

Homelessness MATTERS



January 8th, 2025

Happy New Year from our team at the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness!

We look forward to continuing to provide you with updated news and information on homelessness in New Jersey and beyond through these newsletters every other week throughout 2025. We hope you'll follow along with us and feel free to reach out with any questions or ideas for future publications.

*"People who are homeless are not social inadequates. They are people without homes."-
Sheila McKechnie*

COALITION NEWS



Calling All Homeless Service Providers Who Work With Kids

The Coalition will meet virtually with shelter providers that serve families from across the state on **Wednesday January 15th at 10:00 am**. Please join the conversation on how we can work together to enhance programming and develop resources for children in your facility. Please click below to register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/lhasE_HoS66PywrmRh7jeQ

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.

DCA Webinar on State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP)

Join DCA's Office of Homelessness Prevention and Housing Assistance for a 60-minute webinar on navigating the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) pre-application and waitlist process to help your consumers successfully submit an SRAP pre-application.

Date: Thursday, January 9th

Time: 3:30 pm to 4:30pm

Platform: Microsoft Teams

What You'll Learn:

- Step-by-step portal navigation
- Documentation requirements
- Common pitfalls and solutions
- Post-submission procedures

Register here: [Click here](#)

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

ACTION ALERT:

Call Your Members of Congress Today to Urge Them to Protect Medicaid from Harmful Cuts!

Call (202) 224-3121 NOW to urge your representatives to oppose any cuts to Medicaid!

Please call your congressional representatives, using this action from the Legal Action Center, to urge them to protect Medicaid from harmful cuts and restrictive conditions. Among the options being discussed are work requirements for enrollees (despite the fact that most people receiving Medicaid do work) and other cuts to federal funding.

Sample call script:

I am a constituent from Senator/Representative ___'s state/District calling to urge them to protect Medicaid. Cuts to this program would cause millions of Americans nationwide to lose vital health care coverage and would be especially harmful to people in need of substance use and mental health care. I strongly urge the Senator/Member to protect this lifeline and oppose cuts or harmful policy changes that would threaten people's ability to access lifesaving care.

Be sure to share your personal story, letting them know why Medicaid matters to you, your loved ones, your community members, and the millions of Americans whose futures hang in the balance.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Apply to be a HOUSING READINESS COORDINATOR



Placements available in Bergen, Camden, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, and Passaic counties

EMPOWER | BENEFITS

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

- 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, Mercer and Passaic counties.

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS

[Paterson Moves Ahead With Ordinance To Penalize Homeless Encampments](#)

northjersey.com

The city of Paterson is moving forward with an ordinance that would ban camping or sleeping in public spaces, imposing fines up to \$2,000 and jail sentences of up to 90 days. Mayor Andre Sayegh argues this measure addresses sidewalk obstructions and community complaints while offering support through various programs. Critics, however, argue that such punitive actions criminalize homelessness, create barriers to housing, and fail to address the underlying issue of affordable housing shortages. The ordinance is scheduled for a final vote on Jan. 21.



[With Homelessness Rising, New Eviction Protection May Help](#)

NJ Spotlight News

Senior citizens and people with physical and mental disabilities may soon have greater legal protections to prevent forced evictions if their rental housing is converted to a condominium or a cooperative. A bill pending before state lawmakers aims to extend the protected tenancy period for these renters from 40 years to their full lifetimes. Eviction is now among the leading causes of homelessness in the state in recent years, increasing significantly from 14.1% in 2022 to 18.51% in 2023, according to a report from the state Office of Homelessness Prevention. Coalition Executive Director, Connie Mercer, is quoted, noting "The New Jersey Coalition to End Homelessness applauds the intent to preserve the dignity and safety of our elderly and handicapped with this bill."



[Here's What's Driving the Surge in Homelessness: An Interview with Michael Callahan](#)

NJ Spotlight News

Last week the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's annual homelessness assessment report found more than 770,000 people experiencing homelessness across the country on a single night in January last year. That is an 18% increase from the 2023 assessment.

In New Jersey, the point-in-time count from January 2024 saw an even higher increase 24% over the prior year. NJ Spotlight sat down with NJ's Director of the Office of Homelessness Prevention, who explained that "one of the main precipitating causes of homelessness, it's not what people would generally associate with homelessness being either mental health challenges or substance use. In fact, it's evictions and being asked to leave a shared residence."



[Atlantic City Launches New Effort](#)



[Answering Demand In Camden, Overnight Homeless Shelter](#)

To End Unsheltered Homelessness

NJBIZ

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) launched a three-year initiative aimed at addressing unsheltered homelessness in Atlantic City. The initiative focuses on collaboration between the city, nonprofits, and healthcare providers, with a strategy to improve outreach, shelter access, prevention services, and housing options. The program will also implement real-time data tracking to better target outreach efforts and create citywide care standards, while focusing on specific populations such as seasonal workers, veterans, and individuals with health conditions.

TAP into Camden

Joseph's House, a homeless shelter in Camden, is transitioning to a 24/7 operation to better support individuals who have nowhere else to go during the day after its nightly closure. The shelter serves individuals with complex needs, including those battling addiction, mental illness, or chronic homelessness, and aims to expand its services to help them stabilize. While the initiative is welcomed, the shelter faces challenges related to funding and resources, emphasizing the need for community support to sustain its expanded hours and services.



Affordable Housing Is The Key To New Jersey's Future

nj.com

New Jersey's severe affordable housing shortage disproportionately affects Latino families, exacerbating racial and social inequities. The Mount Laurel Doctrine, a policy that requires municipalities to provide a fair share of affordable housing, has been a key solution, with recent legal changes streamlining the process and promoting inclusive development. These efforts offer transformative opportunities for families, improving education, health, and economic outcomes, and benefiting entire communities by fostering economic growth and social cohesion.



Judge Rejects 26 NJ Towns' Attempt To Stop Affordable Housing Law From Moving Forward

Gothamist

A New Jersey judge denied 26 towns' request to pause the state's affordable housing process while their lawsuit challenging new requirements is ongoing. Judge Robert Lougy ruled that the public interest in creating affordable housing outweighs the towns' claims of being overburdened, emphasizing the need for equitable housing solutions. The towns plan to appeal, while state officials and housing advocates commend the decision as a step toward meeting the state's housing needs under the Mount Laurel doctrine.

Mental Health Needs For NJ Homeless Population

THIRTEEN PBS

The mental health needs of New Jersey's homeless population, particularly children, are rising as housing instability takes a toll on emotional well-being. At a hearing in Princeton, advocates urged the state to expand mental health services to better support those facing homelessness, highlighting the growing urgency of this issue.



[New Jersey Towns Face Key Affordable Housing Deadline This Month](#)

Gothamist

New Jersey municipalities face a January 31 deadline to either accept or challenge their assigned affordable housing obligations under a new law aiming to build over 84,000 homes and rehabilitate 65,000 units by 2035. While some towns embrace the state's targets, others are suing, arguing the requirements strain infrastructure and lack feasibility. Despite ongoing litigation, all municipalities must prepare plans to meet their obligations by June 30, navigating a contentious and complex process.



[Toms River's Homeless Camps Cleared, As Mayor Connects Occupants With Accommodations, Programs Ahead Of Christmas Season](#)

Shore News Network

Toms River Mayor Dan Rodrick announced the successful clearance of the township's homeless camps, ensuring all former residents received state-funded accommodations outside of Toms River. Rodrick criticized the "industrial homeless complex," suggesting that some organizations financially benefit from maintaining individuals in shelters rather than promoting long-term stability. He emphasized the township's



[NJ Rent Assistance: Who Gets Preference?](#)

PIX 11

New Jersey will accept applications for its State Rental Assistance Program waitlist from January 13 at 9 a.m. to January 31 at 5 p.m. Eligible low-income residents can apply online during this period. The program prioritizes veterans, homeless individuals, seniors, and disabled persons. A lottery will select 6,000 households for the waitlist, with notifications sent via email.

commitment to providing immediate housing assistance and addressing systemic issues to help individuals achieve lasting stability.

[HomeSharing Celebrates 40 Years Of Preventing Homelessness](#)

TAP into Breeze



HomeSharing
An Affordable
Housing Alternative

HomeSharing, established in 1984 by Shuey Horowitz, provides affordable housing by matching “Providers,” who need to share their homes, with “Seekers” searching for low-cost housing. Over its 40-year history, the program has expanded across 11 New Jersey counties, diversified its funding sources, and continues to address the increasing economic challenges of its clients. By fostering community-driven solutions, HomeSharing transforms lives, as shown in success stories like Susan’s, where a simple housing match brought financial stability and emotional peace to both parties.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

[VA Announces Plan To Award Hundreds Of Millions In Grants, Launches New Initiative To Help](#)

US Interagency Council On Homelessness

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced three key initiatives to assist Veterans experiencing homelessness, including awarding funding for supportive services and case management grants, and launching the Mayor's Pledge to House Homeless Veterans. The VA will distribute millions of dollars in grants to support rapid rehousing, prevent homelessness, and fund case management for existing programs. The Mayor's Pledge aims to engage mayors and local landlords to help provide permanent housing solutions for Veterans, a critical component in the VA's effort to reduce Veteran homelessness, which has decreased significantly since 2010.



[HUD Highlights Significant Accomplishments In Rental Assistance Programs, Strengthening Housing](#)

HUD

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.

[HUD Awards \\$225M To Preserve And Renovate Manufactured Homes Across 26 States](#)

Housingwire



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded \$225 million to 17 groups in 26 states as part of the Preservation and Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement (PRICE) program. This historic funding will preserve and revitalize manufactured housing and communities, providing essential improvements like repairs, accessibility upgrades, and resilience strategies, while promoting affordable homeownership. The program received overwhelming demand, with funds supporting low- and moderate-income residents, especially in rural, suburban, and disaster-impacted areas, and will also help transition to resident-managed communities.



[HUD: Housing Programs Crucial As Homelessness Reaches New Heights](#)

Real Estate News

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reveals that homelessness reached a new high in 2024, with 771,480 people experiencing homelessness, marking an 18% increase from the previous year. While families and people of color, especially Black Americans, are disproportionately affected, the report highlights a positive trend with a decline in homelessness among veterans, which has decreased by 55% since 2009. HUD's efforts include significant funding



[Squeezed By High Prices, A Growing Number Of Americans Find Shelter In Long Term Motels](#)

NBC News

Once a middle-class family, they now live in a budget motel after losing their home to rising rents. With their belongings crammed into a single room, cooking in a toaster oven, and struggling to save, they're caught in a cycle that feels impossible to escape. Across the country, soaring housing costs are forcing more families into this heartbreaking trap, highlighting the urgent need for affordable housing.

for homelessness prevention and affordable housing initiatives, with a focus on addressing systemic barriers such as restrictive zoning and land use policies.



Trump's Pick To Lead Federal Housing Agency Has Opposed Efforts To Aid The Poor

Non Profit Explorer

As Scott Turner, Donald Trump's nominee to lead HUD, prepares for confirmation, his record raises questions about his alignment with the agency's mission. Turner's legislative history includes opposing affordable housing expansion, tenant protections, and funding for homelessness initiatives, reflecting a skepticism about government intervention in poverty alleviation. Advocates warn that his views, rooted in conservative Christian ideologies and distrust of welfare, could undermine HUD's role in addressing the nation's housing crisis.



Can Storytelling Help Reduce The Suffering Of Homelessness?

TIME

Homelessness represents a profound health injustice, with research indicating that being unhoused increases the risk of death tenfold. While natural disasters inspire collective aid and neighborly compassion, societal responses to homelessness often lack the same empathy, as those displaced by systemic failures are met with neglect rather than support. Storytelling, through platforms like Hollywood films or social media, has the power to humanize the unhoused, challenge stigmas, and foster the communal empathy necessary to drive meaningful action.



Families With Children Are Experiencing Homelessness In Record Numbers HUD Report Shows

Philly Voice

The homelessness crisis continues



Housing Shortages Create An Alternative To NIMBYism

Governing

to escalate in Philadelphia and nationwide, with over 770,000 people experiencing homelessness during the 2024 HUD point-in-time count, a historically high figure. In Philadelphia, homelessness has risen for the third consecutive year, driven by rising living costs, insufficient affordable housing, and untreated behavioral health issues. Local initiatives, such as adding winter beds and piloting stable housing programs, aim to address the crisis, but the demand for assistance continues to outpace resources.



[The Clear, Unimplemented Solution To Homelessness](#)

New University

Homelessness is a complex issue rooted in systemic inequities such as racial disparities, unaffordable housing, and underfunded mental health and domestic violence resources. Instead of addressing these factors, many counties focus on punitive measures like hostile architecture and laws that criminalize the unhoused. True solutions require empathy-driven policies that prioritize affordable housing, accessible healthcare, and increased funding for preventative programs to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

The YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard) movement has grown from a small group in the Bay Area to a nationwide coalition advocating for increased housing development. By addressing the housing crisis with bipartisan appeal—liberals favoring affordability and conservatives seeking reduced regulation—the movement has influenced local and federal policies, promoting denser housing and challenging restrictive zoning laws. Its grassroots activism, professional advocacy, and partnerships across political ideologies have made it a powerful force against traditional NIMBY opposition.



[Surviving On \\$1800 A Month In Social Security, She Died Looking For A Place To Live](#)

USA Today

An older woman, facing eviction after 23 years in her apartment, struggled to navigate long waitlists and unfulfilled promises for housing assistance. Despite efforts to help, she became homeless and passed away just days before her 71st birthday, highlighting the dire challenges aging Americans face in high-cost cities, with limited resources and support.

[Will The Next HUD Secretary Fight For The Unhoused?](#)

The Philadelphia Tribune

President-elect Donald Trump nominated Scott Turner to serve as the secretary of HUD. As a lawmaker in the Texas House of Representatives, Turner opposed a bill to expand affordable rental housing. He voted against the funding for a public-private partnership to support people experiencing homelessness. The pastor turned law maker follows in the footsteps of other "compassionate conservatives" whose administrations led to the creation of homelessness as we know it today.



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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