

July 17th, 2025

## COALITION NEWS



### **NJCEH and NJAMHAA Announce an Important Collaboration that will Improve Outcomes for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness and Behavioral Healthcare Needs**

MERCERVILLE/TRENTON: The New Jersey Coalition to End Homelessness (NJCEH) and the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) are proud to announce that The State of New Jersey has authorized legislation that approves behavioral health treatment to be provided in homeless emergency shelters. The Department of Health, Office of Licensing and the Department of Health and Human Services/Medicaid have confirmed that behavioral health treatment can be integrated into homeless emergency shelters and, furthermore, the services can be billed to Medicaid.

This collaboration validates the increasing recognition that since 85% of the homeless population are in shelters, incorporating programs to address social determinants of health in those shelters will improve both short- and long-term outcomes for the 50% of shelter clients who need behavioral health services. These statistics were determined through a survey conducted and scored by Mathematica Policy Research.

The on-site model mitigates the hard fact that the homeless population is expensive and difficult to treat. Outside the shelters, they are subject to the daily physical and emotional trauma of their situations, making it challenging for them to stay connected and keep community-based appointments. Getting their treatment at shelters will greatly increase the likelihood of consistent and meaningful treatment.

"This is an opportunity for us to build an integrated network that bridges the work of these two systems," said Connie Mercer, Executive Director of NJCEH. "Both Behavioral Health and Emergency Shelter systems have unending commitments to serve and treat all in need with the most professional staff."

"For decades, NJAMHAA has advocated to bring mental health and substance use services to individuals who need them on-site — 'meeting them where they are' — and that certainly includes emergency shelters," said Debra L. Wentz, PhD, President and CEO of

NJAMHAA. “Since so many homeless individuals have behavioral health issues and conversely, those with mental illnesses and substance use disorders may be at risk of becoming homeless if they do not receive the services they require, this is a ‘marriage made in heaven’ to bring these services where they are needed. I have great confidence that through our collaboration with the NJCEH, tremendous strides will be made toward realizing this critical goal.”

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### **A Young Princeton Resident Follows Her Childhood Passion - Ending Homelessness**

*TAPinto Princeton*

Coalition Policy Associate Raisa Rubin-Stankiewicz, a powerful voice in the movement to end homelessness in NJ, is spotlighted in this feature that traces her path from a compassionate 10-year-old making jewelry to support the unhoused, to a fearless statewide advocate fighting for housing justice. Her story is a reminder that empathy, purpose, and action can start young—and change lives.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION**



### **URGENT: Restore the Affordable Housing Trust Fund!**

New Jersey leaders just raided the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, putting hundreds of urgently needed homes at risk. Meanwhile, a new mansion tax is set to bring in over \$300 million a year—yet not a dime is going to affordable housing. We’re demanding the Governor and Legislature restore the Trust Fund and invest at least \$150 million annually from the mansion tax into housing—[join us now to make it](#)

## NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



### Toms River Council Meeting Motion to Seize Christ Church via Eminent Domain

*Patch*

Toms River officials are moving to seize church property through eminent domain—retaliation for their plan to build a shelter for people experiencing homelessness. This land grab must be stopped. Join us at the council meeting on **July 30th at 4 PM**, 33 Washington St., Toms River. ***Stand for justice. Stand for housing. Every voice matters.***



**National Low Income  
Housing Coalition**

### Passaic NJ Tenants Push Rent Cap Reduction on November Ballot

*NLIHC*

In Passaic, New Jersey, tenants are pushing back against rising rents and displacement by submitting a petition to place a rent stabilization measure on the November ballot. The proposed change would lower the city's rent cap from 6% to 3% in an effort to protect low-income renters and immigrant families from eviction and housing insecurity. With over 500 signatures collected, this tenant-led campaign shows the power of local organizing to fight predatory practices and preserve affordability.



### Housing Advocates Push for More Money for NJ Affordable Fund

*NEW JERSEY MONITOR*

Housing advocates are calling on New Jersey lawmakers to reverse a last-minute decision in the state budget that diverted \$125 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, leaving just \$5 million to address a severe housing shortage. With a deficit of up to 300,000 affordable units statewide, advocates warn that this cut will stall critical housing development projects and deepen the affordability crisis. While the state argues the funds are going to other housing-related programs, critics say this move undermines long-term housing stability and voter priorities.



### JFS Launches Housing Assistance Program

*Downbeach.com*

Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties has launched the Housing Supports Program to help NJ FamilyCare members facing homelessness secure stable housing. In partnership with Managed Care Organizations, the program offers personalized case management, housing navigation, and access to financial and legal supports. JFS aims to assist 145 individuals in its first year, emphasizing that housing is a human right and key to overall wellness.



### Housing Network Steps Up Efforts to Require NJ to Dedicate Mansion Tax to Affordable Housing

*INSIDER NJ*

The Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey is calling on state leaders to restore funding to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund after this year's budget diverted millions away from it, despite the introduction of a new mansion tax expected to generate over \$300 million annually. Advocates argue that while the tax was a positive step, the failure to direct its revenue toward affordable housing contradicts its purpose and worsens New Jersey's severe housing shortage. With nearly 300,000 affordable homes needed statewide, housing organizations warn that critical development projects will be stalled unless funding is restored this summer.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



### 'There Is No Place for Us': How Americans Were Pushed into Homelessness

*KCRW*

Journalist Brian Goldstone's new book, *There Is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America*, challenges how we define homelessness in the U.S. He argues that the government's narrow definition —



### Tell Congress: HUD Must Keep Its Promises

*NAEH*

Homeless service providers are facing an unexpected challenge. HUD is walking back its two-year commitment and now requiring providers to reapply for



limited to those living on the streets or in shelters — excludes millions of families living in cars, motels, and overcrowded housing. Through the stories of five families over five years, Goldstone exposes how policy failures, rising rents, and the erosion of public housing push people into homelessness, while outdated systems and definitions leave them invisible and without support.

Continuum of Care funding in FY2025 — a time-consuming process that diverts critical staff time away from housing people. Advocates are urging Congress to intervene and keep the focus where it belongs: on ending homelessness, not chasing paperwork.



### Smith, Rounds Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Empower States and Communities to Reduce Homelessness

*Tina Smith*

The *Reducing Homelessness Through Program Reform Act* is a bipartisan bill aimed at cutting red tape and giving local communities more flexibility to address homelessness. It streamlines the Continuum of Care funding process, simplifies Housing Choice Voucher rules, improves interagency coordination, and invests in technology upgrades—all to ensure resources reach people faster and more effectively. Advocates say the reforms will reduce inefficiencies, empower frontline providers, and help more people access housing and services without unnecessary delays.



### Lawsuits are Forcing Cities to Clear Homeless Encampments Even When No Shelter Exists

*Invisible People*

Following the *Grants Pass v. Johnson* decision, lawsuits are increasingly being filed to force cities to clear homeless encampments—even when no alternative shelter exists. Advocates warn these legal actions criminalize survival, divert resources from real housing solutions, and worsen conditions for unhoused people. Instead of punitive enforcement, they call for compassionate, long-term strategies that prioritize housing and support over arrests and sweeps.



# I am a Homeless Teenager in Detroit. I'm Also an Honor Student, a School Leader, and a Poet. This is My Story of Eviction and Resilience

CHALKBEAT DETROIT

This powerful personal story highlights how housing insecurity deeply affects young people's lives—emotionally, academically, and socially. Through poetry and performance, one Detroit teen turned pain into purpose, using her voice to raise awareness about student homelessness. Despite the instability of eviction, constant moving, and emotional strain, she persevered with the support of caring teachers, peers, and after-school programs, proving that compassion and community can help students overcome even the toughest odds.

## Leftist Lawmakers Want to Make Homeless Encampments a Nationwide Crisis

FOX News



The “Housing Not Handcuffs Act,” introduced by Reps. Jayapal and Frost, aims to prevent federal agencies from criminalizing people experiencing homelessness for engaging in basic life-sustaining activities on public land—like sleeping, eating, or resting. Supporters argue it’s a compassionate step toward human rights, while critics claim it would limit local control and enable unsafe encampments without addressing root issues like addiction and mental illness. The bill has sparked strong debate, reflecting the deep divide over how best to address homelessness across the country. .

## You're Not Angry Enough About Homelessness in America

CURRENT AFFAIRS

This powerful reflection highlights the brutal realities of America's housing crisis—where skyrocketing rents, predatory landlord practices, and a dysfunctional system leave even working people in constant precarity. Through personal experience and analysis of books like *There Is No Place for Us*, it exposes how housing insecurity isn't just about lack of shelter—it's about power, profit, and policy failure. The piece calls for a bold shift: recognizing housing as a human right and rejecting band-aid fixes in favor of universal, dignified, and truly affordable housing for all.



## Homelessness, Addiction Symptoms of a System

ORILLIA MATTERS.com

This column calls for a radical overhaul of how society addresses homelessness and addiction—arguing that these issues are not personal failings but systemic failures. Real change, they note, requires political courage, major public investment, and a shift from blame to compassion, with solutions rooted in housing as a human right, integrated care, and trauma-informed support. Without systemic reform, we will continue to see shelters overwhelmed, public resources misused, and people in crisis left behind.

## Death by Deadline: Trump's HHS Is Making It Impossible to Protect Homeless Youth

Yahoo! news

The federal government's rushed overhaul of youth homelessness grants is placing critical services in jeopardy, giving providers just 14 days to meet complex new requirements without notice, guidance, or support. The sudden elimination of the standalone Street Outreach Program—vital for preventing trafficking and exploitation—along with burdensome new mandates like law enforcement MOUs and marriage promotion education, threatens the survival of life-saving programs. This isn't reform; it's reckless, and it puts tens of thousands of vulnerable youth at risk.

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We love to share news about the accomplishments, events job opportunities and noteworthy activities of NJ's homelessness service agencies. If you have something to share, please send it to us at [info@NJCEH.org](mailto:info@NJCEH.org)

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