

# Homelessness MATTERS



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## NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



### Lawmakers Look to Codify NJ Veteran Homelessness Initiative

PIX11

New Jersey advocates and lawmakers moved to safeguard the state's Bringing Veterans Home initiative, a program launched in 2024 to rapidly connect unhoused veterans with stable housing and services. Veterans leaders and service providers said the program had already helped more than 1,600 veterans and was making measurable progress toward ending veteran homelessness. Bipartisan legislation advanced to codify the initiative into law, aiming to ensure its long-term future.



### Trump Proposal Imperils \$8 Million for New Jerseyans' Rental Aid

NJ Spotlight News

Nearly 900 New Jersey households face the threat of homelessness as uncertainty over federal rental assistance grows due to the Trump administration's proposed changes to HUD's Continuum of Care program, which would cut funding and tie support to work or service requirements. Local nonprofits, which rely on about \$8 million in annual funding to serve vulnerable families, veterans, and people with disabilities, are scrambling to keep programs running while awaiting clarity from HUD. Advocates warn the timing is critical, as the state's unhoused population recently reached a decade-high and winter conditions continue to put lives at risk.



**Singleton Bill Establishing Municipal Homelessness Trust Funds, Housing Plans Becomes Law**

*TAP into Bordentown*

New Jersey municipalities will have new tools to address homelessness under a law signed by Governor Phil Murphy before leaving office that allows towns to create homelessness trust funds and adopt local housing plans. Sponsored by Senate President Nick Scutari and Senator Troy Singleton, the measure gives municipalities dedicated funding and planning authority to invest in affordable housing, rental assistance, support services, and prevention. Lawmakers say the approach is designed to help communities respond more effectively as homelessness continues to rise statewide.



**Task Force: Nowhere to House Homeless**

*Jersey Shore Online*

Ocean County officials, service providers, and advocates say the homelessness crisis isn't just about the need for a year-round shelter—it's driven by a severe lack of affordable housing that makes permanent placements increasingly difficult. At a recent Homelessness Trust Fund task force meeting, speakers highlighted how limited housing availability and finite funding constrain even flexible county programs, leaving many people stuck in temporary solutions. The discussion underscored growing concern about coordination, stigma, and the real human impact behind the data.



**Mental Health Crisis Prompts Renewal Push for 988 Hotline Funding in NJ**

*nj.com*

New Jersey lawmakers renewed a push to fund suicide prevention and crisis services by invoking the legacy of former Gov. Dick Codey, a longtime advocate for mental health care and services for people experiencing



**27 NJ Towns Refuse to Back Down on Affordable Housing Despite Losing in Court - Twice**

*nj.com*

Twenty-seven New Jersey municipalities are continuing their legal challenge to the state's 2024 affordable housing overhaul, even after both state and federal judges dismissed their lawsuit. The towns have appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and are seeking a stay to halt the law while

homelessness. The proposed funding would support the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, mobile response teams, stabilization centers, and temporary housing—resources advocates say are critical for people in crisis, including those without stable shelter. Supporters argue the measure could prevent emergencies from escalating into homelessness or help stabilize individuals already living without housing.



### [For The Unhoused in Bitter Cold, Camden Resource Fair Offers Lifeline](#)

*NJ Spotlight News*

As economic pressures pushed more New Jersey residents into homelessness, a resource fair at Cathedral Kitchen in Camden provided vital support ranging from housing and job assistance to meals, clothing, and basic services that restore dignity. Advocates noted that homelessness continued to rise statewide, with cold weather intensifying the risks for people living without stable shelter. The event also coincided with the annual Point-in-Time Count, helping officials gather data while meeting immediate needs on the ground.



### [Annual Count of People Experiencing Homelessness in Paterson](#)

*NJ.com*

the case proceeds, arguing it forces disproportionate development and limits local control. State officials and housing advocates counter that the obligations stem from long-standing Mount Laurel rulings and will move forward as towns face a March 15 deadline to submit housing plans.



### [Is Homelessness Still Rising in North Jersey? Annual Count Underway](#)

*Daily Record*

Communities across the country conducted the annual Point-in-Time Count as agencies and volunteers worked in freezing conditions to tally sheltered and unsheltered people amid rising homelessness. In Morristown, more than 40 organizations came together for Morris County's Project Homeless Connect, combining outreach, services, and data collection. The effort aimed to capture a clearer picture of local needs to guide funding and policy decisions.



### [After NJ Mayer Blasted Homeless People, Bon Jovi Pop-Up Cafe Stays Open for Frigid-Winter](#)

*New Jersey 101.5*

Outreach workers and volunteers took part in an annual Point-In-Time Count to document people experiencing homelessness, an effort replicated nationwide to produce a snapshot of homelessness on a single night. The federally required count helps communities estimate the scale of homelessness and determine how federal housing resources are allocated. Advocates note that while the data is critical, it often undercounts people who are temporarily housed or living outside of shelters.

Amid New Jersey's coldest winter in years, the JBJ Soul Kitchen pop-up in Toms River will remain open through April after strong community advocacy pushed back against criticism from the town's mayor. Approved by the Ocean County Library Commission, the dignity-based, pay-it-forward café has served more than 13,500 meals while connecting unhoused residents to services, housing placements, and employment. The extension highlights the power of community action and compassionate, solutions-focused responses to homelessness during Code Blue season.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



### Federal Initiative to Address Unsheltered Homelessness Shows Promise

*National Alliance to End Homelessness*

The HUD Special NOFO gave select Continuums of Care flexible, multi-year funding to directly address unsheltered homelessness through housing and services. Communities used these dollars to expand street outreach, speed up connections to permanent housing, and coordinate responses that move people from encampments into homes more quickly. Early results show that sustained investments in housing-focused approaches work, but also highlight ongoing challenges like limited housing supply, staffing shortages, and the harms caused by criminalizing homelessness.



### 'Working Homelessness': When Getting a Job Isn't Enough

*The Beacon*

Working homelessness is a widespread and often underrecognized issue in the United States, as many employed individuals and families still cannot afford housing, child care, and other basic necessities. National research shows that between 40% and 60% of people experiencing homelessness are working, reflecting a broader economic gap where wages lag behind rising living costs. Experts say the true scale of the problem is likely far higher than official counts and that expanding affordable housing and prevention efforts is critical to addressing it.



## 'We Thought We Were Safe': The Story of a Bend Family's Fall into Homelessness

*Central Oregon Daily News*

Rising housing costs pushed Phil and Megan Gordon into homelessness, forcing the Bend couple to live first in their SUV and later in an RV after repeated evictions and rent hikes priced them out of the market. Despite working and trying to stay close to their children, they struggled to find safe, legal places to park and faced stigma, threats, and community resistance. Their story reflected a growing national trend of working families experiencing homelessness as housing affordability continues to collapse.



## 'Housing not Handcuffs': National Advocacy Groups Take Aim at Utah's Homeless Campus

*Utah News Dispatch*

National homelessness advocates and Democratic lawmakers sharply criticized Utah's plan for a 1,300-bed "transformative" campus, warning it could become a "homeless detention camp" that criminalizes and isolates people experiencing homelessness under the guise of treatment. They stressed this isn't just a Utah problem, noting that the project could serve as a blueprint for other states, spreading similar policies nationwide. Launching the "Housing Not Handcuffs" campaign, advocates urged federal and state leaders to block taxpayer funding and prioritize Housing First strategies, permanent housing, and community-based mental health services instead.

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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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