

# Homelessness MATTERS



December 4th, 2025

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- **Opportunities for Action:** *Urgent Statewide Briefing on CoC NOFO today at 2:30pm*
- **Resources for Service Providers:** *Statewide Medicaid Housing Info Session, Contingency Planning Guide, Final week to sign up for EAP*
- **New Jersey Homelessness in the News:** *NJ joins 20 state lawsuit challenging HUD cuts to the CoC program, Childcare Assistance enrollment reopens, and more...*
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## COALITION NEWS



### Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill Announces Transition Task Force

Last week, Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill unveiled an Interdisciplinary Task Force made up of experts from across sectors to help shape the priorities of the new administration. ***We're thrilled that our very own Connie Mercer was selected to serve*** bringing frontline insight on homelessness, housing, and food insecurity directly into the transition process.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

**Urgent Statewide Briefing on the CoC NOFO and the  
Threat to the NJ Housing System:  
Today, Thursday, December 4th, 2:30-3:30PM  
(note updated time)**

Today, December 4th at 2:30 PM, DCA, the Attorney General's Office, and HMIS are hosting a crucial statewide All-Housing Briefing on the significant changes in the

FY2025 Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). These federal shifts are projected to **push 3,300 additional New Jerseyans into homelessness in the first year alone**—a crisis our systems must be prepared to confront.

Please attend and share this webinar link broadly across your networks: [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_ODQyOWY0ZGQtNjUxMS00Y2I3LWJiNzYtY2ExOTkyNGNhMDRh%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%225076c3d1-3802-4b9f-b36a-e0a41bd642a7%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22c3eee07c-c638-44dc-b47c-a2f7576c4c2c%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ODQyOWY0ZGQtNjUxMS00Y2I3LWJiNzYtY2ExOTkyNGNhMDRh%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%225076c3d1-3802-4b9f-b36a-e0a41bd642a7%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22c3eee07c-c638-44dc-b47c-a2f7576c4c2c%22%7d)

## RESOURCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS



### [Statewide Housing Info Session on NJ's 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Waiver for Housing Support Services](#)

As a follow-up in the series of Statewide Housing Info sessions, the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF)'s Office of Housing is partnering with the NJ Department of Human Services to facilitate the next Housing Info session for Provider Partners, community stakeholders, and DCF teams.

**When: Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm-2:45pm.**  
**The meeting can be accessed by clicking the link [here](#).**

The session is an opportunity for community partners to access information and increase awareness about **NJ's 1115 Demonstration Waiver for Housing Support Services**. The DHS/DMAHS team will explore how community partners can stay connected to waiver and related funding opportunities.

This is also an opportunity to ask questions and clarify information; we ask that you share questions in advance via email with [DCF.Officeofhousing@dcf.nj.gov](mailto:DCF.Officeofhousing@dcf.nj.gov).



## Why You Need to Start Contingency Planning- Now

With the Trump Administration's 2025 pause on federal grants and loans, along with major changes to HUD's Continuum of Care funding, communities are being urged to prepare for significant disruptions to homelessness services. The National Alliance to End Homelessness has developed a three-part [Contingency Planning Toolkit](#) to help local partners assess the impact of funding cuts, prioritize resources, and plan strategically to protect vulnerable households. The toolkit includes a community impact survey, a decision-support tool, and a project-level checklist (coming in early 2026) to guide coordinated, informed planning across the entire safety net.


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# QUALITY & AFFORDABLE HELP

## WHEN YOUR STAFF – OR YOU – NEED IT

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for agencies of any size, providing Shelter and/or Services to those experiencing homelessness in New Jersey.



**NEW JERSEY COALITION TO  
END HOMELESSNESS**  
we can. we must. we will.

**Sign-Up by DEC. 5**  
**EAP Begins on JAN. 1, 2026**

**Contact Connie to sign-up and learn more: [CMercer@njceh.org](mailto:CMercer@njceh.org)**  
Check out ResponseWorks, Inc. at [www.responseworks.com](http://www.responseworks.com)

Reasons for your Agency to Engage an EAP	Quality EAP	Affordable Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased employee productivity</li><li>• Reduced absenteeism</li><li>• Enhanced employee retention</li><li>• Improved workplace morale and culture</li><li>• It is the right thing to do!</li><li>• Annual Usage Report</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Up to Four (4) Therapy Sessions for free; then employee is linked to their own work benefits for further sessions (if needed)</li><li>• Dependent Care, Consultation and Referral Services</li><li>• Financial and Legal Consultation</li><li>• EAP services available to all family members of your employees</li><li>• Monthly access for all employees to an online interactive resource: MindHealth Matters</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Base fee per Agency: \$500/year (for 20 or fewer employees) 20+ Employees: Base fee plus \$24 per employee each year</li><li>• NJCEH is making this EAP available to All Agencies that serve those experiencing homelessness.</li><li>• EAP services are available to Full-time and Part-time employees.</li></ul>

## **Bridges Outreach in Summit Sounds Alarm as HUD Cuts Permanent Housing Funds**

*TAPinto Summit*

Twenty state attorneys general have filed a lawsuit challenging HUD's major shift in Continuum of Care funding, which would cut permanent housing allocations from about 90% to 30% and redirect billions toward transitional housing and treatment programs. Summit-based Bridges Outreach and other advocates warn the changes would dismantle proven long-term housing pathways, increase criminalization of homelessness, and destabilize services across New Jersey amid a 54% rise in the state's homeless population since 2022. HUD defends the move as a necessary correction to "Housing First," but local leaders argue it threatens safety, stability, and comprehensive support for vulnerable residents.



## **Advocates Win Fight to Reopen Enrollment for N.J.'s Child Care Assistance Program**

*nj.com*

After public pressure from child-advocacy groups, the Murphy administration reversed its decision to freeze enrollment in New Jersey's Child Care Assistance Program and will reopen applications in December for up to 5,000 additional infants and toddlers. The \$870 million program, which helps 70,000 low-income families afford child care, had halted new enrollment in August after lawmakers cut planned funding, prompting strong criticism from advocates and lawmakers who pushed for a reversal. While supporters applaud the reopening, they warn the fix is temporary because enrollment will close again once the program reaches its new cap of 75,000 children, leaving long-term affordability challenges unresolved.



## **DCA Awards \$45M for Affordable Housing Projects Across NJ**

*NJBIZ*

New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs awarded more than \$45 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to 23 projects statewide, along with an additional \$10 million for Habitat for Humanity developments, to expand affordable rental and homeownership opportunities. The FY 2026 investments—part of over \$260 million the Murphy administration has committed to affordable housing—primarily support small, community-based projects that often struggle to secure financing and must remain deed-restricted for at least 20 years. DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn Suarez said the awards reflect the state's ongoing effort to create sustainable, accessible, and community-supported housing as New Jersey plans for 150,000 needed affordable units in the coming decade.





### Homeless Solutions Completes First Medicaid Housing Placement in State

*Chatham Courier*

Homeless Solutions completed New Jersey's first housing placement under the new NJ Family Care (Medicaid) 1115 Waiver Housing Supports program, securing an apartment for a 73-year-old man in under 60 days. The initiative allows Medicaid to fund pre-tenancy and tenancy-sustaining services for eligible individuals experiencing homelessness, enabling providers like Homeless Solutions to rapidly locate, secure and support stable housing. Leaders say the case demonstrates how coordinated health, housing, and community partnerships can transform lives, with the program set to begin broader referrals in January.



### Where Should He Go? Homeless Man's Endless Ocean County Woods Odyssey

*APP*

Rob Zahn, a 61-year-old former MTA worker who became homeless after a divorce and disability, has spent the year repeatedly displaced from makeshift camps in Brick and Lakewood as local police continue clearing encampments. His experience—marked by constant forced moves, injury, and dwindling safe places to stay—reflects a broader pattern of instability facing unhoused residents in the region as warming centers shrink and enforcement increases. Zahn's story illustrates how homelessness in these communities has become a cycle of relocation and survival, with people continually pushed from one fragile refuge to another.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

### Trump Sets New Direction on Homelessness Policy

*City Journal*

The Trump administration's revised HUD scoring criteria shift federal homelessness funding away from Housing First and toward transitional, work- and sobriety-oriented programs, marking a major policy departure.

Supporters argue that transitional housing can serve a broader range of people and restore balance to a system long dominated by permanent supportive housing, even as critics say the changes are extreme and risk undermining proven approaches. The new rules will make much more funding competitive and significantly reduce the share going to permanent housing, prompting ongoing debates about evidence, program effectiveness, and how best to address diverse needs within homelessness and mental-health systems.



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### Millions of Full-Time Workers Are Struggling to Afford a Place to Live. Here's Why

The rising cost of living and unstable low-wage jobs are pushing millions of working people into homelessness, even when they hold full-time or multiple part-time jobs. Journalist Brian Goldstone explains that most homeless workers are invisible to the public, often sleeping in cars,

motels, or unsafe temporary situations while trying to support their families. He argues that this crisis is the predictable result of wages that cannot keep up with rent, combined with failures across housing, healthcare, childcare, and other basic systems.



### The Housing Crisis That Breaks Families Apart

*invisiblePEOPLE*

Across the country, families are losing custody of their children not because of abuse, but simply because they are homeless or facing eviction, even though federal law says poverty alone is not grounds for removal. Caseworkers often label unstable housing as “neglect” and give parents unrealistic deadlines to secure housing in markets where rents are unaffordable and waitlists are years long. As a result, children are taken from loving parents and placed into the same unstable systems that failed to help their families in the first place.



### 'Immediate Risk': Trump's Funding Overhaul Could Force Thousands Back into Homelessness

*invisiblePEOPLE*

HUD's new funding rules under the Trump administration slash support for permanent supportive housing and force communities to abandon Housing First, a proven approach that helps seniors, disabled people, and those with the highest needs stay housed. By capping funds for permanent housing and shifting money toward work-first, treatment-first, and ideology-driven programs, advocates warn that as many as 170,000 people could be pushed back into homelessness. These changes come at a time when homelessness is already at record highs, putting vulnerable Americans at even greater risk.



## The Experts Are Making Narrative Change Complicated

*invisiblePeople*

The author argues that the “narrative change” field has become overly complicated and disconnected from how people actually communicate today. They explain that real narrative change boils down to telling authentic stories that resonate with a specific audience, and that nonprofits often confuse marketing tactics with true narrative work. The author says nonprofits must simplify, listen to the public, focus on relatable human stories, and coordinate messaging if they want to counter harmful narratives about homelessness.

## HUD Is Funding the Crisis of Homeless Children, Not the Solution

*THE HILL*

Many homeless youth, like Jasmine, cycle through shelters, hospitals, and the justice system long before anyone recognizes their homelessness, because federal and state policies focus on crisis response instead of prevention. Programs that provide long-term stability, education, and support are often denied funding simply because they don't fit rigid Housing First rules, even when they produce strong outcomes. Advocates argue that until prevention and early intervention are funded as seriously as emergency services, young people will continue to fall through the cracks before help ever arrives.

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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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