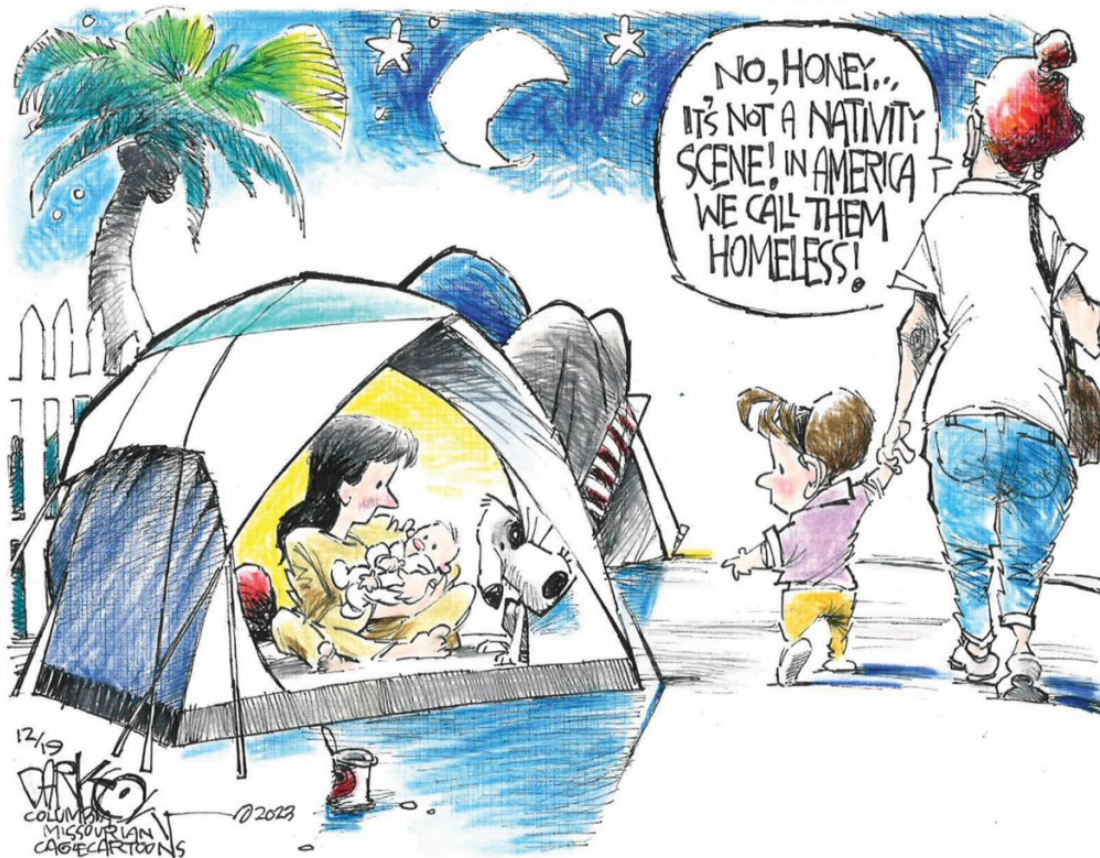


Homelessness MATTERS



December 20th, 2024



This holiday season, the Coalition honors the hard work of all the social service providers and volunteers in our state who support our most vulnerable neighbors through their most difficult days to make sure everyone has a room in the inn. Whether you've been following us this year by simply reading this newsletter to stay informed or working side-by-side with our team, we are grateful for you! 2025 will bring new challenges and new opportunities. We look forward to sharing all of it with you.

We wish you and your loved ones a very happy holiday.

Sincerely,
The Staff of the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness

COALITION NEWS



THomeless Persons Memorial Service in Mercer County

In Mercer County today, a service was held at Shiloh Baptist Church to honor and recognize the humanity of the people of Mercer County who have passed away while unhoused. The attendees included numerous individuals who have experienced homelessness as well as a large number of service providers who work with the population daily. The sense of community and the feeling of coming together around a renewed commitment toward the work of ending homelessness was palpable. The names of the people who died this year as listed in the program include: Angel Llorens, David Ryan Sennit, Shawna Brickhouse, Hector Legette, Robert Hardison Jr., Terrence M. Lane, Rosalyn Anderson, Darlene Tomasura, Anthony L. Jones, Jorge Guzman, James Stephens, Steven Stewart, Tamar Woolfolk, Robin Watkins, Tyrell Wilson, and others whose names were not listed.



State Urged To Up Mental Health Services For People In NJ Spotlight News

The New Jersey Coalition to End Homelessness, led by Connie Mercer, recently hosted a crucial event at Princeton University, focusing on the urgent need for mental health services for homeless individuals in the state's shelters. The event brought together nonprofit leaders, academics, and people with lived experience to spotlight the challenges faced by those in crisis. Connie Mercer, CEO of the Coalition, emphasized the gap in behavioral health services for this vulnerable population. Mary Gay Abbott-Young, a consultant to the Coalition, underscored the importance of creating a robust system of care to address these pressing needs. Together, their leadership is driving critical conversations and actions to improve mental health support for those in shelter systems across New Jersey.

Calling All Homeless Service Providers Who Work With Kids

The Coalition will meet virtually with service providers from across the state who work with children on Wednesday January 8th. If you fit this criteria, we'd love for you to join the conversation on how we can help incorporate programming into your facility. Please contact Kate to register: k Leahy@njceh.org

RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS

Murphy Administration Announces Opening of Wait List for State Rental Assistance Program

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has announced the opening of the pre-application period to enter the lottery for placement onto the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) waiting list. Beginning on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. (EST) and running through Friday, January 31, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. (EST), New Jersey residents who meet eligibility criteria are invited to apply online at: www.WaitlistCheck.com/NJ559.



Surveys on Lived Experience

The National Alliance to End Homelessness' Homelessness Research Institute has released two surveys to gather more information about how people with lived experience are involved and integrated into homeless services systems. The first asks about experiences working or volunteering in the homeless response system as a person with lived expertise of homelessness. [Take survey here.](#)

The second aims to better understand how the homeless response system partners with people with lived expertise of homelessness. This survey is intended for leaders and directors that coordinate and/or provide resources to people experiencing homelessness in the United States. To complete the survey, the respondent(s) will need to consider basic information about your organization's structure, strategy, planning process, staff and budget. You may choose to complete the survey with a colleague. [Take the survey here.](#)

Survey responses will close on January 6, 2025.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Are you ready to make a **real difference**
in the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness?

APPLY TO BE A



Housing Readiness Coordinator

Empower shelter clients to achieve **Housing Readiness** by working with them to **navigate the complexities of securing housing**

(Locations vary at shelters across NJ)

BENEFITS

- Living Allowance of \$21,500
- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of \$7,395 upon completion of service
- Health coverage and childcare benefits
- Professional development and networking opportunities

INTERESTED? HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please send resume and cover letter or direct your questions to **NJCEH AmeriCorps Program Manager, Victoria Tartivita** at vtartivita@njceh.org

Note: Positions are still available in Bergen, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Mercer and Passaic counties.

Partner Jobs



City Relief is currently seeking to fill four vacant positions in New Jersey: **Resource Coordinator, Guest Care Coordinator, Director of NJ Programs and Finance Manager**. For more information, click [here](#) or contact Lydia Lucas, Chief People Officer at lydia@cityrelief.org or 646-431-4661

*Share your open positions in future publications of this newsletter at no cost.
Contact Alicia Alvarez: aalvarez@njceh.org*

[NJ Awards \\$9M To Expand Mental Health Services In All 21 Counties](#)

northjersey.com

New Jersey is investing \$9 million to expand community wellness centers statewide, focusing on underserved areas. The funds will support staff training, competitive salaries, transportation, and enhanced services for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. This initiative, running through June 2025, ensures compassionate, peer-driven care at no cost to those in need.



[What Exactly Is An 'Unconscionable' Rent Increase? Hoboken Councilmembers Say 10% In Proposed Law](#)

nj.com

Hoboken councilmembers are proposing a cap on rent increases above 10% annually for non-rent-controlled units with 10 or more apartments. The ordinance aims to protect tenants from steep hikes while addressing unfair market practices and rising housing costs.



[NJ Mayor Gets Blowback For 'Insane' Affordable Housing Plan](#)

New Jersey 101.5

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka has proposed a plan to double New Jersey's affordable housing development if elected governor, aiming to address the state's housing crisis. However, his proposal has sparked controversy, with some municipalities opposing affordable housing mandates and a lawsuit challenging a recent law on housing obligations. Baraka also suggested weakening local control over land use and zoning to combat New Jersey's affordability issues, which has drawn both support and criticism.



[New Report: Developing Effective Fourth Round Municipal Housing Plans 2025-2035](#)

Insider.NJ

Fair Share Housing Center and the Housing and Community Development Network of NJ have released a new guide to help municipalities, planners, developers, and residents navigate New Jersey's affordable housing process. The updated report outlines the steps for local governments to meet their affordable housing obligations, with key dates and compliance mechanisms, following the landmark legislation signed in March 2024. The guide aims to streamline the process, increase transparency, and provide municipalities with tools and resources to plan and develop affordable housing effectively.

[Proven 'Housing First' Program Lost Half It's State Funding. Will Next Budget Restore It?](#)

NJ Spotlight News

A "housing first" program in Camden has been instrumental in helping individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, health issues, and addiction by prioritizing stable housing before addressing other challenges. Despite its success in improving lives and reducing healthcare costs, the program faces financial strain due to recent state funding cuts. Efforts are underway to secure alternative funding, including exploring the possibility of integrating the program with Medicaid to ensure its sustainability and continued impact.

[Finally, The First New State Plan In 23 Years Is Unveiled For Public Comment](#)

NJ Spotlight News

Jersey has released a draft of its first updated State Development and Redevelopment Plan in over 20 years. The new plan outlines policies for economic development, housing, transportation, and climate resilience, with a strong focus on equity and environmental justice. Once finalized, it will guide the state's infrastructure and land use planning for the next 25 years, aiming to address both growth and climate challenges while ensuring underserved communities are prioritized. Public feedback will be collected before the plan's final approval in 2025.



[Why Is Finding A House Or Apartment So Hared These Days In New Jersey?](#)

Shore News Network



[Advocates Shine Light On Rash Of Deficient Evictions In](#)

[NJ](#)

Law 360

Finding a home in New Jersey has become increasingly difficult due to skyrocketing demand and limited supply. With a shortage of affordable housing and many homeowners holding onto properties to keep low mortgage rates, the market is more competitive than ever. The construction of new homes is slow, often focusing on luxury properties, leaving many in search of more affordable options to face a long, challenging journey.

Dorian Bernard's return to his family's Irvington apartment to care for his ill parents turned into a legal battle when a new landlord attempted to evict him despite his housing voucher. With help from the Housing Justice Project, Bernard successfully fought the eviction, exposing the larger issue of legally deficient eviction filings in New Jersey's landlord-tenant courts. His case highlights the challenges faced by unrepresented tenants, shedding light on a flawed system that often leaves them vulnerable.

[Plainfield Mayor Announces Office Of Homelessness Prevention, Plans For Rent Control](#)

TAP into Plainfield

Mayor Adrian Mapp announced the creation of the Office of Homeless Prevention during the Plainfield City Council meeting, set to launch in early 2025. The office, part of the Department of Health and Social Services, will focus on preventing homelessness and addressing rent control issues. A new Senior Community Service Worker position, requiring a licensed social worker fluent in English and Spanish, will be added to support the initiative. Mapp also highlighted ongoing efforts to secure grants for the office's resources.



[5 More NJ Towns Join In Lawsuit To Block New Affordable Housing Law](#)

nj.com

Twenty-six municipalities, led by Montvale Mayor Mike Ghassali, are suing New Jersey over its new affordable housing law, calling it an overreach with unrealistic mandates. The state defends the law as necessary to meet housing needs, citing legal precedent. A hearing on December 20 will address whether to pause the law's implementation.



[NJ Rents Keep Rising](#)

NJ Spotlight News

[Housing Aid For Low-Income NJ Renters \(How To Apply In 2025\)](#)

Patch

The State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) in New Jersey will open its 2025 application period from Jan. 13 to Jan. 31. This program provides housing subsidies to very low-income residents to ensure access to safe and affordable housing, with priority given to veterans, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. Eligible applicants will be entered into a lottery to join the waiting list, with income limits varying by household size and county.



[NJ Affordable Housing Advocate Releases Guidelines For New Developments, Not All Down And Gloom](#)

nj.com

The Fair Share Housing Center has released a guide to help New Jersey municipalities meet their obligations to create affordable housing under updated state laws. The report highlights various approaches, such as building 100% affordable developments, integrating affordable units in mixed-income housing, or preserving existing homes. Despite pushback from some municipalities challenging these requirements, advocates emphasize the critical need for affordable homes to meet growing demand and counter misinformation about responsible development.

[Sterley Stanly: Affordable Housing Vouchers Can Now Be Applied To Home Ownership](#)

TAP into Edison

Governor Murphy has signed bill A586 into

New Jersey renters face rising costs, with rents increasing faster than the national average and putting significant pressure on low-income households. Experts point to a housing shortage and lack of affordable options, particularly for Black and Latino residents, who are disproportionately rent-burdened. Advocates are urging state leaders to expand renter protections and affordable housing initiatives to prevent further displacement and ensure housing stability.



[NJ Offering To Help Pay Rent. Here's How To Get Your Share](#)

New Jersey 101.5

The State Rental Assistance Program's pre-application period opens January 13, offering eligible New Jersey residents the chance to apply for housing subsidy assistance. Applicants will be entered into a lottery to determine placement on the program's waiting list, with preferences given to veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, those with disabilities, elderly residents, and local applicants. The application window closes on January 31, with only 6,000 households selected for the waiting list.

law, enabling the State Rental Assistance Program to include a homeownership component similar to the federal Section 8 program. This initiative allows housing vouchers to be used for homeownership expenses, including down payments, mortgages, taxes, and utilities, expanding access to affordable homeownership in New Jersey. This legislation marks a significant step toward making homeownership more accessible for all Garden State residents.



[New Jersey Human Service Awards Contracts To Create Community Housing & Services For Individuals With Mental Illness](#)

Trenton Daily

The Department of Human Services has awarded \$1.4 million in contracts to provide housing and wellness services for adults with mental illness in nursing facilities, psychiatric hospitals, or experiencing homelessness. This effort emphasizes personalized care that respects and addresses the unique needs and experiences of diverse individuals, promoting recovery and community integration.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

[Opinion: Hostile City Planning Hides Homelessness, But Doesn't Solve It](#)

Washington Square News

Hostile architecture, such as spiked ledges and curved benches, is designed to deter homeless individuals from using public spaces, often under the guise of modern design. These exclusionary measures marginalize the unhoused while also limiting accessibility for others, like the elderly and disabled. Real solutions to homelessness lie in creating affordable housing and providing essential support services, not in implementing designs that push people further into invisibility.



[Homelessness Prevention Series:](#)

Spotlight On Eviction Prevention

US Interagency Council On Homelessness



Larry Short has made it a weekly routine to visit the Bayshore Navigation Center, where he meets with nurse Teal Fennell to manage his mental health and receive medication for his bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. The center is part of the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Shelter Health program, which offers on-demand medical and behavioral health services to unhoused residents, helping them navigate their health needs and connect to resources that can support their well-being and stability..

NLIHC And PAHRC Release Joint Report Finding Growing Preservation Challenges For Federally Assisted Housing Stock

NLIHC



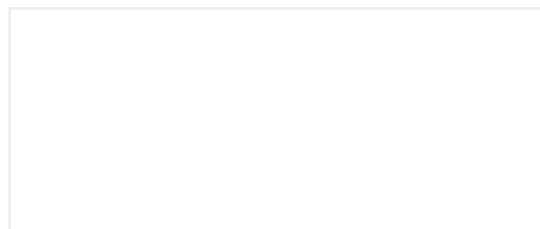
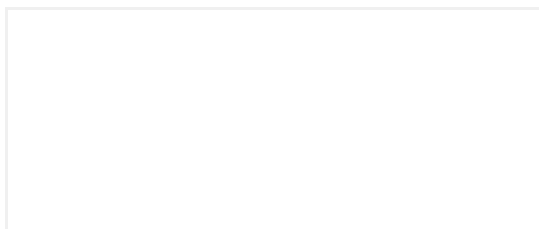
A new report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation highlights the risks to the preservation of federally assisted housing, including expiring affordability restrictions, declining physical conditions, and reduced funding. The report calls for stronger policies, including increased appropriations for federal housing programs and enhanced preservation protections, to prevent the loss of affordable homes for the lowest-income renters. Without these changes, many federally assisted homes may be lost, exacerbating housing instability.

Decade-Old SF Program Aims To Minimize 911 Calls To Shelter

San Francisco Examiner



Larry Short has made it a weekly routine to visit the Bayshore Navigation Center, where he meets with nurse Teal Fennell to manage his mental health and receive medication for his bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. The center is part of the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Shelter Health program, which offers on-demand medical and behavioral health services to unhoused residents, helping them navigate their health needs and connect to resources that can support their well-being and stability.





'I Was Homeless For Seven Years; I Lost Everything To Addiction: Solving Social Issues Starts With Housing

Calgary Herald

CUPS Calgary's recent renovation of its inner-city headquarters, including the enhanced welcoming hub, is a key part of its strategic plan to improve client support. The organization's integrated approach, which addresses housing, education, health, and mental health, is effective in providing comprehensive care for those in need. Despite rising costs and increasing demand, CUPS continues to make a positive impact by focusing on prevention and offering practical, compassionate services that help clients achieve stability.



Autonomy And Affordability: Solving Homelessness Without Coercion

CATO Institute

A December 12 report highlights concerns about Elon Musk and President-elect Donald Trump's views on homelessness, which oversimplify the issue by focusing on violence, drug use, and punitive measures rather than addressing



A'Vulnerable' Young Mental Health Patients Discharged Into Caravans, B&Bs And Onto The Street

Big Issue

The transition from child to adult mental health services can be abrupt and harmful for young people, as highlighted by a new report from the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB). The report reveals that many young people, upon turning 18, are discharged from mental health hospitals without sufficient care, often ending up in unsuitable housing like caravans or B&Bs, despite still needing support. Mental health care funding has not kept pace with growing demand, and vulnerable individuals face a lack of resources and guidance, leaving them without the necessary care and life skills to live independently.



Booker Introduces Bill To Repurpose Vacant Housing For Unhoused Individuals

Cory Booker

Senator Cory Booker introduced legislation to create a new HUD grant program aimed at supporting community land trusts (CLTs) in converting vacant housing into affordable homes for unhoused

key causes like the lack of affordable housing and mental illness. Both Musk and Trump overlook the need for reforms such as zoning changes and accessible mental health care, while Trump's proposals for involuntary treatment have been criticized for violating personal autonomy and lacking effectiveness. The report suggests that improving access to medications for mental health, like clozapine, could help reduce homelessness by addressing treatment-resistant conditions.



[Housing Crisis In Focus: LIHTC Best Practices To Discourage Qualified Contracts And Keep Housing For Unhoused Individuals](#)

US Dept. Of The Treasury

Post-pandemic housing costs have highlighted a growing affordability crisis, with many renters spending over 30% of their income on housing. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is a key federal tool to increase affordable housing, but the "qualified contract" provision allows property owners to exit affordability commitments early, leading to the loss of thousands of affordable units annually. To address this, many state agencies have adopted policies to discourage or prevent the use of qualified contracts, ensuring longer-term affordability and greater stability in the housing market.

individuals. The program will prioritize CLTs in high-homelessness areas and those offering essential services like job training and healthcare. It seeks to leverage CLTs to address homelessness and housing insecurity by repurposing vacant properties while ensuring long-term maintenance and stability for residents.



[More Californians Are Freezing To Death Experts Point To More Older Homeless People](#)

KFF Health News

Hypothermia deaths in California have more than doubled over the past decade, with 166 people dying from cold exposure last year, many of whom were homeless and older adults. The rise in deaths is linked to an increase in homelessness, especially among aging populations, with experts calling for more permanent housing solutions and programs to prevent homelessness, in addition to temporary warming centers. The trend of rising deaths is also seen nationwide, as vulnerable populations struggle with extreme weather conditions exacerbated by climate change.

We love to share news about the accomplishments, events and other noteworthy activities of NJ's homelessness service agencies. If you have something to share,

please send it to us at info@NJCEH.org



NJ Coalition to End Homelessness | 10 Mercer Street | Princeton, NJ 08540 US

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