

Homelessness MATTERS



March 12, 2026

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- **Coalition Updates:** Coalition applauds budget investments in housing and urges continued action to address the growing crisis; Coalition supports bipartisan bill to expand “Code Blue” shelter funding.
- **Resources for Providers:** Learn how the NJ budget works with NJCEH and LWVNJ; Client Engagement Training for Case Managers; Suicide Prevention Training; Mental Health Recognition and Response for Frontline Staff
- **Opportunities for Action:** HUD work rules threaten housing; submit comments to protect rental assistance; nearly 37,000 children at risk of homelessness – submit comments opposing HUD mixed-family housing proposal
- **NJ Homelessness in the News:** NJ lawmakers consider bills to ease housing costs and strengthen tenant protections; leaders urged to expand housing and eviction prevention
- **News From Around the Country:** Alabama panhandling laws blocked - courts uphold free speech and call for housing solutions; experts cite income inequality as key driver of housing instability - urge stronger protections and subsidies

COALITION UPDATES



"A Statement of Values": Governor's Budget Address Includes \$25 Million for Rapid Re-housing, Invests in Bringing Veterans Home, Begins to Restore Affordable Housing Trust Fund

We applaud Governor Sherrill for proposing \$25 million for rapid re-housing programs and \$11 million to expand Bringing Veterans Home, recognizing the urgent need to address New Jersey's growing homelessness crisis. We also welcome her commitment to begin restoring the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, a critical resource for building affordable homes at a time when the state's housing shortage is at an all-time high. Homelessness in New Jersey has increased 57% over the past three years, with more than 152,000 residents seeking homeless or homelessness prevention services last year. While these investments are an important step forward, additional funding is needed to strengthen New Jersey's homeless response system and meet the scale of the crisis. Homelessness is not inevitable, and with sufficient investment, political will, and leadership, New Jersey has the tools to end both veteran homelessness and homelessness more broadly.

[Read our full response here.](#)



[New Jersey Bill Looks to Increase Funding for Code Blue Shelters](#)

PIX 11

Representatives from the New Jersey Coalition to End Homelessness testified in support of a bipartisan bill in New Jersey that would create a grant-matching program to increase funding for “Code Blue” shelters during extreme winter weather. Advocates say the state’s current system has gaps in overnight capacity, leaving some municipalities with warming centers but no shelter beds. Service providers, including the Rescue Mission of Trenton, say shelters have been over capacity during recent cold snaps and that additional funding would help meet growing demand.

RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS



New Jersey Budget Process 101 Tuesday, March 17, 6 PM

Join the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness and the League of Women Voters of NJ for a training about the ins-and-outs of the NJ budget: how government agencies and the Office of Management and Budget collaborate to determine policy and program priorities and important fiscal deadlines:
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/5jvw_wvYSleNy6HckaCshA#/registration



Opioid
Response
Network

You asked, we listened! We are so excited to share a free training opportunity for Case Managers working in homeless services across New Jersey.

The NJ Coalition to End Homelessness is proud to partner with SAMHSA's Opioid Response Network to offer **Meeting Clients Where They Are: Stages of Change and Communication Strategies for Case Managers** on March 30th. This session will focus on practical tools to strengthen client engagement, enhance motivation, and support individuals navigating complex behavioral health and housing challenges.

Please see [this flyer](#) for full details. You can register using the links below:

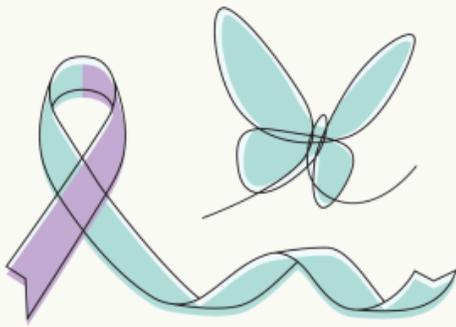
Monday, March 30th 10:00am - 11:30am:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/80bL07wQJea2KsAvHMjPg#?registration>

Monday, March 30th 2:00pm - 3:30pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/K0d0a9orTLKKDwf7-t3UGA#?registration>

Please feel free to share widely with your teams, and keep your eyes peeled for more exciting trainings in the coming months.



Suicide Prevention

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

During this 1-hour workshop, we will:

- * Understand the impact of suicide as a public health issue
- * Learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide
- * Learn how to offer hope to someone in crisis
- * Know how to get help and save a life

Session times:

6-7AM
8-9AM
10-11AM
2-3PM
4-5PM
6-7PM



bit.ly/14aprSP

- * *Please register for this workshop in advance by scanning the QR code or clicking the link.*
- * *When registering, be sure to indicate the time slot you plan to attend.*



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

Please contact Jaime Angelini with any questions regarding this training:
jangelini@mhanj.org

BE BOLD

JOIN US

Be BOLD training sessions

March 17th

at 8 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7 p.m.

Presented by the NJ Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, **Be BOLD** is an opportunity for frontline staff to learn the basics of mental health recognition and response. The training will prioritize the impact of perspective and importance of de-escalation and self-care.



The links below lead directly to registration:

Register for the 8:00 AM-9:00 AM Session:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/TF8Sk-MJRcyFDoxAwgf8BQ_

Register for the 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Session:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/vgrwkmxdTt2kru-xTEGu-A>

Register for the 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Session:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/4tPBvu3wREaVZwEKNhprMg>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



[Urge HUD: Reject Time Limits and Work Requirements on Rental Assistance that Keeps People Housed](#)

HUD has proposed a rule that would allow public housing agencies and HUD-assisted properties to impose work requirements and a two-year time limit on rental assistance — putting an estimated 3.3 million people, including 1.7 million children, at risk of losing their housing support. Housing assistance is often the only barrier preventing eviction and homelessness for low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities. We urge community members and service providers to contact their federal representatives and submit public comments opposing policies that would increase housing instability.

[Submit comments to HUD here](#). Rental assistance is a critical basic need, not a luxury. Families struggling to meet ends meet shouldn't have to jump through more hoops to avoid becoming homeless.



[Tell HUD: Keep Families Together - Don't Push 80,000 Families Toward Homelessness](#)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has proposed a rule that would force up to 80,000 mixed-status families to make an impossible choice: break the family apart to keep their housing or stay together and lose their housing assistance— putting nearly 37,000 children at risk of homelessness. This harmful policy would create new bureaucratic barriers, strip families of critical housing support, and push vulnerable households into crisis.

Today, the law has not changed, and families with mixed immigration status still have the right to stay in HUD housing if they choose to, but we must ensure that it stays this way.

We have until **Tuesday, April 21st** to speak out and submit comments opposing this proposed rule. [Tell HUD to withdraw this proposal: Families should never](#)

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



[NJ Lawmakers to Consider Package of Bills Aimed at Easing Housing Costs and Strengthening Tenant Protections](#)

THE Jersey Vindicator

Lawmakers in New Jersey are considering a package of housing bills aimed at reducing rent burdens and preventing displacement as housing costs continue to rise. Proposals include stronger tenant protections for seniors and people with disabilities, limits on rent-setting algorithms, tax relief for renters, and new rules to prevent applicants from being denied affordable housing based solely on credit history. The package also includes funding for emergency “Code Blue” shelters through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and utility assistance through the NJSHARES S.M.A.R.T. program, measures advocates say could help prevent homelessness and support residents in housing crisis.



[Sherill Has to End NJ's Homelessness Crisis. Here's How](#)

My Central Jersey

In an opinion column, Volunteers of America-Northern New Jersey urges Mikie Sherrill and state lawmakers to take stronger action to address the growing homelessness crisis. The piece argues that homelessness is fundamentally a housing issue and calls for expanded prevention efforts, including limits on eviction filings, more shelter capacity with coordinated access, and increased investment in affordable and supportive housing. It also urges the state to boost the State Rental Assistance Program and protect and expand the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to help keep residents stably housed.



[Toms River Motel Homeless, Fearing Eviction Again, Get Another Month](#)

Asbury Park Press

[New Report: Critical Shortage of Affordable Homes in New Jersey Persists Despite Progress](#)

INSIDER NJ

More than 100 housing and community organizations are urging Mikie Sherrill to fully fund and protect the state's Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the upcoming FY2027 budget, warning that New Jersey has only 34 affordable homes for every 100 extremely low-income renters. A new report from the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey and the National Low Income Housing Coalition highlights how the shortage is pushing many renters to spend more than half their income on housing or risk homelessness. Advocates are also calling for a share of mansion tax revenue to support the fund and for an expansion of the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit to boost affordable housing development.

A group of 16 people experiencing homelessness who have been living in a motel in Toms River, New Jersey for more than a year have been granted another month to stay while officials and service providers work to find longer-term housing solutions. The extension delays a planned eviction and gives local agencies additional time to secure placements or support for the residents, who have faced repeated uncertainty about where they would go next. Advocates say the situation highlights the ongoing shortage of stable housing options for people experiencing homelessness in the area.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



[U.S. Supreme Court Denies Alabama's Appeal of Panhandling Ruling](#)

yahoo! news

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear Alabama's appeal of a lower-court ruling that blocks enforcement of state laws criminalizing panhandling by people experiencing homelessness. The case, *Taylor v. Singleton*, challenged statutes that allowed arrests for asking for help in public, with courts finding such restrictions violate First Amendment free-speech protections.

SHELTERFORCE

Essential Reporting on Affordable Housing

[To Solve The Housing Affordability Crisis, Communities Must Confront Inequality](#)

Shelterforce

An opinion piece in Shelterforce argues that rising homelessness and housing instability are driven largely by widening income inequality rather than a simple shortage of housing. Drawing on research from the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, the author says income gains among higher earners are pushing housing prices beyond what low-income households can afford, increasing the risk of eviction, displacement, and homelessness.

Advocates from the Southern Poverty Law Center called the decision a win for free speech and urged the state to focus on housing solutions rather than criminalizing homelessness.

The article calls for stronger tenant protections, deeper affordable housing subsidies, and expanded social housing to keep vulnerable residents stably housed.

Emergency Rental Assistance Reduced Housing Insecurity and Improved Mental Health

NLIHC



National Low Income
Housing Coalition

New research highlighted by the National Low Income Housing Coalition finds that the federal Emergency Rental Assistance program helped reduce housing insecurity and lower the risk of eviction for low-income renters during the COVID-19 pandemic. By covering rent and utility costs, the program helped keep households stably housed and reduced the likelihood that renters would fall into homelessness. The study also found the assistance improved mental health outcomes by easing financial stress and allowing recipients to access more mental health care.



How to Make the Case for Supportive Housing

Shelterforce

An article in Shelterforce highlights how advocates are using research and data to defend permanent supportive housing as a proven solution to chronic homelessness. Studies cited by groups like the Urban Institute show that combining stable housing with voluntary support services helps people remain housed, reduces shelter stays, and lowers interactions with emergency services and the criminal justice system. Advocates warn that proposed federal changes to homelessness funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development could threaten



SAMHSA Announces More Than \$69 Million in Funding Opportunities for Serious Mental Illness and Suicide Prevention Grant Programs

U.S. Dept. of Human Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration announced \$69.1 million in federal grants through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to expand mental health treatment, suicide prevention, and assisted outpatient treatment programs. While the funding primarily targets serious mental illness and behavioral health care, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. noted that these efforts are intended to address root causes of addiction—including homelessness—by expanding access to treatment and recovery services. The announcement suggests that

thousands of supportive housing units nationwide.

improving mental health systems and treatment access is part of a broader strategy to stabilize vulnerable populations and reduce factors that can contribute to homelessness.



[Not in My Backyard? Data on Shelters Doesn't Back That Up](#)

Kitsap Sun

An opinion column pushes back on “Not In My Backyard” opposition to homeless shelters, arguing that fears about rising crime and falling property values are largely unsupported by evidence. Research from groups including the NYU Furman Center shows that supportive housing and shelters generally have little to no long-term impact on neighborhood crime or property values—and in some cases nearby conditions improve. The author calls on communities to move past stigma and embrace solutions like Housing First and low-barrier shelters to help people experiencing homelessness move off the streets and into stable housing.



[Court Watch: Orange County Residents Serve Time for Unlawful Camping](#)

Vanguard News

Across the U.S., laws criminalizing homelessness—like banning camping, sleeping, or storing belongings in public—trap people in a cycle of fines, arrest warrants, and jail time, while doing nothing to address the root causes of poverty. Research shows these policies fail to reduce street homelessness, worsen health outcomes, and cost far more than providing shelter and supportive housing. Instead of punishing survival, the country needs housing-first solutions that give unhoused individuals stability, safety, and a real path forward.

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

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