

July 10th, 2025

COALITION NEWS



Over \$4 Million Secured to Keep NJ Shelter Doors Open: Your Voice Made an Impact

Thanks to your advocacy, New Jersey allocated \$4.04 million in this year's state budget to support homeless shelters and frontline staff. This is a huge win in a challenging budget year, and it is all due to your advocacy!

The State Senate unanimously voted in favor of the [Code Red bill \(A2258/S2346\)](#), with help from over 50 members of the Coalition community who submitted slips of support. While the bill still needs to pass through the Assembly, we're one step closer to protecting people experiencing homelessness during extreme weather events.

However, the fight is far from over. The New Jersey budget diverted \$125 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, a critical resource for building affordable housing. With a shortfall of nearly 290,000 affordable homes in NJ, restoring this fund is a top priority.

We are deeply grateful for your continued advocacy in the fight to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring in our state.



A Visionary Leader Honored: Connie Mercer Receives Statewide Recognition

The Coalition's CEO, Connie Mercer, was recently honored with the ***"Transformational Leadership in Ending Homelessness Award"*** from the *New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA)*.

This award celebrates the Coalition's unwavering commitment to bridging behavioral health and homelessness services to better support the people we serve. Under Connie's leadership, NJAMHAA continues to find bold and effective ways to meet the complex needs of our community.

NJAMHAA is New Jersey's leading statewide association representing organizations that serve individuals and families affected by mental illness and substance use disorders.



Raising our Voice on Capital Hill at the National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference

Last week, several members of the Coalition team brought their advocacy to Capitol Hill during the National Alliance to End Homelessness' annual conference. They met with members of New Jersey's congressional delegation to strongly oppose the Reconciliation bill and proposed cuts to HUD that would severely impact housing and homelessness

services.

We are deeply grateful to our dedicated partners—Family Promise affiliates of Essex, Morris, and Hunterdon; Monarch Housing Associates; the Welcome Home Foundation, Inc. and the Mercer County Lived Experience Advisory Board—for standing with us in this critical effort to protect and expand resources for those experiencing homelessness.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Our Advocacy Continues: Prevent the Slashing of Federal HUD Funds from Housing and Homeless Services Programs

On July 4th, the President signed into law the federal Reconciliation bill, making cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and other essential programs and putting over [1 in 5 New Jersey residents](#) currently enrolled in Medicaid at risk of losing their coverage.

We are devastated by this law, but we are not giving up the fight to protect the people we serve! Last week, Coalition staff met in D.C. with Congressman Kean and other members of the NJ Congressional Delegation about why the massive HUD cuts of \$33.6 billion in the [President's "Skinny" Budget Proposal](#) would be so devastating for their districts.

[Act now to tell your congressional representatives to oppose unthinkable federal cuts to HUD](#)— that put over [45,552 more NJ households](#) at imminent risk of homelessness.

Representatives need to hear from their constituents, particularly those who live in the districts of Representatives Jeff Van Drew (CD-2), Chris Smith (CD-4), and Thomas Kean Jr. (CD-7).

For more information, here is our [one pager](#) highlighting the detrimental impacts of HUD and Medicaid cuts nationally and on New Jersey.

RESOURCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

MENTAL HEALTH 101

(PART TWO OF TWO)



Tuesday, July 15, 2025

During this 1-hour workshop, we will:

- * Discuss strategies to respond to guests/residents/clients experiencing a mental health challenge
- * Learn and understand risk and protective factors
- * Examine the mental health spectrum

**Session
times:**

6-7AM
8-9AM
10-11AM
1-2PM
3-4PM
7-8PM



bit.ly/MH101p1

- * 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



Impacted by Federal Funding Freezes? Apply for this Emergency Fund

The Community Foundation of New Jersey launched NJ Strong: Emergency Fund, a rapid response fund aiming to provide a safety net for nonprofits to weather federal funding freezes or terminations of existing contracts to minimize disruptions in vital services for NJ communities.

Organizations who have been in operation for three or more years and can provide

documentation of funding loss, particularly if they address basic human needs and serve vulnerable populations, are encouraged to apply for grants ranging from \$10,000-\$50,000. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and organizations will be notified within 3 weeks of applying.

You can [apply here](#) using the access code **NJSTRONG**.



Free, Online Course on Caring for Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is offering [this free online course for service providers](#), as more and more older adults are experiencing homelessness, and the homeless population is aging.

Learn strategies for offering temporary and permanent housing and meeting the needs of this uniquely vulnerable population.

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NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



Advocates Say New Jersey Budget Falls Short of Affordable Housing Needs

NEW JERSEY MONITOR

New Jersey lawmakers have been accused of underfunding affordable housing in their \$58.8 billion budget by diverting \$125 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund,

leaving only \$5 million for housing development. This diversion comes as the state faces a shortage of nearly 290,000 affordable homes, with people of color disproportionately impacted by the crisis. The diverted funds will instead be allocated to first-time homebuyer programs and rental assistance, despite strong public support for using the funds for affordable housing. While the budget includes a \$100 million tax credit program for the rehabilitation of affordable housing over several years, advocates are calling for more policies to address housing affordability, including higher eviction filing fees and surcharges on luxury homes as well as enhanced tenant protections.



Toms River Homeless Residents Given More Time to Move Belongings from Public Spaces

News12 New Jersey

Homeless residents in Toms River were given a short amount of time to move their belongings from an encampment behind the Ocean County Library after city officials ordered them to vacate the area. Many have lived in the community for years and are refusing offers to relocate to temporary housing out of town, saying they want to stay in Toms River until local shelter options are available. Advocates argue the residents have nowhere else to go after the recent closure of a warming center, while tensions rise over how the township is handling the crisis.



NJ Officials Accused of Hypocrisy Over Land Use that Barred Homeless Shelter

Gothamist

Advocates are calling out Emerson, NJ officials for hypocrisy after they approved plans for affordable housing at the same intersection where they recently rejected a proposed homeless shelter for families. Just two months ago, the town cited traffic safety concerns as a reason to block the shelter but raised no such concerns when approving a 234-unit housing development with 47 affordable units across the street. Critics say the move suggests the shelter was rejected not over safety, but due to stigma against homelessness, highlighting the ongoing struggle to secure real solutions for vulnerable families in wealthy suburbs.



Family Promise Helps Families with Homelessness



Turner, McKnight Code Red Alert Pilot Program Passes

Family Promise of Hunterdon County supports families facing homelessness and helps low-income families build long-term stability through shelter, rental assistance, mental health support, and prevention services. When Jenna and her daughters needed a safe place to stay after a family separation, Family Promise provided shelter, guidance, and support that helped her regain confidence and reach financial goals. As the first Family Promise in New Jersey to open a free-standing facility for families, the organization continues to lead statewide efforts to keep families together and end homelessness in Hunterdon County.

Senate to Protect Vulnerable Residents from Extreme Heat

INSIDER NJ

In response to extreme heat and poor air quality, the NJ Senate unanimously passed a bill to launch a Code Red pilot program in 10 counties with high homeless populations. Sponsored by Senators Shirley Turner and Angela McKnight, the program would fund cooling centers, transportation, and coordinated outreach to protect vulnerable residents, especially unhoused individuals and seniors. With \$5 million in funding, the bill aims to create life-saving infrastructure as climate risks intensify across the state.



When Will Medicaid Cuts Take Effect in NJ Now That the 'Big Beautiful Bill' Passed?

northjersey.com

The Medicaid cuts in the federal government's new federal tax and spending bill will begin affecting New Jersey residents in 2027, with new eligibility checks every six months and higher out-of-pocket costs starting in 2028. "Able-bodied" adults will face work requirements starting as early as January 2027, and some immigrant groups will lose access to Medicaid, known in this state as "NJ Family Care" by October 2026. These changes could lead to coverage losses for thousands of low-income residents in New Jersey, with hospitals and public health funding also being cut by \$3.3 billion annually. As a result, vulnerable residents, including those at risk of homelessness, will face increased challenges in accessing healthcare.





Toms River Mayor Rodrick Places Downtown Homeless into Housing with State Funds

SHORE NEWS NETWORK

Toms River Mayor Daniel Rodrick has responded to a rise in homelessness in the downtown area by securing emergency housing vouchers after individuals were dropped off in the municipal parking garage with furniture and belongings, just before a heat wave. This situation followed the opening of a soup kitchen at a public library, which Rodrick had opposed, fearing it would attract more homeless individuals to the area. In collaboration with the State Department of Community Affairs, the mayor helped transition these individuals into stable housing, while expressing frustration over local media misreporting the situation. The Toms River Council has enacted an ordinance to restrict access to the parking garage, addressing safety issues such as drug activity and theft.

Statement from Humans Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman on Impact of Medicaid and SNAP Cuts on NJ

NJ Dept. of Human Services

New Jersey Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman warned that cuts to Medicaid and SNAP programs will disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including the homeless, by reducing access to vital healthcare and food assistance. The legislation is expected to cause an estimated 350,000 residents to lose healthcare coverage, further straining families and individuals struggling with homelessness. The cuts to Medicaid and food assistance will increase the financial burden on the state, with New Jersey having to raise millions to cover new costs, potentially risking the elimination of SNAP benefits.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



How Trump's HUD Budget Proposal Would Harm Homelessness Response

SHELTERFORCE

After a Denver woman named Ruth Goebel died while experiencing homelessness in 1983, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless was founded to close gaps in care for people with serious mental illness. Today, Beacon Place provides housing and services to women and gender minorities using federal Continuum of Care funds. A proposed federal budget change would combine and cut key homeless services programs, putting Beacon Place and thousands of supportive housing beds across the country at risk.



Homelessness Reduction Efforts in Jeopardy Due to Budget Cuts

AHCI

At Health Journalism 2025, panelists warned that the Trump Administration's budget cuts are threatening Medicaid-funded programs that support housing and social services for vulnerable populations. These cuts come just as many states have expanded Medicaid waivers to cover housing, food, and transportation for people experiencing homelessness. Critics say the administration is shifting away from proven housing-first approaches and instead promoting institutionalization and criminalization, ignoring the fact that homelessness is driven by a lack of housing, not a lack of treatment.



Where Should the Homeless Go? A Year After the Grants Pass Ruling, Advocates Remain Divided

Deseret News

Robert, a man experiencing homelessness in Washington, D.C., shared how support from programs like Medicaid, food stamps, and a case manager helped him move from the street into housing. His story highlights the struggles faced by more than 500,000 people across the country who are often criminalized for simply trying to survive. As cities use new legal tools to dismantle encampments, advocates warn that without real investments in shelter and services, these actions only shift the problem rather than solve it.



They Were Repeatedly Ticketed Because of Their Homelessness. What Did It Change?

CAL MATTERS



US Department of Labor Awards More Than \$37M In Continued Grants to Help Homeless, At-Risk Veterans Re-Enter Workforce

U.S Dept of Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor

Across California cities like Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego, people experiencing homelessness are facing an increase in arrests, citations, and displacement following the Supreme Court's decision in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, which upheld the right of cities to ban public camping even when no shelter is available. Individuals like Deadra Walicki and Jerry Carter describe a cycle of harassment, ticketing, and property loss that has done little to help them find permanent housing, instead pushing them further into survival mode. Outreach workers say these crackdowns not only make their jobs harder, but also add legal and logistical barriers that delay or derail efforts to connect people to the support they need.

awarded over \$37 million in grants to nearly 100 organizations through the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program to help veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness access job training, placement, and support services. These grants connect veterans to apprenticeships, occupational skills programs, and employment resources to help them successfully reenter the workforce. The program reflects a broader commitment to addressing the barriers veterans face when transitioning back into stable employment and housing.

'Housing First' Addresses the Revolving Door of Homelessness

Psychology Today

Many unhoused individuals are trapped in a cycle of jails, shelters, and hospitals without lasting support, often criminalized for survival behaviors like loitering or sleeping in public spaces. Housing First programs provide stable housing without requiring treatment or sobriety first, giving people a chance to focus on recovery and rebuilding their lives. Studies show this approach improves mental health outcomes and reduces long-term public costs, highlighting that stable housing is essential for lasting change. .



After Supreme Court Ruling, Grants Pass Still Can't Remove a Homeless Encampment

npr



One year after the Supreme Court ruled that cities can ban public camping, Grants Pass, the city at the center of the case, still cannot remove its own encampments due to a new state lawsuit. A judge has blocked most enforcement and ordered the city to provide more legal camping areas. Advocates warn that punishing unhoused people is costly and ineffective, and they continue to push for real solutions like affordable housing.



LA's Homeless Services Workers Face Impossible Choice: Help Others or Pay Rent

Los Angeles Public Press

In Los Angeles, workers in the homeless services sector face low wages, high stress, and insufficient support despite their vital role in addressing homelessness. Entry-level positions, typically paying around \$24 per hour, struggle with high turnover, with workers often leaving the field after just 18 months. The sector is under intense strain due to funding cuts, a lack of mental health resources, and growing demand, leading to staff burnout and difficulty attracting new talent. Without significant reforms to improve compensation, resources, and support, the ability to effectively address homelessness in the city remains at risk.



Criminalizing Homelessness Doesn't Work, Study Finds

Shelterforce

A recent study found that encampment bans and other criminalization policies do not effectively reduce homelessness in U.S. cities. The analysis, covering ordinances enacted between 2000 and 2021, showed no significant reduction in homelessness in cities with such laws, with some areas even seeing a resurgence in homelessness after initial declines. Advocates argue that these laws increase homelessness due to increased arrest records and losses of belongings. The study counters conservative think tanks' push to criminalize homeless encampments by showing definitively that doing so is ultimately ineffective.



National Alliance to End Homelessness' Statement on President Trump's Budget Bill

National Alliance to End Homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness issued a statement last week condemning the President's "Mega bill," which includes a \$1 trillion Medicaid cut, warning that it will increase poverty, hunger, and homelessness, particularly among marginalized communities. The bill's reduction of federal resources for



How Homelessness Blocks the Path to Employment

Los Angeles Public Press

This story of a woman experiencing homelessness while searching for a job highlights the difficult cycle many homeless individuals face in trying to secure employment without a stable home. Basic challenges such as lacking a permanent address, staying clean and professional, and accessing reliable transportation make it nearly impossible

housing, healthcare, and food will exacerbate homelessness, making it harder for vulnerable people to escape poverty.

for homeless people to succeed in the job market, even when they have skills and work experience. While some creative solutions are emerging, such as mobile showers and mailing addresses, more systemic changes are needed to break the cycle of homelessness and unemployment.

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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