police killed him.

Daniel's Law: Mental Health First Responders

Since the killing of Daniel Prude at the hands of police, the Daniel's Law Coalition has worked to create a statewide system to deploy peer supporters and EMT staff rather than police first responders

In 2023, the state created The Daniel's Law Task Force to gather information and create recommendations for implementing the system. They completed their work by the end of 2024, and provided recommendations pushing the state to create a statewide Behavioral Health Crisis Technical Assistance Center and pilot programs to begin collecting data and providing the appropriate response

Daniel's Law Advocacy

Over the last two year's, we have secured $16 million for Daniel's Law initiatives, with $2 million for the BHTAC and $14 million for "pilot" programs

We continue to push for the proposed legislation to pass the legislature and expand programs to the whole state.

The current funding will provide for at least 7 programs, with three expected to be operating by 2027 and the other four to be bid out in the coming months

RISE UP CAMPAIGN

Criminalizing Homelessness & Poverty: An Attack on People-First

- Cicero “anti-homeless” Campaign
  - Template Bill
- *Grants Pass v. Johnson* (SCOTUS, 2024)
  - 330+ bills make it a crime to be homeless have been introduced since this decision;
  - *Hundreds* of criminalization ordinances on the books in NYS alone
- Executive Order 45321 (2025)
- HUD Notices of Funding Opportunity (2025 (repealed), 2026 (active))

Stop **L**aw **E**nforcement of **E**ncampment **P**enalties **("SLEEP")** Act (A5452/Forrest)

Source: AMNY (May 15, 2022); link here

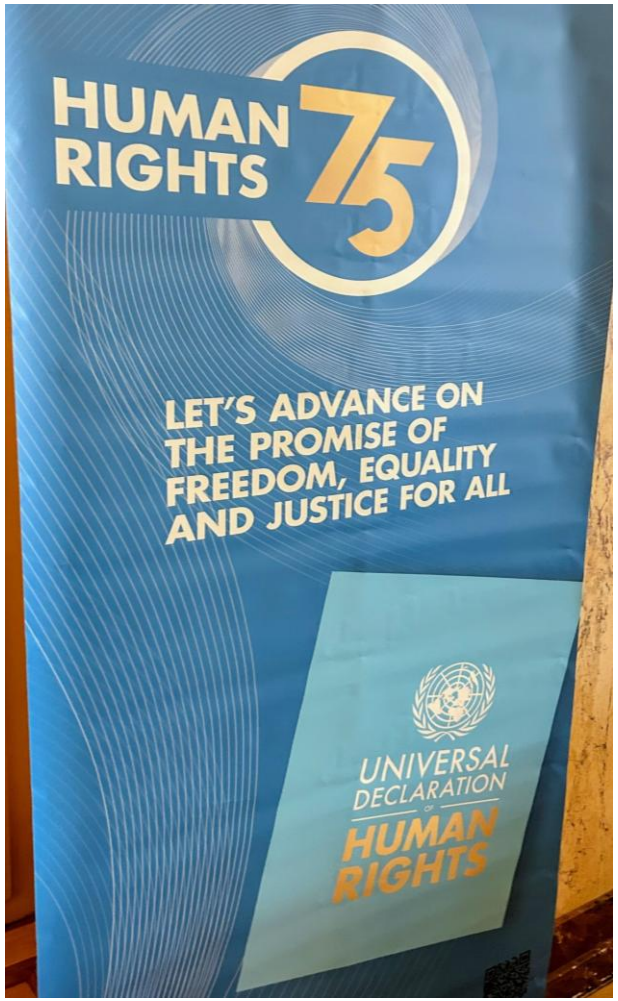
Key Provisions:

- **Prohibits** criminal punishment & forced commitments for sleeping, camping, and other postures in public spaces;
- **Prohibits** personal property removal for sleeping, camping, etc., on any publicly-owned property;
- **Promotes** non-punitive alternatives to residing outdoors;
- **Expands** definition of public spaces to include mass transit, sidewalks, alleys, bridge underpasses, etc.;
- **Enshrines** right to move freely & right to rest (Homeless Bill of Rights (A10451/Forrest; S4885/Comrie))

Coalition:

- Formed in the summer of 2025;
- 12+ organizations (upstate & downstate);
- Mutual membership with CCIT-NYC, RISE UP, and Daniel's Law Coalitions

Advancing the ‘Right to Housing’: From Global to the Local



- Enshrining international legal standards into local legislative solutions (i.e., anti-torture, anti-policing, right to life, etc.);
- Comprehensive, multi-issue decriminalization platform designed to codify ‘housing as a human right’;
- Organizing and political education tool