



Where to Sleep?

The COVID-19 pandemic hit hard in many United States urban areas, especially in New York City. Restaurants and grocery stores closed down, and access to public transportation, such as buses and the subway, were reduced. This was a big issue for New Yorkers who relied on public transport to get to work or travel to other essential places. It was an even more sensitive subject for homeless people, many of which depended on public vehicles for warmth and safety.

In New York City, it is not uncommon to see homeless people sleeping on the subway or living in subway stations. This is often a better option than residing in the city's homeless shelters, which can be [crowded and dangerous](#), especially during COVID times. During the pandemic, however, subway stations were closed during the night for routine cleaning. This meant that homeless people were forced to leave the stations and sleep on the streets.

Public transportation offers shelter and safety that the streets do not, so this was a very large issue among the homeless community. As of May 17, the New York City subways and other modes of public transportation are now fully operational. Though homeless people can now go back to staying the night on subways, this situation still demonstrates the grave need for better, safer sleeping options for people without a stable home.

There is no guarantee that there won't be another pandemic and that public transportation won't be restricted again. There needs to be more reliable sleeping options for homeless people, such as safer shelters. A person's basic need to rest should not be contingent on a public service that could so easily be blocked off from them; there needs to be another option.

By Nicole Alesso