

Homelessness MATTERS



December 19th, 2025

May this holiday season bring peace, joy, and happiness to you and those you love.

*With gratitude,
The staff of the NJ Coalition to End Homelessness*



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COALITION NEWS



NJ Coalition to End Homelessness Urges Renewals of Expiring Grants

The Trentonian

The Coalition strongly opposes HUD's decision to withdraw the FY2025 Continuum of Care funding notice and urges that all expiring CoC grants be renewed for 12 months to prevent catastrophic funding losses and keep people housed. Coalition Policy Associate, Raisa Rubin-Stankiewicz explained the withdrawal deepens chaos for providers and people at risk of losing housing, and called on Congress to require HUD to extend the grants to avoid dangerous gaps. Without action, communities could face funding lapses just as winter conditions worsen.



Mercer Homeless Persons' Remembrance Day to Honor Those Who Died This Year

This morning, the Coalition was honored to partner with the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness to host a memorial service at Westminster Presbyterian Church for everyone who was unhoused and died in Mercer County. National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day is hosted annually on the longest night of the year nationwide. Today and every day, we remember them and recommit to our work of ending homelessness.

We remember Makonnen Tessema, Robert Livenspire, Renee Rosario, John Counts, Earl Bethea, Mark Johnson, Craig Gomez, Wayne Frascella, Tonya Leary, Gabriel Grimes, Robert Brothers, Edward Atkins, Sr., Gail Collins, Norman Smith, Richard Gordon, Bonnie Mucha, Henry Beatty, Juan Francisco Guerra-Galves, Julius Brown, Jose Rios, Jr., Brenda Alvarado, Willie Laster, Fred Barnes, Meagan Johnson, Thomas Weaver, Marcus Evans, and others whose names aren't listed.



Coalition Honored to Be Our Homes, Our Votes Grant Recipient for 2026 Voter Registration Efforts

Thank you to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) for naming us an Our Homes, Our Votes mini grant recipient. We look forward to partnering with NLIHC in 2026 to further grow our *Homeless Does Not Mean Voteless: Power to the Polls* campaign to register and empower unhoused voters!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



Keep People Housed: Tell Congress to Direct HUD to Renew All CoC Grants to Avoid Dangerous Funding Gaps!

HUD's sudden withdrawal of the FY2025 Continuum of Care (CoC) funding opportunity underscores the urgent need for a responsible path forward: a 12-month renewal of all expiring CoC grants to prevent catastrophic losses and keep people housed. The Coalition opposed the NOFO's severe cuts, which threatened housing for more than 170,000 people, and this abrupt withdrawal has only deepened uncertainty as winter approaches. With roughly one-third of CoC grants expiring between January and June 2026, communities face dangerous funding gaps that could force providers to close their doors. Reissuing a revised NOFO now is unworkable and destabilizing, leaving people who rebuilt their lives after homelessness fearing they may lose their homes once again.

We urge Congress to act immediately: include language in the upcoming appropriations bill directing HUD to renew all FY25 CoC grants and keep people housed.

Protect Against Life Threatening Heat & Air Quality Events: Pass Code Red Now!

Heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths. People experiencing homelessness are 200 times more likely to die from heat-related causes. More than 1500 people die from extreme heat each year and more than half of these people are unhoused. If Code Red doesn't pass through the Assembly by January, **even though the bill was approved unanimously in the Senate, this bill will have to be reintroduced and go through the Senate and Assembly all over again.** We cannot delay when lives are on the line:

Tell the NJ Assembly to pass Code Red now!

RESOURCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Communicating with Tenants During Funding Uncertainty or Possible Service Disruptions

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has released guidance for service providers on trauma-informed methods to communicate with tenants amid funding uncertainties: <https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Guide-To-Talking-With-Tenants-12.4.25.pdf>

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

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



[NJ's Housing Crisis Won't Wait and Neither Should Lawmakers](#)

nj.com

Al-Tariq Witcher, a current Garden State Leaders cohort member and Managing Director of External Affairs at Fair Share Housing highlights how New Jersey's housing affordability crisis is hurting seniors, working families, and young adults across the state. Drawing from what he hears weekly from residents choosing between rent, medication, and basic needs, Al-Tariq lifts up the urgency of acting now to protect housing funding, modernize zoning, and strengthen tenant protections. He calls on lawmakers to use the lame duck session to turn recent affordable housing progress into real relief for families before evictions and homelessness rise further.



[First They Cut its Funding, Now NJ Lawmakers Want Funding for Homeless Program](#)

NJ Spotlight

Nearly six months after Gov. Phil Murphy signed a state budget that cut funding for two key social service programs, lawmakers are moving to restore \$1.5 million for the Camden Coalition, a nonprofit that supports people experiencing homelessness and mental health crises. A pending bill would revive funding for the coalition's housing-first program and its Pledge to Connect initiative, which links emergency room patients to behavioral health care and reduces repeat hospital visits. Supporters say the programs have proven results, including improved housing stability, better health outcomes and lower health care costs. The proposal comes amid rising homelessness in New Jersey and growing concerns over cuts to housing-first initiatives at the federal level.



['No One Would Rent to Me': Essex County Group](#)



[Camden County Building New Housing Center to Help People Facing Homelessness](#)

Highlights Housing Challenges, Solutions

Montclair Local

Edwin “Chino” Ortiz turned his own experience of housing denial after incarceration into action. After returning home from prison and being unable to secure housing despite steady work, he is now leading the development of a 42-unit affordable housing project in Newark, with 25% of the units reserved for people returning from incarceration. His work highlights how systemic barriers like criminal records, lack of credit, and tenant history continue to drive homelessness, and how community-led solutions can change that narrative.

10 Philadelphias

Camden County is building a 43,000-square-foot supportive housing center in Gloucester Township with 60 efficiency apartments to help people experiencing homelessness, as the county’s unhoused population has increased by 20% since 2020. The \$22 million, county-run facility will offer transitional and emergency housing along with on-site support services, while allowing residents independence as they work to get back on their feet. Officials say the center is designed to reduce barriers to housing and could be the first of its kind in New Jersey operated by a county government.



Paterson Receives \$53K for Code Blue Homeless Operations

TapInto Paterson

Paterson will receive \$53,750 in Code Blue funding from Passaic County to support emergency warming services for unhoused residents during cold weather from Nov. 1 through Dec. 31, 2025. County officials are distributing the funding in installments this year rather than as a single lump sum, with additional allocations expected later in the winter as the Code Blue season runs through March. The funds help cover warming center operations, transportation, and coordination with partners, though city officials note the stipend does not fully cover program costs. Paterson currently operates one warming center at the Salvation Army, while families, women with children, and people with mental health needs are placed in hotels.



Veterans Housing Project With 98 Apartments, 24 Homes Under Construction in NJ

Town
nj.com

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation is building Veterans Village in Berkeley Township, Ocean County, to support veterans experiencing homelessness. Set to open in 2026, the complex will include 98 single-occupancy apartments and 24 comfort homes, along with on-site services like job training, benefits assistance, legal support, and mental health counseling. The project aims to provide both stable housing and the resources veterans need to rebuild their lives.



[Union County Advocates Attack Trump Administration for Proposed Reduction in Support for Homeless](#)

Patch

Union County advocates, including Bridges Outreach, are strongly opposing proposed changes by the Trump Administration that would sharply restrict access to federal homelessness funding and cut Continuum of Care grants starting in 2026. New Jersey, along with 20 other states, has filed a lawsuit arguing the changes would increase homelessness by reducing permanent housing funding, adding harmful conditions to housing access, and encouraging criminalization of people experiencing homelessness. Advocates warn the rules would undermine trauma-informed, person-centered care and put vulnerable populations at serious risk.



[From Renting to Roots: How Newark Families Are Finally Becoming Homeowners](#)

TAPinto Newark

Newark families are becoming first-time homeowners through the Newark Land Bank's Housing Choice Voucher Conversion Program, which helps Section 8 voucher holders transition from renting to owning homes. By redeveloping vacant properties and pairing families with grants and lender support, the program is turning blighted lots into stable homes and pathways to generational wealth. Families like the Murdocks and others shared how the program made homeownership possible despite long-standing financial and systemic barriers.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



[HUD Retreat on Homelessness Cuts Shows Power of Public Outcry](#)

Insight News



[What State Policymakers Need to Know About Early Childhood Homelessness](#)

Congresswoman Maxine Waters responded to HUD's temporary withdrawal of a proposal to cut Continuum of Care funding, saying the reversal only happened because communities nationwide pushed back against a harmful plan. She warned the proposal would have undermined proven strategies like Housing First and threatened housing for more than 170,000 people, calling it cruel and inhumane. While welcoming the pause, Waters cautioned that delays still risk funding gaps and urged HUD to renew existing grants quickly to keep people housed.



[HUD Secretary Turner on Homeless Funding Reforms: "What I Want for The American People Is to Be Able to Live in Dignity and to Have a Self-Sustainable Life"](#)

US Dept of Housing

HUD Secretary Scott Turner announced major changes to the federal Continuum of Care program, saying the department will shift funding away from Housing First and toward transitional housing and treatment-focused services. He argues the reforms are intended to address mental health and substance use, promote self-sufficiency, and restore dignity for people experiencing homelessness. The proposed changes have sparked national debate about the future of federal homelessness policy.

Homelessness among infants and young children is rising, even as birth rates decline, putting hundreds of thousands of children at risk of lifelong health and developmental harm. Often hidden from view, early childhood homelessness disrupts brain development, increases toxic stress, and leaves most affected children unconnected to early care and support services. The article calls on state policymakers to act now by prioritizing families with young children, strengthening housing stability, and ensuring early intervention before long-term damage occurs.



[How to Recruit and Lead Staff Who Truly Know Your Community](#)

stacker

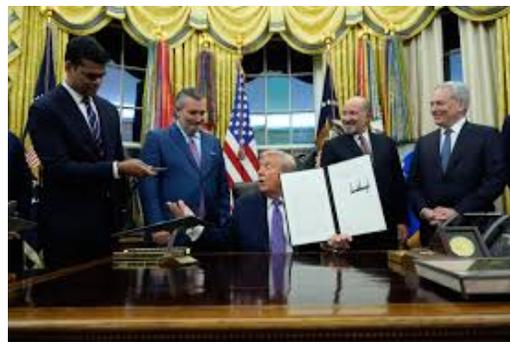
Organizations are more effective when the people leading and delivering services truly understand the communities they serve. This piece highlights how hiring staff with lived experience builds trust, strengthens decision-making, and leads to more humane and effective programs. It also offers practical guidance on recruiting, supporting, and valuing lived-experience leaders without tokenizing or retraumatizing them.



[She Was a School Counselor for a Decade. Now, Her Family of Five is Homeless](#)

USA TODAY

Johnika Jamison, a former school counselor with a family of five has been homeless for 14 months after overlapping medical crises, a high-risk pregnancy, job loss, and an eviction pushed them past the breaking point. Living day-to-day in a hotel, she's juggling caregiving for a spouse with multiple sclerosis and children with serious health needs while trying to work and navigate a system with long waitlists and strict requirements. The article underscores how easily stable working families can fall into homelessness when one crisis hits and there's no cushion or reliable safety net.



[Trump's AI Moratorium Threatens State-Level Crackdowns on Housing Costs](#)

POLITICO

A proposed federal moratorium on state AI laws could undermine efforts by states to regulate how artificial intelligence is used in the housing market. As states move to curb AI-driven rent pricing, discrimination, and anti-competitive practices, critics warn that blocking these safeguards could worsen housing affordability and fairness. The debate highlights growing tension between federal control, state consumer protections, and the role of technology in housing costs.

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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