

September 18th, 2025

## COALITION NEWS

### Statement from Coalition CEO, Connie Mercer:

"We are outraged by Fox News anchor, Brian Kilmeade's cruel remarks on live TV suggesting lethal injection for homeless people living with mental illness. These comments strip dignity from those who deserve care, not contempt.

While we are glad that an apology was given; words matter. They reveal the lack of compassion too often directed toward people who are vulnerable.

We urge Brian Kilmeade to move beyond words and take a step toward understanding. We call on him to visit a New Jersey homeless shelter, speak with individuals who have endured the challenges of life without stable housing, and listen to the service providers working tirelessly to support them. Seeing their humanity firsthand may help foster the compassion that was missing in his initial remarks.

Our communities need solutions rooted in dignity, care, and investment in mental health and housing: not rhetoric that treats people as disposable."



### [Join Our Homeless Does Not Mean Voteless: Power to the Polls Campaign!](#)

There is a major election in New Jersey on Tuesday, November 4, which will decide who the next Governor will be and the make-up of the entire State Assembly. The deadline to register to vote in this upcoming election is **Tuesday, October 14**, meaning we have less than a month to help people [register](#) and [check their registration status](#).

Please register for one of the following trainings to learn about how you can host events to register and engage unhoused voters:

- **Monday, September 22th, 11AM:** [Click here to register](#)
- **Thursday, September 25th, 12PM:** [Click here to register](#)

We are also offering \$100 to homeless service providers to cover costs associated with hosting a voter registration event or party ahead of the October 14 deadline: <https://forms.office.com/r/TPKTnVn0pL>

Please email Raisa at [rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org](mailto:rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org) for more information about how to get involved with these efforts.

## **Now Accepting Applications for the 2025 Garden State Leaders Program: Elevating the Voices of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness**



### **GARDEN STATE LEADERS**

Use Your Experience to Create  
Positive Change in New Jersey!



(PHOTO: Garden State Leaders 10 Year Celebration)

Garden State Leaders is a leadership and advocacy training program for individuals who have experienced housing insecurity or homelessness in New Jersey.

The 2025 program begins in October and will be made up of four day-long, in-person sessions, once a month through January, as well as four virtual sessions.

- Learn how to advocate and tell your own story to effect change on public policies that matter to you.
- FREE to participate (technology and transportation assistance may be available).
- Network with state and local leaders in government and nonprofit fields.
- Join a community of over 100 graduates from around the state!
- Visit the NJ State House and interact with legislators in the place where policy decisions are made.



**4 in-person sessions at \*CLiME,  
at Rutgers University's Newark,  
NJ  
+ 4 virtual sessions.**

\*CLiME-Center on Law, Inequality & Metropolitan  
Equity

[Click Here To Apply To Become A  
Garden State Leader!](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[njceh.org/thegarden-state-leaders](http://njceh.org/thegarden-state-leaders)  
Email: [aalvarez@njceh.org](mailto:aalvarez@njceh.org)



**973-545-7233**



10 Mercer Street, Princeton,  
NJ 08540



[njceh.org](http://njceh.org)



[aalvarez@njceh.org](mailto:aalvarez@njceh.org)

### [AmeriCorps Program Manager](#)

**Join the Coalition and lead meaningful change with AmeriCorps**

We are hiring a Full-time Program Manager to recruit and support members, manage program operations, and drive impact in the community.

[Learn more about this great opportunity!](#)

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



### [Protect Homeless Service Providers from Federal Weaponization of Promised 2-Year CoC Funding](#)

Last year, Congress decided — with bipartisan support — to extend the process to apply for HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) funding to a 2-year cycle to ease the burden on often overstretched local agencies. Recently, HUD communicated that it intends to retract this commitment and make homeless service providers apply again for FY25 CoC program funding.

We have seen recent HUD attempts to weaponize CoC funding — adding requirements that penalize providers who engage in harm reduction and for those located in places that do not pursue criminalization of homelessness policies, for example. In response, a district court granted a [temporary restraining order](#) last week against these unlawful restrictions on federal housing funding. [You can help by urging Congress to not politicize life-saving homeless services funding and hold HUD accountable to their promised 2-year funding cycle!](#)



### [Stand Against Federal Cuts to Essential HUD Funding:](#)

Tell your congressional representatives to reject any cuts to HUD funding — with homelessness on the rise, we must invest in critical housing and homelessness assistance programs. Our advocacy has already made a difference: [the House and Senate HUD budget versions reject some of the most severe cuts to HUD from the President's proposed budget](#), but they still include damaging funding cuts, so we must keep the pressure on. [See the National Alliance to End Homelessness' Appropriations Advocacy Activation toolkit.](#)



### [Urge New Jersey Leaders to Restore the Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#)

The NJ budget diverted \$125 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), a critical resource for building affordable housing for low income and very low-income residents. With a shortfall of nearly 290,000 affordable homes in NJ, restoring this fund needs to be a top priority. [Contact Governor Murphy and your state legislators](#) to urge them to restore the AHTF, using revenue from the new mansion tax.

## RESOURCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS



# 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.



Sign up Today!  
Your Staff  
deserves this benefit!  
Contact Robin at  
[RBuckingham@njceh.org](mailto:RBuckingham@njceh.org)

Annual Sign-Up by **Sept 23rd** EAP begins **October 1st**

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

### Reasons for your Agency to Engage an EAP

- Increased employee productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Enhanced employee retention
- Improved workplace morale and culture
- It is the right thing to do!

### Annual usage report

### Quality EAP

- Up to Four (4) Therapy Sessions for free; then employee is linked to their own work benefits for further sessions (if needed)
- Dependent Care, Consultation and Referral Services
- Financial and Legal Consultation
- EAP services available to all family members of your employees
- Monthly access for all employees to an online interactive resource: *MindHealth Matters*

### Affordable Care

- Base fee per Agency: \$500/year (for 20 or fewer employees)  
20+ Employees: Base fee plus \$24 per employee each year
- NJCEH is making this EAP available to All Agencies that serve those experiencing Homelessness.
- EAP services are available to Full-time and Part-time employees.

## Eviction Help Is Here



Answer a few questions to get  
personalized, private guidance  
in minutes.

DCA  
Division of Community Affairs

[NJ Eviction Guide Released](#)

The NJ Department of Community Affairs recently released the NJ Eviction Guide, a guide available in English and Spanish to help tenants understand where they are in the eviction process and connect with free legal help in their county:

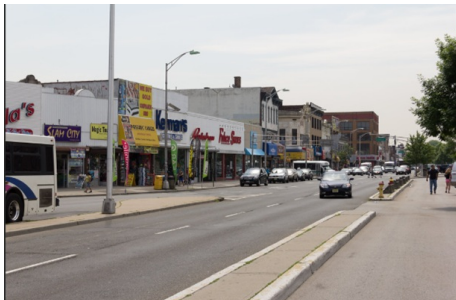
<https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/evictionguide.shtml>. Please share this resource widely and contact [evictionprevention@dca.nj.gov](mailto:evictionprevention@dca.nj.gov) or (609) 376-0810 with any questions.



### [Guide: Helping D.C. Homeless Service Providers During Federal Homelessness Crackdown](#)

The National Alliance to End Homelessness released [this guidance](#) on ways to support D.C. Homeless residents and service providers during this federal homelessness crackdown.

## NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



### [This NJ City Just Took an Important Step to Prevent Rents from Skyrocketing](#)

*NJ.com*

Passaic has strengthened its rent control ordinance by lowering annual rent increases from 6% to 3% and eliminating vacancy decontrol, which often led to steep rent hikes when tenants moved out. The law, covering multifamily buildings built before 1996, is meant to protect working-class and immigrant families from displacement while still allowing limited increases for major upgrades with rent board approval. Advocates call it a major



### [Homelessness is Not One Problem - It's a Spectrum](#)

*NJ Breaking News*

Homelessness in Toms River, NJ, is a complex issue that ranges from working families one crisis away from eviction to individuals with severe mental illness, worsened by a lack of affordable housing and the absence of a local shelter. Kimberly Veith of Bright Harbor Healthcare highlights that many people experiencing homelessness are hidden, especially women and children, while rising rents and limited resources deepen the crisis. She calls for comprehensive, long-term solutions including affordable

victory for housing stability, though landlord groups argue it could discourage property investment and worsen long-term housing quality.

housing tied to real wages, expanded behavioral health care, and community-driven partnerships rather than quick fixes or single-property proposals.



**Bills from Essex County Lawmakers:**  
**Housing, Energy, Finance,**  
**Pollution, Taxes**

*Patch*

NJ State Senator Britnee Timberlake (D-34) is championing a proposed “Homeless Bill of Rights” that affirms the rights of unhoused individuals to access public spaces, medical care, and employment without discrimination. Emphasizing that “homelessness is not a crime,” the bill aims to ensure fair treatment and legal protections for people experiencing homelessness in New Jersey.



**Governor Murphy Proclaims**  
**New Jersey as a**  
**"Do Your Part" State**

*Insider NJ*

Governor Phil Murphy has declared New Jersey a “Do Your Part State,” joining a national initiative led by Blue Star Families and the National Governors Association to better support military families. The state has committed more than \$30 million to reduce veteran homelessness, expanded access to services through county Veterans Service Offices, and launched statewide mental health and suicide prevention programs. New Jersey becomes the fourth state to join the effort, underscoring its commitment to providing housing, healthcare, job training, and community support for service members, veterans, and their families.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



**HUD Secretary Pursues 'Paradigm**  
**Shift' in Administration's Approach**  
**to Homelessness**

*USA Today*



**Rhode Island Judge Halts Effort by**  
**HUD to Change Criteria for**  
**Homeless Funding**

*APP*



HUD Secretary Scott Turner is promoting a “paradigm shift” in the Trump administration’s homelessness strategy, focusing on reducing federal involvement and increasing reliance on nonprofit and faith-based groups, while ending “housing first” policies. Critics argue the administration’s proposed housing benefit time limits, stricter work requirements, and civil commitment policies will worsen homelessness, not solve it — potentially putting millions, including children, at risk.

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### Trump Wants 'Insane Asylums' Back

*CBS 4 News*

Trump recently suggested reopening “insane asylums” as a way to address homelessness, drug use, and crime in U.S. cities, pointing to old institutions like Creedmoor and Bellevue in New York. While some facilities still exist, his comments likely refer to large psychiatric hospitals of the past where people could be involuntarily committed for long periods, a system that declined after widespread abuse, poor conditions, and landmark court rulings in the 1970s limited forced institutionalization. Critics warn that bringing back such institutions would revive harmful practices rather than expand community-based mental health care.

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### A Powerful Tool to Address the

A federal judge in Rhode Island temporarily blocked the Trump administration from changing how \$75 million in federal homelessness funding is awarded, following a lawsuit by several nonprofits. The plaintiffs argue the new criteria unlawfully tie funding to political factors, such as local stances on sanctuary cities and LGBTQ+ inclusion, and would harm vulnerable communities. The ruling ensures current funding rules remain in place while the legal challenge proceeds.

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### How to Highlight the Homelessness Crisis in Older Adults

*Association of Healthcare Journalists*

Homelessness among older adults is rising sharply, with more than 138,000 seniors experiencing it on a single night in 2023. Advocates warn this “emerging crisis” is fueled by rising rents, cuts to safety net programs like Medicaid and SNAP, and the loss of federal job training programs for older people, leaving many at risk of losing stable housing late in life. Programs like PACE, which aim to help elders remain in their homes, now face the challenge of serving clients who have no home to return to.

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### Caregiving: A Healing Space for People Experiencing Homelessness

*PBS*



## Homelessness Crisis,

### Waiting for its Big Moment

*City Limits*

Occupational therapy (OT) is emerging as a powerful tool in addressing homelessness by helping individuals develop daily living skills essential for stability, such as managing medications, regulating emotions, and preparing for employment. Project Renewal's model shows how OT can be effectively integrated across shelters, transitional housing, and permanent residences to support people with complex behavioral health and substance use needs. While not a standalone solution, OT offers a low-barrier, high-impact intervention that could be replicated more widely to address the root causes of housing instability.

At a respite center in Phoenix, AZ, dedicated staff and patients share powerful stories of healing and hope. Discover how Circle the City serves individuals facing homelessness who often fall through the cracks of the healthcare system. This inspiring look inside shows how a stable environment and human connection can transform lives and help those facing homelessness move forward in their lives.



### Denver is Closing More Homeless Shelters. Here's What it Means for the Mayor's Goal to End Homelessness

*Denverite*

Denver Mayor Mike Johnston is closing two major homeless shelter sites as part of a broader shift from temporary shelter to permanent housing and intensive case management, aiming to save \$11 million annually and improve long-term outcomes. While Johnston initially focused on tiny home communities and hotel shelters, his updated strategy emphasizes work, mental health, and addiction treatment, rewarding shelter providers based on their success in moving people into stable housing. Despite progress in clearing encampments and housing thousands, homelessness overall has increased — prompting a



### To Fill Empty Apartments for Homeless People, NYC Will First Start Tracking Them

*Gothamist*

Despite over 5,000 supportive housing units sitting empty in New York City as of June, a new City Council measure aims to improve transparency by requiring the city to publicly report vacancies and the reasons behind them. Lawmakers and advocates say the data will help address barriers like poor unit conditions and discriminatory tenant selection, potentially opening doors for thousands of New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.



### Mayor Eric Adams Launches 'Bridge to Home' Hell's Kitchen Facility for Severely Mentally Ill New Yorkers

*New York Post*

Mayor Eric Adams has launched the “Bridge to Home” pilot program, a \$13 million initiative designed to support New Yorkers with severe mental illness who have been discharged from psychiatric facilities but are not yet ready for independent living. Located in Hell’s Kitchen, the new facility will provide 46 residents with private rooms, daily meals, and comprehensive mental health services. The program, run by NYC Health + Hospitals, aims to fill a critical gap in the city’s mental health and homelessness response by offering stable, transitional housing and direct access to care.



### Ending Homelessness is a Humane Priority

*Baptist News Global*

The Trump administration’s new executive order rolls back support for the “housing first” model, instead promoting punitive measures like mandatory treatment, institutionalization, and criminalization of homelessness—despite strong evidence showing housing-first programs improve stability, reduce costs, and save lives. Advocates warn this shift will endanger vulnerable populations, including domestic violence survivors, youth at risk of trafficking, and people with severe mental illness, by denying them access to stable housing without preconditions. As one advocate powerfully argues, housing is not a reward—it’s a lifeline that makes recovery, safety, and dignity possible.

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)

**DONATE TO SUPPORT THE COALITION'S WORK TO END HOMELESSNESS**





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