The Thin Balance Sheet

A comparative study of five New York City homeless services providers, drawn from filed Forms 990

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Editorial note

Methodology. Every figure is drawn from the most recent Form 990 released by the IRS for each organization as of November 5, 2026, read directly from the filed return, and from the audited statements cited where the return does not reach. Derived figures are recomputed from the line items named in section 12, so any number here can be checked or rebuilt. Passages expressing judgment or inference are labeled as opinion and analysis and are not statements of fact. Nothing here alleges misconduct by any organization or person.

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1. Purpose and scope

This paper compares five organizations that operate shelter and supportive housing under New York City Department of Homeless Services contracts: Children's Rescue Fund, Home/Life Services, Homes for the Homeless, Win, and Westhab. Together they report $634.3 million of revenue in their latest filed year. Every figure is drawn from the most recent Form 990 released for each organization, and the method is stated in full in section 12. [1 to 5]

The purpose is not to rank them. It is to understand how the business model of contracted homeless services behaves, and to identify which measures are informative and which are not.

CAMBA, the largest diversified provider in this segment, is omitted. Its fiscal year ends on August 31, two months after four of the five, and its operations extend well beyond shelter, so its figures are not comparable on the terms used here. [10]

2. The five at a glance

Organization	Fiscal year	Revenue	Expenses	Result	Net assets
Westhab	FY2024	$179,054,210	$180,694,146	($1,639,936)	$65,499,362
Win	FY2025	$162,961,169	$174,878,588	($11,917,419)	$16,631,412
Home/Life Services	FY2025	$118,324,765	$118,255,543	$69,222	$1,159,373
Children's Rescue Fund	FY2025	$115,002,009	$116,965,127	($1,963,118)	($3,946,951)
Homes for the Homeless	FY2025	$58,998,655	$59,219,188	($220,533)	$3,761,862

Four of the five ran a deficit in the year reported. The fifth, Home/Life Services, reported a surplus of $69,222, six hundredths of one percent of its revenue. Westhab reports on a calendar year and its latest released return is for 2024; the other four report on years ending June 30. [1 to 5]

3. Revenue architecture

Organization	Government share	Private support	Private as % of revenue
Home/Life Services	99.7%	$0	0.00%
Children's Rescue Fund	98.9%	$54,142	0.05%

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Organization	Government share	Private support	Private as % of revenue
Westhab	95.3%	$2,247,964	1.26%
Win	92.2%	$10,079,791	6.19%
Homes for the Homeless	86.1%	$312,710	0.53%

Government dependence across the five runs from 86.1 to 99.7 percent. The organization with the most developed philanthropy in the set still draws 92.2 percent of its revenue from government. Private support here means total contributions, Part VIII line 1h, less government grants on line 1e and contributions from related organizations on line 1d.

A note on measurement. Government share is normally read from Part VIII line 1e. That line is blank for Home/Life Services, as is every other contribution line. Of its $118,324,765 of revenue, $117,911,209 is booked as program service revenue, because Department of Homeless Services money arrives as fee for service rather than as a grant. Read literally, line 1e would report Home/Life Services as zero percent government funded. The figure above treats its program service revenue as government revenue, which is what it is. This booking difference is a common source of error in comparative analysis of this sector. [3]

4. Capital: the same organizations measured two ways

Days of reserve, which is net assets divided by a single day of total expenses, states how long an organization could operate on what it holds. Measured on total net assets, it reports one ranking. Measured on net assets without donor restrictions, which is the money an organization can actually deploy against a shortfall, it reports another. Removing donated goods from both revenue and expense makes no material difference for these five.

Organization	Reported days	Unrestricted days	Rank, reported	Rank, unrestricted
Westhab	132.3	63.0	1	1
Homes for the Homeless	23.2	23.2	3	2
Win	34.7	10.4	2	3
Home/Life Services	3.6	3.6	4	4
Children’s Rescue Fund	(12.3)	(12.3)	5	5

Win is the organization for which the distinction matters most. Its reported reserve of 34.7 days is made up of $4,982,756 without donor restrictions and $11,648,656 with them. On the money it can use, it holds 10.4 days. Westhab has the same structure at larger scale, $31,202,509 without restrictions against $34,296,853 with them, and its reserve falls from 132.3 days to 63.0 on that basis. The three organizations with no restricted net assets are unaffected. [1, 2]

Children’s Rescue Fund reports negative net assets of $3,946,951, down from negative $1,983,833 a year earlier. Its liabilities exceed its assets. Section 5 separates how much of that is lease accounting. [4]

5. Leverage, leases and working capital

Organization	Total assets	Total liabilities	Right-of-use assets	Assets to liabilities
Homes for the Homeless	$18,152,275	$14,390,413	not stated	1.26
Westhab	$373,098,315	$307,598,953	$252,096,900	1.21
Win	$535,867,418	$519,236,006	$394,063,893	1.03
Home/Life Services	$131,367,142	$130,207,769	$99,267,566	1.01

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Organization	Total assets	Total liabilities	Right-of-use assets	Assets to liabilities
Children’s Rescue Fund	$255,357,262	$259,304,213	$212,557,349	0.98

These balance sheets are far larger than the operations they support. Win reports $535,867,418 of assets against $162,961,169 of revenue and $16,631,412 of net assets. The explanation is lease accounting. Under ASC 842 an operator that leases its buildings records future lease payments as both a right-of-use asset and a lease liability, so a portfolio of leased shelters produces a very large gross balance sheet and almost no equity. [2]

The lease effect has to be separated before negative equity can be read. Children’s Rescue Fund holds right-of-use assets of $212,557,349 against lease liabilities of $216,090,347, as itemized on Schedule D. Because a lease liability is typically drawn down more slowly than the asset in the early years of a lease, that pairing alone accounts for $3,532,998 of the negative $3,946,951, and it reverses over the lease term. Excluding leases, the balance is negative $413,953. [4]

> *In this publication's view, the word insolvent overstates what the equity line shows. Liquidity, however, is a different matter. Net assets are not the binding constraint in contracted homeless services. Working capital is.*

Working capital in this paper means cash and receivables less accounts payable, accrued expenses and deferred revenue, which isolates the money tied up in the billing cycle with the City.

Organization	Cash	Days of cash	Working capital, start	Working capital, end
Win	$14,634,798	30.5	$46,710,185	$27,211,984
Westhab	$13,478,047	27.2	($154,944)	($1,544,037)
Children’s Rescue Fund	$4,133,126	12.9	($1,518,534)	($2,968,512)
Homes for the Homeless	$1,661,952	10.2	$5,991,311	$9,298,791
Home/Life Services	$2,555,712	7.9	($3,777,425)	($302,754)

Receivables run from 52.1 to 117.5 days of expense, which is money earned and not yet paid. The net cycle below is receivable days less payable days. A positive figure means the organization is funding the City's payment lag itself. A negative figure means its own vendors are waiting longer than it is. [1 to 5]

Organization	Receivable days	Payable days	Net cycle, days
Homes for the Homeless	61.9	14.9	+47.1
Win	117.5	91.2	+26.3
Home/Life Services	80.8	89.6	(8.8)
Children’s Rescue Fund	110.6	132.8	(22.2)
Westhab	52.1	82.5	(30.3)

Two fund the gap from their own resources. Win holds $14,634,798 of cash and $27,211,984 of working capital, down from $46,710,185 a year earlier. Homes for the Homeless runs a 14.9-day payables cycle, by far the shortest here, and holds $9,298,791 of working capital on a $59.2 million operation. Three run a negative cycle. Home/Life Services is closest to balance at negative 8.8 days. Westhab and Children’s Rescue Fund run the widest gaps. [1 to 5]

The posture is shared. The cushion behind it is not. Westhab carries a negative 30.3-day cycle with $13,478,047 of cash and $31,202,509 of unrestricted net assets. Children’s Rescue Fund carries a negative 22.2-day cycle with $4,133,126 of cash and negative equity, runs the longest payables cycle in the study at 132.8 days, and its working capital moved from negative $1,518,534 to negative $2,968,512 over the year. Its receivables cycle of

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110.6 days is more than double Westhab's 52.1 days against the same payer. [1, 4]

In this publication's view, the receivables lag is imposed, while the payables cycle and the collections function are managed. A gap of that size against the same payer points to collections performance rather than payment policy alone.

6. Cost structure

Organization	Program	Management and general	Fundraising
Home/Life Services	92.6%	7.4%	0.0%
Westhab	92.3%	7.4%	0.3%
Children’s Rescue Fund	91.2%	8.8%	0.0%
Win	88.9%	9.9%	1.2%
Homes for the Homeless	88.1%	11.9%	0.0%

The program expense ratio, the figure most often quoted to donors and used by rating services, ranges only from 88.1 to 92.6 percent across five organizations whose financial condition ranges from negative net worth to comfortable. The organization with the highest program ratio holds 3.6 days of reserve. The organization with the lowest holds 23.2 days. [1 to 5]

In this publication's view, the ratio has no discriminating power in this group. If it predicts anything here, it may predict the opposite of what it is assumed to predict, because a high program ratio can indicate an organization that has invested little in its own management and fundraising infrastructure.

7. Fundraising capability

Organization	Fundraising expense	Private support	Cost per dollar raised
Win	$2,053,966	$10,079,791	$0.20
Westhab	$570,413	$2,247,964	$0.25
Homes for the Homeless	$0	$312,710	n/a
Children’s Rescue Fund	$0	$54,142	n/a
Home/Life Services	$0	$0	n/a

Three of the five report no fundraising expense at all. Two of those three report private support, $312,710 and $54,142, with no recorded cost of raising it. The two that do invest raise money at 20 and 25 cents per dollar. [1 to 5]

In this publication's view, those are unremarkable figures for an institution building a donor base from a low starting point.

8. Governance

Organization	Voting board members	Private support
Win	27	$10,079,791
Westhab	17	$2,247,964
Homes for the Homeless	13	$312,710
Children’s Rescue Fund	7	$54,142

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Organization	Voting board members	Private support
Home/Life Services	5	$0

Board size orders private support exactly across all five organizations, without a single exception, and more cleanly than revenue or program model. Home/Life Services, with $118.3 million of revenue, has five voting directors, the smallest governing body in this study, attached to the third largest budget. [1 to 5]

> *Correlation is not causation, and the direction of the arrow is genuinely uncertain. A large board may generate philanthropy, or an organization that decides to pursue philanthropy may build a large board. Both readings point the same way in practice: in this publication's view, an organization with five directors is not structurally equipped to raise money, whichever way the causation runs.*

9. Growth

Growth is measured on Schedule A, Part II or Part III, line 1, which records five years of gifts, grants and contributions received, including government grants and, for Home/Life Services, its fee-for-service revenue. The annual rate is the compound rate across the four intervals between the first and latest year shown. The same basis is used for all five.

Organization	Schedule A line 1, first year	Latest year	Multiple	Annual growth
Home/Life Services	$49,265,071	$117,911,209	2.39	24.4%
Westhab	$79,872,238	$172,966,450	2.17	21.3%
Children’s Rescue Fund	$53,040,477	$108,722,657	2.05	19.7%
Homes for the Homeless	$31,037,482	$52,100,216	1.68	13.8%
Win	$121,415,968	$160,333,405	1.32	7.2%

Every organization in this study is growing, and the growth is government money. Home/Life Services grew fastest, from $49,265,071 to $117,911,209, a multiple of 2.39. Children’s Rescue Fund more than doubled over the same window and moved from positive net assets of $2,780,083 at June 30, 2021 to negative $3,946,951 at June 30, 2025. [3, 4, 11]

> *In this publication's view, growth in this model consumes capital rather than creating it. Each new shelter requires working capital before the contract reimburses, and reimbursement arrives in arrears. This is a sector expanding on public money while its balance sheets stay flat or deteriorate.*

10. Leadership compensation

Organization	Officer and key employee compensation, Part IX line 5	As % of revenue
Westhab	$3,580,622	2.00%
Win	$1,989,998	1.22%
Children’s Rescue Fund	$1,329,291	1.16%
Homes for the Homeless	$564,682	0.96%
Home/Life Services	not separable (see below)	n/a

Westhab spends 2.00 percent of its revenue on officer and key employee compensation, 68 percent more than the median of the four that report it separately, 1.19 percent, and it has the strongest balance sheet in the group. Homes for the Homeless spends the least and ranks second on unrestricted reserve. With four observations no relationship can be claimed. Home/Life Services reports the salaries and wages of its whole

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workforce, $32,260,666, on Part IX line 5, so officer compensation cannot be isolated from its return. [1 to 5]

11. What the evidence suggests

Opinion and analysis

Section 11, the profiles that follow, and the closing implication are the publication's analysis. The figures they rest on are stated in sections 2 to 10.

1) Thin capitalization is structural, not managerial. Under cost reimbursement contracting, a surplus implies an organization billed more than it spent, so reserves cannot be accumulated out of contract revenue by design. Neither philanthropy nor property on the operating corporation's own return is enough to change that. Win has the largest fundraising operation and the most net property of the five on its own return, and one deficit of $11,917,419 took 63 percent of its unrestricted net assets in a single year. Where real capital exists in this group, it sits largely outside the operating corporation: in the affiliated foundation that owns the shelters Homes for the Homeless operates, and in the housing subsidiaries consolidated in Westhab's audit.

2) The standard measures do not discriminate. The program expense ratio spans four and a half percentage points across organizations ranging from negative net worth to sound. Reported days of reserve reorder when restricted funds are separated. Gross balance sheet size reflects lease accounting rather than strength. An analyst using the conventional dashboard would rank these five almost at random, and an analyst reading only the operating corporation's return would miss where the capital that does exist is held.

3) The sector is growing on capital it does not have. Every organization here is expanding on public money, the fastest at 24.4 percent a year, and expansion consumes working capital in a model that reimburses in arrears.

What follows is a reading of each organization on its own terms. Every one of them is delivering shelter at scale under contract conditions none of them set.

Westhab

Westhab holds $31,202,509 of unrestricted net assets, 63.0 unrestricted days, and the largest reserve in this study on either basis. Its own return carries $26,842,105 of net land, buildings and equipment. Its audited consolidated statements, which include wholly owned housing partnerships, report net assets of $89,111,150 at December 31, 2024, against $65,499,362 on the return. It grew 21.3 percent a year on Schedule A, second in this study. Private support is 1.26 percent of revenue, raised at 25 cents on the dollar, from a 17-member board. [1, 8]

In this publication's view, Westhab's position rests on a group structure that holds capital the operating corporation alone would not. Its development function is small relative to an organization of this scale and standing.

Win

Win raises $10,079,791 a year, 6.19 percent of revenue, at 20 cents per dollar, the lowest cost in this set. Its 27-member board is the largest by a wide margin, and it carries $67,085,279 of net land, buildings and equipment on its own return, the most of the five. A deficit of $11,917,419 took its unrestricted net assets from $13,645,210 to $4,982,756 in one year, leaving 10.4 unrestricted days. Its audited group holds net assets of $19,057,986 against $16,631,412 on the return. Its growth on Schedule A is the slowest here, 7.2 percent a year. [2, 9]

In this publication's view, Win has demonstrated that private money can be raised at scale against a homeless services mission in this market. Its case also shows that a fundraising engine and owned property

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do not by themselves protect an operating corporation from a single year's operating gap.

Homes for the Homeless

Assets exceed liabilities by 26 percent, the widest margin here, and its 23.2 days of reserve are entirely unrestricted. It reports the highest management and general share, 11.9 percent of expense. Its audited statements show that an affiliated foundation owns the properties in which it operates its shelters, and the consolidated group reports net assets of $67,980,985 against $3,761,862 on the operating corporation's return, a multiple of 18.1. It reports no fundraising expense, and its $312,710 of private support arrives against none. [5, 7]

In this publication's view, the management and general share here looks less like overhead and more like infrastructure the others have gone without, and the group's property is a capital base the operating return does not show. At $59.2 million of expense with a 13-member board, it has the governance base to build a development function.

Home/Life Services

Home/Life Services reports the highest program expense ratio in the study, 92.6 percent, and the lowest management and general share, 7.4 percent. It describes its program as seventeen shelters for homeless families. Its results over three years are a deficit of $196,804 in FY2023 and surpluses of $50,169 in FY2024 and $69,222 in FY2025, each within a quarter of one percent of revenue. It is the fastest growing of the five, 24.4 percent a year on Schedule A. Schedule A records $443,969,037 of support over five years, every dollar of it program service revenue, with no contributions and no fundraising expense in any year. Net assets of $1,159,373 give 3.6 days, and its five-member board is the smallest here. [3, 6]

In this publication's view, holding results that close to break even on a budget of this size, while more than doubling in four years, is a real operating achievement that none of the headline numbers show. What it does not have is a second revenue architecture, and the gap sits in governance and revenue design rather than operations.

Children’s Rescue Fund

Children’s Rescue Fund more than doubled its support on Schedule A over four years, 19.7 percent a year, third in this study, providing emergency and transitional housing to families and single adults in New York City. It directs 91.2 percent of expense to program. It holds 12.9 days of cash and negative working capital of $2,968,512, and runs the longest payables cycle in the study, 132.8 days. Its receivables cycle of 110.6 days is more than double Westhab's against the same payer. It reported deficits of $2,953,564 in FY2024 and $1,963,118 in FY2025, $54,142 of private support, no fundraising expense, and a seven-member board. Its negative equity is largely a lease timing effect, as section 5 shows. [4]

In this publication's view, the organization has taken on scale the City needed someone to take on. Within a constraint every organization here faces, it has consistently taken the more exposed option: growing into a thinning cash position rather than consolidating, without building a capital instrument. On that reading the remedy is recapitalization, and the case for it would be stronger alongside a shorter payables cycle, faster collections and a board built to raise money.

The common implication

A board governing any of these organizations against conventional metrics would see healthy program ratios and rising revenue. It would not see that equity on the operating return is thin or negative, that the cushion is measured in days, that growth is drawing down what little working capital exists, or that where capital has been built, it has usually been built in another corporation.

12. Method, sources and limitations

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Sources. The most recent Form 990 released by the IRS for each organization as of November 5, 2026, read from the filed electronic return: Children’s Rescue Fund FY2025 (EIN 13-3486829), Home/Life Services FY2025 (13-3899699), Homes for the Homeless FY2025 (13-3351420), Win, legally Women In Need Inc, FY2025 (13-3164477), and Westhab calendar 2024 (06-1064281). Westhab's return for calendar 2025 had not been released as of that date. Home/Life Services' FY2023 result is read from the prior-year column of its FY2024 return. Audited figures are from the consolidated statements cited. Fiscal years are stated by period end.

Definitions. Days of reserve is net assets, Part X line 32, divided by total functional expense, Part IX line 25, over 365. Unrestricted days uses Part X line 27 only. Government share is Part VIII line 1e over total revenue, except for Home/Life Services, where program service revenue, line 2g, is used for the reason given in section 3. Private support is Part VIII line 1h less lines 1e and 1d. Cost per dollar raised is Part IX line 25 column D over private support. Functional shares are Part IX line 25 columns B to D. Board size is Part VI line 1a. Cash is Part X lines 1 and 2. Receivables are Part X lines 3 and 4. Payables are Part X line 17 plus deferred revenue at line 19. Working capital is cash plus receivables less payables, at the start and end of the year. Right-of-use assets and lease liabilities are as itemized in Schedule D, Parts IX and X. Net property is Part X line 10c. Growth is the compound rate of Schedule A line 1 across four intervals. Compensation is Part IX line 5.

Limitations. Five observations cannot support statistical inference, and every pattern described here is descriptive. Westhab's year predates the others by six months. A Form 990 is a compliance document rather than a management report and covers only the filing corporation; three of these organizations operate inside larger audited groups, as the profiles show. Officer compensation could not be isolated for one organization. Nothing in this paper is a substitute for reading the audited statements of any organization under serious consideration.

Currency. First compiled August 8, 2026. Every figure re-read from source November 5, 2026. Forms 990 lag their fiscal year by up to eleven months on the extended filing timetable, so the most current figures available in this sector are always between one and two years old.

Third Sector Recon will publish, in full and without editing, any response that an organization discussed here wishes to make. Where this analysis is shown to be wrong, the correction will appear at the head of the document and remain there permanently.

References

[1] Westhab Inc, EIN 06-1064281, Form 990 for the year ended December 31, 2024. IRS e-file object 202543219349307024.

[2] Women In Need Inc (Win), EIN 13-3164477, Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2025. IRS e-file object 202631359349315498.

[3] Home/Life Services Inc, EIN 13-3899699, Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2025. IRS e-file object 202631189349301033.

[4] Children’s Rescue Fund, EIN 13-3486829, Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2025. IRS e-file object 202641349349313264.

[5] Homes for the Homeless Inc, EIN 13-3351420, Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2025. IRS e-file object 202631339349306038.

[6] Home/Life Services Inc, EIN 13-3899699, Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2024, prior-year column. IRS e-file object 202541349349313299.

[7] Homes for the Homeless, Inc. and Affiliates, consolidated financial statements, June 30, 2025 and 2024, statement of financial position and note 1.

[8] Westhab, Inc. and Affiliates, consolidated financial statements, December 31, 2024, statement of financial position.

[9] Women In Need, Inc. and affiliates, consolidated financial statements, June 30, 2025 and 2024.

[10] Internal Revenue Service, Form 990 e-file index, release years 2025 and 2026, entries for CAMBA Inc, EIN 11-2480339, tax periods ending August 2024 and August 2025.

[11] Children’s Rescue Fund, EIN 13-3486829, Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2021, Part X line 32.

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