

January 23rd, 2025

COALITION NEWS



Paterson City Council Drops Proposal to Criminalize Homelessness - For Now

On Tuesday night, the Paterson City Council removed a proposed ordinance from their agenda that would have banned sleeping and camping in public, with penalties including fines up to \$2,000 and up to 90 days jail time or community service. Council President Mendez stated that because of the concern the Council heard from the public, the legislation would go back into workshop to be amended and reintroduced with the fines and criminalization of homelessness portions removed out of the ordinance.

Coalition Board member Jeff Wild (pictured above) and staff member Raisa Rubin-Stankiewicz testified on behalf of the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness at Tuesday's Council meeting to express opposition to the initially proposed ordinance. Watch the full Council meeting [here](#), with their testimony starting at around 1:37:00.

This is an organizing victory for the community of Paterson, and for advocates like the Coalition and Legal Aid. This is powerful evidence that communities across New Jersey can successfully push back against attempts by municipalities to criminalize homelessness!

To read more on this on NJ.com, [click here](#).

The NJ Coalition to End Homelessness' Response to Governor Murphy's State of the State Address:

We are grateful and encouraged that Governor Murphy, in his State of the State address on January 14th, indicated support of legislation to change zoning laws to remove obstacles to the construction of more affordable housing. This includes permitting municipalities to change their ordinances to allow for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). If this passes, it would be a gamechanger for NJ residents seeking affordable housing!

But there is more that must be done. Homelessness in New Jersey has risen 40 percent over the past two years. There are 158,217 active individuals in the HMIS system. This means the number of NJ residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have reached out to an agency for help. This is larger than the population of Paterson, the third largest city in New Jersey.

We will continue to fight for necessary funding for our states' shelters and emergency homeless services, many of which are at capacity and are operating in the red financially.

We also urge for full funding of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and for a commitment that these funds will not be diverted from low income New Jerseyans.

Email Raisa at rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org if you want to get involved in advocating for these and other policy issues and learning more about our policy agenda.

[MPA Student Uses Internship To Help Improve Healthcare For Trenton's Homeless](#)

Princeton School Of Public & International Affairs

The Coalition was honored to have had the assistance last summer of

Princeton's SPIA Social Impact Fellow, Ben Harris, who played a vital role in establishing the Medical Respite Center in partnership with the Rescue Mission of Trenton, which opened its doors in November. The Center currently has four beds; eventually, it will have eight. It's equipped to provide case management and care coordination as well as basic medical clinical services, including medication and chronic disease management, wound care, and behavioral health assessments.

Experts estimate that hospital care for unhoused people costs \$4,000 more per admission than it does for the general public, paid for by the community. Medical respite centers help alleviate those costs. The Rescue Mission's Medical Respite Center is funded through state and county grants, but Harris plans to spend his remaining time at SPIA researching ways to diversify funding, including working with hospitals, insurance companies, and New Jersey Medicaid to make medical respite a reimbursable service.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

NJ's Point-in-Time Count and Project Homeless Connect Events Happening Next Week - Volunteers Needed!

New Jersey's annual survey of the unhoused, referred to as the Point-in-Time Count (PIT) begins next Tuesday, January 29th, and continues in some communities throughout the week. While the numbers produced by the Count are just a snapshot of one moment in time, and are always an undercount, their significance cannot be understated. These numbers of individuals living in shelters and on the streets are used to inform policy and

funding allocation decisions and help communities and their leaders understand the scope of the problem.

In numerous NJ communities, corresponding Project Homeless Connect events will be occurring next week as well. These are service fairs designed to connect the unhoused to services, supplies and support. Volunteers are still needed! If you're interested in helping, please see [this list](#) of events.

For more details on the 2025 NJ count, see [this article](#) from today's news.

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.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

**LET'S END HOMELESSNESS
TOGETHER**



Apply to be a **HOUSING READINESS COORDINATOR**



AmeriCorps
New Jersey

This is an AmeriCorps national service opportunity.

Placements available in Bergen, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, and Mercer Counties

Empower

shelter clients to achieve **Housing Readiness** and **navigate the complexities of securing housing:**

- Acquiring identification
- Accessing a reliable source of income
- Developing skills to maintain tenancy
- Securing funds for rent and security deposits

Benefits

- Living Allowance/Stipend
- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon completion of service
- Health coverage and childcare benefits
- Professional development and networking opportunities
- And more!

APPLY NOW!

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

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



NOW HIRING:

Director of Shelter Services – Family Preservation Center [Read More](#)
[Apply Here](#)

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS

Newark Opens More Transitional Housing For Homeless

NJ Spotlight News

The City of Newark has implemented "housing first" initiatives, including a program designating 200 public housing units as transitional housing for chronically homeless residents. With support from Bridges Outreach, residents receive wrap-around services, contributing to a reported 50% drop in Newark's homelessness rate last year, according to state data.



Housing The Homeless: New Initiative In Newark Making 200 Public Housing Units Available

ROI-NJ.com

Rich Uniacke, President of Bridges Outreach and a board member of the New Jersey Coalition to End Homelessness (NJCEH), emphasized his organization's commitment to supporting Newark's chronically homeless residents through "The Path Home" program. He highlighted that Bridges Outreach will continue providing crucial services such as housing navigation, behavioral health counseling, financial assistance, and other supports to help residents build strong plans and achieve independent, successful futures. Uniacke expressed enthusiasm for collaborating with the City of Newark to make a lasting impact.





With Homelessness Rising New Eviction Protection May Help

NJ Spotlight News

Lawmakers in New Jersey are advancing a bill to extend eviction protections for senior citizens and disabled renters living in buildings converted to condominiums or cooperatives. The proposed legislation would amend the 1981 "Senior Citizens and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act" to offer lifetime protection, addressing rising eviction rates and the significant barriers these vulnerable populations face in securing new housing. Advocates, including Connie Mercer of the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness, praise the effort as a critical step toward safeguarding housing stability and human rights.



The Path Home In Newark, NJ: Strategies To End Chronic Homelessness

National League Of Cities

Luis Ulerio, Director of the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services in Newark, this article highlights the city's progress in addressing homelessness under Mayor Ras J. Baraka's leadership. Through initiatives like the *Path Home* strategic plan, innovative housing solutions such as the "Come As You Are" community, and enhanced street outreach efforts, Newark has achieved a 57.6% reduction in its unsheltered population since 2022. Looking ahead to 2025, the city remains committed to expanding transitional housing, building a resource center, and leveraging public-private



APP Journalist Shined Light On Hidden Toms River Homeless Camp

Asbury Park Press

Asbury Park Press (APP) journalists brought attention to the hidden homeless encampment in Toms River's Winding River Park, sparking action that led to tangible change. Through in-depth reporting and compelling photography, they highlighted the personal stories and systemic challenges faced by the camp's residents. This persistent coverage not only informed the public but also motivated officials and advocates to collaborate on finding temporary shelter and long-term housing solutions for those living in the woods.



Preserving Open Space And Meeting Housing Obligations Don't Go Together In NJ

My Central Jersey

Preserving open space and addressing homelessness are interconnected issues that require a thoughtful balance between development and community needs. While New Jersey faces state-mandated housing obligations, these policies should also prioritize creating affordable housing to prevent and address homelessness. Instead of overdeveloping green spaces, the focus can shift to repurposing underutilized or vacant properties to provide housing solutions, ensuring we meet housing demands without compromising environmental preservation. This approach not only protects open space but also addresses the urgent need for safe, affordable housing, offering stability to those currently unhoused.



'I Slept With My Coat On': Newark Tenants Endure Frigid Apartments

nj.com

The situation at 440 Washington St. highlights the pressing need for reliable housing conditions, especially for vulnerable tenants relying on public subsidies. While the building's heat and other maintenance issues are being addressed, the ongoing struggle for basic services like heat and sanitation underscores the broader challenges that many low-income residents face in subsidized housing. Ensuring safe, healthy living conditions in these buildings is crucial not only for residents' well-being but also for preventing homelessness, as unstable housing situations can contribute to displacement.

Fair Share Housing Center Applauds Gov. Murphy's Commitment To Affordable Housing

Insider NJ

Fair Share Housing Center commended Governor Murphy's 2025 State of the State address, which emphasized addressing New Jersey's housing shortage and reforming zoning and permitting laws. Executive Director Adam Gordon highlighted the importance of the new affordable housing law and called for further action, including full funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and continued support for homeownership programs. This commitment ties directly to homelessness by ensuring



more affordable housing options for vulnerable populations, helping to prevent homelessness and support those who are experiencing it. The center looks forward to collaborating with the Governor and Legislature to advance these proposals and investments.



Do Empty Offices Equal New Affordable Housing?

Gothamist

Rep. Mikie Sherrill has introduced a bill to address the affordable housing crisis by offering tax breaks for converting vacant commercial and office spaces into housing. The proposal aims to help states like New Jersey tackle their housing shortage without encroaching on open spaces or wetlands. This initiative ties to efforts to address homelessness by increasing the availability of affordable housing, especially in underutilized properties, and supporting redevelopment in areas with a high demand for housing.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

How To End Homelessness

Colombia Magazine

In June, Denver Mayor Mike Johnston made a bold announcement, revealing a plan to eliminate homelessness for veterans in the city by the end of the year. His approach, inspired by Rosanne Haggerty's data-driven methods, focuses on aggressive outreach, building tiny homes, and providing health services to homeless veterans. While some locals were skeptical, experts believe this strategy could actually work, as most people experiencing homelessness want stable housing but are hindered by broken systems. This could be a game-changer for how cities address homelessness.



HUD Releases 2024 Annual Homeless Assessment Report

NLIHC

The 2024 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), released by HUD, reveals an 18% increase in homelessness in the U.S. from 2023 to 2024, with approximately 770,000 people affected. This increase spans nearly all populations, including individuals, families with children, seniors, and people of color, while veterans saw a decline in homelessness due to targeted funding. Contributing factors include a worsening affordable housing shortage, stagnant wages, inflation, and the ending of pandemic-era protections.



Stop Blaming The Shelters

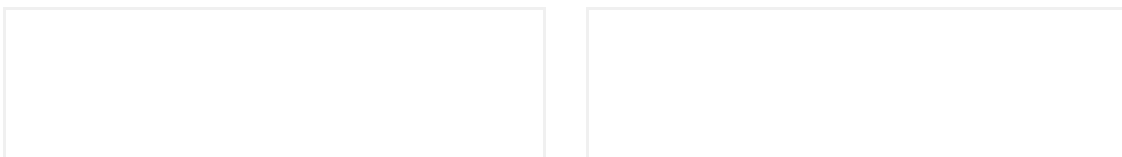
Illinois Times

The recent criticism of a local social services employee underscores the damaging tendency to blame shelters for the challenges of homelessness. Chronic homelessness is a complex issue rooted in trauma, systemic inequities, and the decline of social support networks, and it cannot be solved by emergency shelters alone. Instead of blaming these organizations, the piece calls for a shift in focus toward collective action, advocating for policy changes, community support, and better access to affordable housing and healthcare to prevent and address homelessness effectively.

Mayor Adam's Unveils \$650 Million Homelessness And Mental Health Plan

Gothamist

In his State of the City address, NYC Mayor Eric Adams announced a \$650 million investment to help those experiencing homelessness and mental illness, alongside plans to add 900 Safe Haven beds and a new facility for psychiatric care. Despite facing a corruption trial and challenges from rising living costs and homelessness, Adams outlined a strategy to build more housing, reform zoning, and improve city parks while addressing childhood poverty through targeted services. However, advocates remain skeptical about some of his proposals, including the push to forcibly hospitalize mentally ill individuals.





New Homelessness Data: How Does California Compare To The Rest Of The County?

SMDP

California still has the largest homeless population in the U.S., but the crisis is growing more slowly compared to other states, with a 3% increase last year. While homelessness surged nationally by over 18%, California saw reductions in certain groups, including homeless veterans and young people without guardians. Governor Newsom points to these trends as signs that his homelessness strategies are making progress, though he acknowledges more work is needed.



New \$3M Marietta Tiny Home Community In The Works For Homeless Students

Fox 5

A new \$3 million tiny home community, Emmanuel's Village, will provide transitional housing for homeless students and their families in Marietta, Georgia. The village, consisting of 15 tiny homes, aims to offer a stable living environment for up to a year and a half, helping families move from survival to stability. The initiative, led by local nonprofits and community members, has been approved by Marietta city leaders and is supported by donations from churches and residents.



Opinion: He Died Homeless. That's Not A 'Squatter' That's A Failure Of Humanity.

CT Mirror

The death of a person inside a health system highlights the dehumanization of people experiencing homelessness, with the individual being labeled a "squatter" instead of receiving support. This tragedy underscores the failures in housing policy and social safety nets, revealing how the system forces individuals to hide in order to survive. It calls for a shift in how we address homelessness, advocating for



[New Study Finds Nearly 1 in 4 Youth In Denver Experienced Homelessness](#)

Denver 9 News

A new study reveals that nearly 25% of Denver teens aged 14 to 17 experienced housing insecurity in 2021, far surpassing previous estimates based on traditional point-in-time counts. Using data from Denver Public Schools, the Colorado Division of Child Welfare, and the Denver-Metro Homeless Management Information System, researchers uncovered that homelessness often goes unnoticed, encompassing situations like doubling up in apartments or lacking a permanent address. With Black and Hispanic youth disproportionately affected, advocates stress the need for increased resources to address the growing crisis and provide long-term support for unhoused teens.

[Governor Forces Removal Of Homeless People By New Orleans Superdome Before Super Bowl](#)

CNN US



Ahead of the Super Bowl, Louisiana authorities cleared homeless encampments near the Superdome and relocated people to a temporary warehouse facility. Governor Jeff Landry framed this move as necessary for safety, but many feel it undermines the city's efforts to tackle homelessness. The \$16.2 million cost of the warehouse facility raises concerns about long-term solutions, with critics arguing it's a short-term fix instead of addressing permanent housing needs. Meanwhile, homelessness across the U.S. hit record highs in 2024, with more than 770,000 people affected.

[First Look: Mayors Across U.S. Warn Of Worsening Housing Crisis](#)

CNNUS

Mayors across the U.S. are warning of a worsening housing crisis, citing a severe shortfall in available homes that has been driving up both rental and home purchase prices. This housing shortage, along with rising mortgage rates, is pushing housing



out of reach for many, contributing to growing homelessness. According to a new survey, mayors believe the crisis will deepen in the coming years without significant federal intervention to increase affordable housing options and support low-income communities.



What Happened When A City Started Accepting - Not Evicting- Homeless Camps

BBC

Halifax is addressing its homelessness crisis by designating specific sites where unhoused individuals can lawfully camp, providing amenities like portable toilets and regular outreach visits. This approach aims to offer a safer, more stable option compared to forced removals, allowing the city to focus services while awaiting the development of affordable housing. However, the policy remains controversial, with concerns about safety, community impact, and its provisional nature.



Beyond The Statue: Homelessness Must Be Addressed As A Public Health Priority

Daily Bruin

"Beyond the Statute," a series by Sierra Benayon-Abraham, examines the intersection of public health policies and the lived experiences of marginalized communities, with a focus on systemic inequities. A recent column highlights the devastating health effects of homelessness, where the absence of stable housing exacerbates chronic illnesses, limits access to care, and fuels cycles of poverty. By addressing homelessness as a public health crisis, Sierra advocates for policies that view housing not as a privilege, but as a vital component of health and well-being.



POEM:...After A Loss In A Midwest Court House.

SHELTERFORCE

This poem, from the author's debut collection *The Rent Eats First*, reflects their experience as a housing justice lawyer, blending the emotional weight of legal struggles with the power of creative writing. The poem critiques the dehumanizing nature of the legal system, particularly in eviction cases, and the subtle violence embedded in its language. The author emphasizes how poetry nurtures empathy and creative thinking, which are

vital tools in both legal advocacy and the fight for housing justice.

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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