

Homelessness MATTERS



NEWS & NOTES

October 31st, 2024

Dear Friends,

As we review the distressing results of the 2024 Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless (PIT) released by Monarch Housing last week, which showed a **24% overall increase** since 2023 in New Jerseyans experiencing homelessness and a **14% increase in children experiencing homelessness**, we are more determined than ever to push our state to do better. This year's count, taken in the last 10 days of January, found a total of 12,680 people experiencing homelessness either in shelter or on the streets. Particularly concerning to us, the number of first time homeless continues to grow, with this year's numbers representing a 50% increase since 2021.

The graphic below highlights the report's findings in more detail. Despite everybody's best efforts, we unfortunately know that the PIT Count is always a significant undercount. The results do not paint a comprehensive picture of the homelessness problem here in NJ, but rather provide a snapshot of what was captured at that brief moment in time.

The Coalition and its partners are working to ensure that even in one of the tightest housing markets of our lifetime, more New Jersey residents have a safe place to call home. Simultaneously, we are focused on improving the services and institutions that are in place for households when homelessness unfortunately does become a reality. We work daily to see that there are quality services and sufficient resources in place to help them transition quickly and effectively into permanent, stable housing.

For more information and details on the numbers reported in your county, see the full report [here](#). For questions and more information on homelessness in New Jersey, contact the Coalition at info@njceh.org.

In solidarity,
Connie Mercer

Commissioned by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, New Jersey's annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless provides a statewide snapshot and important demographic insights on persons experiencing homelessness, with the goal of allocating housing resources and services to prevent and end homelessness.

12,680 persons were experiencing homelessness in New Jersey on January 23rd, 2024.

24% increase in homelessness between 2023 and 2024.



10,943 PEOPLE WERE SHELTERED



1,737 PEOPLE WERE UNSHELTERED



55% MAN (BOY IF CHILD)

42% WOMAN (GIRL IF CHILD)



22% CHILDREN UNDER 18

20% ADULTS AGES 55+



30% HOMELESS 1+ YEARS



46% REPORTED ONE OR MORE DISABILITIES



2,079 WERE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS (**16%**)

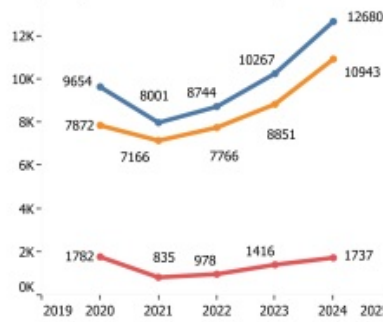


1,466 WERE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (**12%**)



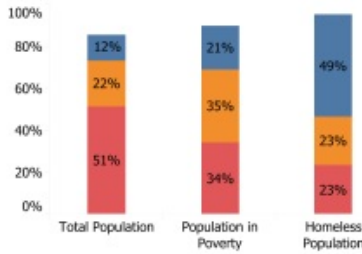
518 WERE VETERANS (**15%**)

Yearly Comparison of Total Homeless Population



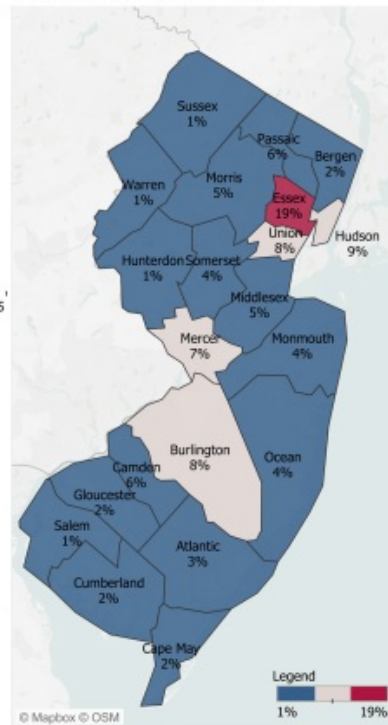
Legend
■ Total
■ Sheltered
■ Unsheltered

New Jersey Population by Race & Ethnicity

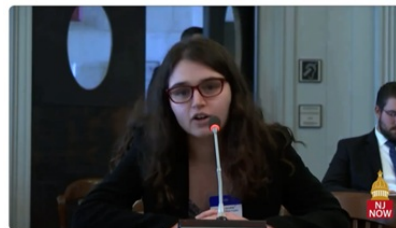


Legend
■ Black/African American, non-Hispanic/Latino
■ Hispanic/Latino
■ White, non-Hispanic/Latino

Total Homeless Population by County



COALITION NEWS



NJCEH testimony on A4970

Coalition Urges Examination of Unmet Mental Health Needs of Unhoused Children

Watch the testimony our Policy Associate, Raisa Rubinstankiewicz, gave last week in support of A4970, which would provide a grant to study and map mental health care resources for children. On behalf of the Coalition, she urged that the study places particular attention on the mental health needs of children experiencing homelessness and the journeys and barriers they face to accessing care across the state: <https://youtu.be/GlXoBO-vh1M>

Good news, this bill passed through the full NJ Legislature on Monday and now moves ahead to the Governor's desk for signing. (Fingers crossed!)



Coalition AmeriCorps Members Program Kick-Off

This past Friday, our new AmeriCorps members attended Launch24!, a kick-off event for all AmeriCorps Programs in New Jersey. AmeriCorps NJ hosts a service project each year for Launch!, and this year, all Programs were asked to collect new pajamas, socks and underwear for children between the ages of 2 – 12 years old. Donations were distributed to children in shelters served by our AmeriCorps Members.

RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS



The 2024 election is less than a week away. NOW is the time to vote and ensure that unhoused New Jerseyans are able to cast their ballots!

- You can vote on Election Day (Tuesday, November 5) from 6 AM-8 PM. Find your designated polling place [here](#).
- The early voting period has started and goes through Sunday, November 3. You can vote early at any [early voting location](#) in your county between 10 AM-8 PM Monday-Saturday and 10 AM-6 PM on Sunday.
- If you have a mail-in ballot, make sure it is returned ASAP by 8 PM on Tuesday, November 5 (either by putting it in a [ballot dropbox](#), mailing it back postmarked on or before 8 PM Election Day, or bringing it to your [County Board of Elections](#) office).

Contact Raisa at rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org with any questions.

Meeting the Behavioral Health Needs of the Unhoused in NJ

Join us for a symposium in partnership with Princeton University on how New Jersey must invest now to meet the behavioral health needs of unhoused residents. Monday, November 18 from 10-11:30 AM

Princeton University.

Everyone is encouraged to attend. Please register through this form:

<https://forms.gle/zyS9rZarnVcGYWNo7>.

More details to come.



**Mental Health
Association in
New Jersey, Inc.**

Collaboration Between the Mental Health Association in NJ and The Coalition Continues This Fall

We are pleased to offer FREE training sessions on a range of behavioral health related topics. Sessions are the **third Tuesday of every month** for homeless service providers offered at times convenient for all of your staff:

Morning: 6am, 8am, 10am

Afternoon/Evening: 2pm, 3pm, 7pm

Our next and final session of the year is November 19th

Topic: How medication can play an important role in supporting individuals living with mental health challenges **(1-hour session)**

For more details and a link to join, email us at: info@njceh.org



SAVE THE DATE: Friday December 13th, 2024

Changes to Medicaid are coming - don't be left behind! Wellpoint (formerly Amerigroup) will be holding an in-person "round table" on Medicaid and the 1115 Waiver. We hope you'll attend.

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Rhonnda Talton at: rhonnda.talton@wellpoint.com



Opportunity for Individuals with Lived Experience to Explore Creative Endeavors

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is pleased to announce the **Susan G. Baker and Elizabeth Boyle Innovation Fund**. This fund honors two of the Alliance's co-founders and will support individuals with lived experience of homelessness in pursuing innovative professional and creative endeavors. Eligible applicants can receive up to \$25,000 in funding for initiatives like starting a business, research efforts, or creative projects. Applications are due by December 30, 2024.

Shelter Providers' Consortium Upcoming Monthly Meeting: November 21st at Noon

*"Most important, relative meeting I attend each month."
- Zammeh Bivins-Gibson, Isaiah House*

Shelter Directors: Please join our monthly meetings for Shelter Providers, the third Thursday of each month from 12pm - 1:15pm. Meetings provide crucial relevant information and bring experts from a range of fields to deliver resources and opportunities for shelters. Meetings are also an energizing chance to network and share best practices and challenges among peers.

Register in advance:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZApfuGhqD0rE9QkgtWPwEiRFi3vK2efjA8B>



Trauma-Informed Outreach and Engagement

This training course is accredited for 3 CEUs from NASW and provides foundational information about trauma-informed outreach and engagement strategies, approaches, and service delivery models. This will focus on ways to support individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness who have serious mental illness, substance use disorders, or co-occurring disorders.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Covid is Back in Full Force - Protect Your Clients and Staff by Taking Advantage of the Coalition's FREE Infection Control Consultations, PPE and Test Kits

Click the button below to place your order and/or express interest in a consultation for your organization today!

Consultations/PPE/Test Kits

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

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*

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



[Homelessness Continues Climbing In New Jersey](#)

New Jersey Monitor

Homelessness in New Jersey has risen dramatically since last year, with advocates attributing this surge to a persistent affordable housing shortage worsened by rising rents and declining vacancy rates, which fell from 3.7% to 3.1% in a year. The rise highlights a critical need for affordable housing. Advocates are now calling for stronger tenant protections and preventive measures to address housing instability and the growing trend of evictions, which are significant contributors to homelessness across the state.

[Ocean County OKs Homeless Code Blue Center In Toms River](#)

Patch

The Ocean County Board of Commissioners approved the 2024-25 Code Blue plan to address winter homelessness, designating a county-owned property in Toms River as an overnight warming center. This facility, which will offer 165 beds and be managed by Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, provides vital access to social services and transportation to help homeless individuals move toward stability.



[Why Does Homelessness Continue To Rise Across NJ?](#)

NJ Spotlight News

NJ Coalition to End Homelessness Board member Richard Uniacke, President of



[Public Health Is Public Safety: A Call To Action On Homelessness In Atlantic City](#)

New Jersey Globe

Bridges Outreach, highlights that the 12,680 individuals counted on January 23rd only scratch the surface of the ongoing crisis, estimating that over 230,000 New Jerseyans have engaged with homeless services this year. Uniacke emphasizes that, contrary to common belief, the main causes of homelessness are often not mental illness or addiction but rather eviction and displacement from shared residences, underscoring the need for housing stability solutions.

In Atlantic County, the rising homelessness crisis poses significant challenges, as many individuals face not only housing instability but also criminal victimization and engagement in survival crimes. The need for transitional and permanent housing solutions is urgent, with existing organizations struggling to provide adequate support. A call to action emphasizes that addressing homelessness is crucial for public health and safety, urging community collaboration to implement successful housing models that offer stability and support for vulnerable populations.

[Nearly Half Of NJ Renters Are Paying More Than They Should. See Latest Data](#)

nj.com

Almost half of New Jersey renters are considered "rent burdened," meaning they spend over 30% of their income on rent, a threshold set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Rising housing costs and low rental supply contribute to this financial strain, especially for lower-income renters, with over 80% of those earning \$50,000 or less facing high rent burdens. While the state's strong economy helps many meet expenses, the lack of affordable housing options remains a systemic issue affecting renters statewide.



[25 Landlords Who Considered Tenants Criminal History Facing Fines, AG Says](#)

Microsoft Start

Twenty-five New Jersey landlords are facing fines for allegedly violating the Fair Chance in Housing Act (FCHA), which restricts the consideration of tenants' criminal history during the housing application process. NJ Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin announced that these landlords either questioned applicants' criminal records on applications or posted advertisements excluding individuals with criminal histories, actions prohibited by the FCHA. Violations may lead to fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000, depending on the offense count.



[After Years Of Delay Former Toys 'R' Us Headquarters In NJ Will Be Turned Into](#)

[Housing](#)
Gothamist

Wayne Township has approved a rezoning plan to convert the former Toys "R" Us headquarters into housing, including 1,360 apartments with over 200 designated as affordable. This decision comes after prolonged negotiations and a court mandate requiring the town to meet its affordable housing obligations under New Jersey's Mount Laurel Doctrine.



[Bridges Outreach Receives \\$100,000 Grant From The Healthcare Foundation Of New Jersey](#)

TAPinto Newark

Bridges Outreach, Inc. recently received a \$100,000 grant from the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey to advance Project Connect Newark's outreach and mobile case management programs. This partnership focuses on year-round support for individuals experiencing homelessness, connecting them to essential health and housing resources. Pictured in this article is ShonTe Smith, one of the Coalition's Garden State Leaders, who represents the dedication and impact of community leaders working to drive meaningful change.

[Newark Seeks \\$7M In Federal Dollars For Affordable Housing](#)

TAPinto Newark

Newark is seeking a \$7 million federal grant to boost affordable housing and homelessness prevention through HUD's Pathways to Removing Obstacles program. The funds would support several initiatives, including Kawaida Towers, Hotel Riviera, and grants for nonprofits addressing housing needs. Newark's application emphasizes the city's high percentage of rent-burdened households vulnerable to displacement, with the Deputy Mayor highlighting strong local



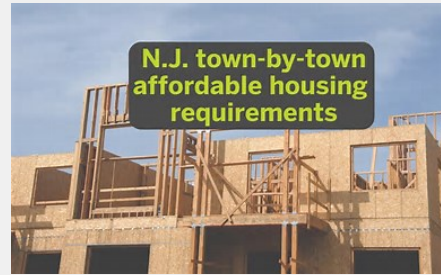
commitment to tackling affordable housing barriers.



[South Brunswick Council To Introduce Ordinance Establishing Affordable Housing Set Asides For Development](#)

TAPinto South Brunswick

South Brunswick's council is set to introduce an ordinance requiring developers to reserve 20% of new residential units for affordable housing in developments of five or more units. This action follows a recent settlement with the state to address affordable housing needs, making South Brunswick the first municipality to meet its obligations under New Jersey's Mount Laurel Doctrine. The ordinance mandates affordability controls lasting 30 years for ownership units and 40 years for rentals, with plans over the next decade to increase supportive housing and family housing options in partnership with nonprofits.



[NJ Releases New Affordable Housing Requirements Through 2035. See Your Town's Numbers](#)

nj.com

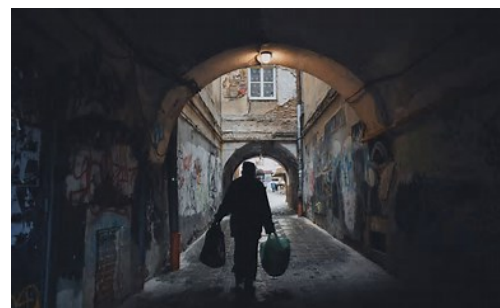
New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs recently released calculations for each municipality, detailing the affordable housing units they are expected to build or rehabilitate by 2035 to meet affordable housing needs. The guidance categorizes needs into "present" (rehabilitating substandard units) and "prospective" (new construction), with municipalities required to develop zoning to support these targets. While some cities welcome the standardized expectations, other municipalities, led by a coalition of mayors, argue the requirements overextend and place excessive strain on local resources, sparking ongoing legal challenges.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

[Involuntary Sweeps Of Homeless Encampments Do Not Improve Public Safety, Study Finds](#)

University Of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

A new study from the *Journal of Urban Health* shows that forced sweeps of homeless encampments in Denver did not reduce crime, contradicting the belief that displacing encampments makes



communities safer. Researchers analyzed crime around sweep sites from 2019 to 2023, finding no significant reductions in crime and, in some cases, increased violent crime following sweeps. The study suggests that without addressing homelessness's root causes, these actions do not improve safety and may even harm public health.

[Homeless New Yorkers Sue Eric Adams Administration To End Inhumane And Unlawful Sweeps](#)

NHLC



Six homeless individuals in New York City are suing the city and Mayor Adams' administration to stop what they call unconstitutional sweeps targeting homeless camps, claiming these actions violate their civil rights. The lawsuit, led by advocacy groups, argues that these sweeps only worsen homelessness and fail to provide affordable housing solutions. Advocates urge the city to invest in housing and support services instead of policies that criminalize homelessness.

[Encampment Sweeps Threaten Homeless People's Health](#)

STAT



California Governor Gavin Newsom recently allocated \$130.7 million to address homelessness, partly to clear encampments, following a Supreme Court ruling allowing cities full discretion to enforce such policies. A physician criticizes these actions, arguing that encampment sweeps, like the one Newsom personally participated in, often deprive homeless individuals of essential belongings and medications, worsening their health and increasing crises like overdoses. Research supports this, indicating that forced displacements do not effectively reduce homelessness or crime but instead destabilize individuals, complicating efforts by outreach workers and decreasing treatment adherence among those with chronic conditions or substance use disorders.

[Extended- Stay Hotels, A Growing Option For Lower-Income Families Can Lead To Health Issues For Georgia Kids](#)

WABE PBS



With rising rents and scarce affordable housing, extended-stay hotels have become a last-resort housing option for low-income families in Georgia, but this environment often poses serious health and safety risks for children. Schools like Dunaire Elementary, where 10% of students live in hotels, report higher rates of social

trauma, sleep problems, and food insecurity among these children. Advocates and local officials urge the construction of affordable housing and stronger eviction protections, emphasizing that while hotels offer temporary shelter, they are not suitable for raising children and do not address the root causes of homelessness.

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



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