

Homelessness MATTERS



February 12th, 2025

Love is in the air! In honor of Valentines' day this week, we are sharing a blog post from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. See below for ways New Jersey residents can advocate to help protect vital services for our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Advocacy is Love in Action



Written by Marcy Thompson February 6, 2025

Bell Hooks said that love is profoundly political and that our deepest revolution will come when we know this truth. She went on to say, “the moment that we choose love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression...we begin to move towards freedom.”

Last year, the Alliance shared the core values guiding our strategic plan: we will **inspire faith that ending homelessness is possible**. We will lead with love and equity in everything that we do. And we will continue to **bring people home**.

The thread that ties all of this together is your advocacy.

Now more than ever, we must use our collective power to demand that both Congress and the administration preserve critical federal funding to prevent and end homelessness. Those funds must advance programs using evidence-based approaches and solutions that we know work. Advocacy is an incredibly powerful way to influence public policy. It allows individuals to have their voices heard as a collective. When there are enough voices, advocacy can serve as catalyst for change. To read more, [click here](#).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

**We Need Your Continued Advocacy:
Help Secure Funding to Keep NJ's Shelters Viable to Provide Life-Saving Services!**

Thank you for all of your advocacy around the Trump administration's memo, attempting to freeze all federal grants, loans, and funding. That memo was rescinded by the federal Office of Management and Budget, indicating that your voice made a difference.

Now we need your voice and involvement again. **The Coalition is launching a campaign to advocate for \$10 million for our state's underfunded shelter system in the upcoming state budget, to ensure shelters and emergency homeless services can remain viable and sustain operations.**

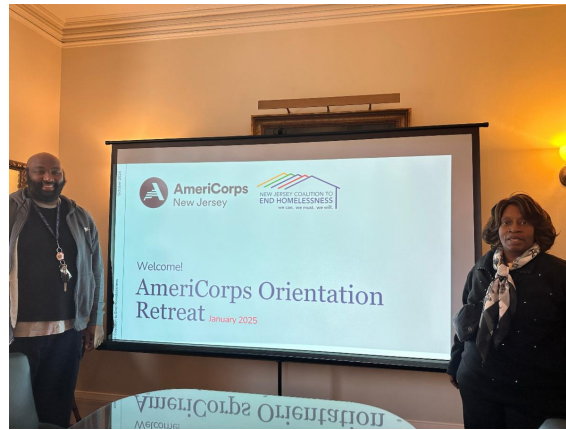
Join us for meetings with key state legislators to speak from your experiences and stories about the needs your clients and your organization face! **Sign up through [this form](#) or contact Raisa, our Policy Associate, at rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org or (609) 865-2534 to get involved: <https://forms.office.com/r/JuHfKZ5C4n>.**

New Jersey is facing a particularly tight budget season this year, so our power comes from advocating together and demonstrating that shelters across the state are experiencing significant financial hardship and are unified in advocating together to meet our state's need. Thank you!

COALITION NEWS

The Coalition Welcomes Two New AmeriCorps Members!

Two new AmeriCorps members joined our team of Housing Readiness Coordinators at the end of January, and we are excited to see the impact they will have at their sites! We still have positions available in Bergen, Burlington, Camden, and Passaic counties.



Mark Horvath of Invisible People Teaches Service Providers Strategies for Messaging Around Homelessness

The Coalition was thrilled to welcome Mark Horvath to our January Shelter Providers Consortium meeting. Mark developed and runs Invisible People, a nonprofit dedicated to educating the public about homelessness through innovative storytelling, news and advocacy. His groundbreaking work on messaging around homelessness has made an impact on an international level, changing the conversation about solutions to homelessness in a way that gives people a chance to tell their own story. Thank you to Mark for joining and inspiring service providers across NJ to take action around educating their communities on the realities of homelessness. [Click here](#) to learn more about Mark's work and Invisible People.

RESOURCES FOR HOMELESS SERVICES PROVIDERS



ICE Raid Guidance for Homeless Service Providers

The National Homeless Law Center and Crowell & Moring LLP have put together ICE Raid Guidance for Homeless Service Providers: "What to do Before, During, and After a Raid": <https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ICE-Guidance.pdf>.

While you may have been inundated with materials on this topic, we recommend you spend a moment reviewing this guidance as it includes some unique proposals about steps to take following an ICE raid specifically designed for homeless service providers.

Installing signage in your facility indicating private areas forces ICE agents to obtain a valid warrant, signed by a judge in order to enter those non-public areas of the facility (further explanation on page 2 of the guidance document linked above). For a sample sign, please contact [Raisa](#).

**JOIN
OUR
TEAM!**

**A ROLE THAT MATTERS.
SERVICE THAT MATTERS.**

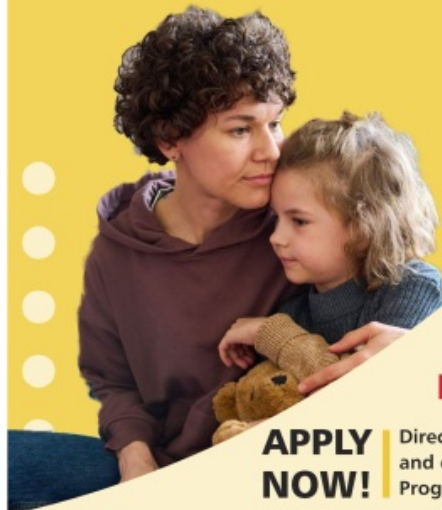
**We're looking for a few good people
who want to MAKE A DIFFERENCE —**

**Help those in New Jersey shelters find
their way back to safe, secure housing.**

We need **Housing Readiness Coordinators
in Bergen, Camden, Cumberland, Essex,
Hudson, Mercer and Passaic Counties.**



An AmeriCorps
national service
opportunity



**JOIN US TODAY
BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION**

**APPLY
NOW!**

Direct any questions you may have or send your resume
and optional cover letter to NJCEH AmeriCorps
Program Manager, Victoria Tartivita at vtartivita@njceh.org

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NOW HIRING:

**Director of Shelter Services – Family Preservation Center [Read More](#)
[Apply Here](#)**



NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



[Last Year, Homelessness in NJ Was Up 24%. Why Some Fear It's Even Higher Now](#)

NJ.com

Volunteers across New Jersey conducted the annual Point-in-Time count, a federally required effort to estimate the state's homeless population. Armed with surveys, they searched streets, train stations, and shelters, while some agencies held events offering necessities to encourage participation. Advocates note that homelessness appears to be rising due to evictions and a lack of affordable housing. Some individuals hesitated to take the survey due to fears of immigration enforcement, despite assurances that citizenship status is not recorded.

[Sarah Steward, CEO Of HomeFront, on NJ Spotlight News Discusses Proactive Approach With Homeless Prevention Program](#)

NJ Spotlight News



Sarah Steward, CEO of HomeFront, a large Mercer County based homeless services provider, discusses the organization's proactive approach to preventing homelessness through their eviction prevention program. She emphasizes the importance of early intervention to address the root causes of homelessness, aiming to keep families in their homes before eviction becomes imminent. This strategy not only provides immediate assistance but also fosters long-term stability for vulnerable families. ***Sarah's segment begins at the 14:02 minute marker.***



Commissioner Haines Leads Efforts for Ocean County Homeless Shelter, Funding

Shore News

The Ocean County Homelessness Trust Fund Task Force has set its 2025 funding priorities to focus on supportive services, rental assistance, and a coordinated prevention system to address rising homelessness. Since its establishment in 2023, the fund has raised \$420,000, with allocations supporting emergency shelter, prevention efforts, and Code Blue programs. With federal aid expiring in 2025, the Task Force emphasizes the need for sustainable local investments and stronger collaboration between public agencies and nonprofits to ensure long-term housing stability.



New Jersey Creating More Housing for Homeless, At-Risk Veterans

American Legion

Building on the success of its veteran housing program in Hoboken, New Jersey is expanding similar projects to multiple locations, starting with Post 3 in Westfield. These long-term projects involve demolishing and rebuilding posts to provide housing and support for homeless and at-risk veterans, with funding from government grants and donations. Advocates emphasize that addressing veteran homelessness is also a key step in suicide prevention, ensuring that those who served can rebuild their lives with stability and dignity.



Even With Federal Grants Freeze Paused, New Jersey Democrats, Non Profits Are Worried About Funding

CBS News

Despite a temporary halt on the federal funding freeze, concerns remain among New Jersey nonprofits, particularly those supporting domestic violence survivors. Advocates warn that potential cuts could lead to layoffs and reduced services, jeopardizing critical support like emergency shelter and crisis intervention. Officials emphasize that the uncertainty surrounding funding creates fear and instability for both service providers and the communities they serve.

New Jersey Municipalities Meet Key Deadline, Commit to Affordable Housing Development

Gothamist

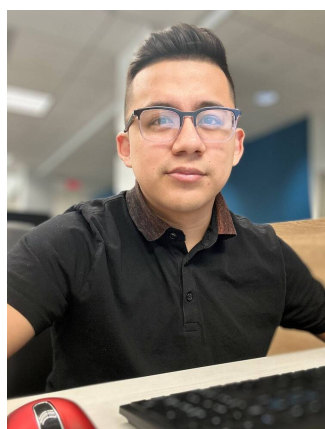
Over three-quarters of New Jersey's municipalities met a key affordable housing deadline in January, with 431 out of 564 towns committing to develop affordable housing over the next decade. However, many towns are seeking to reduce their assigned housing numbers, citing concerns over land calculations, and more than 100 municipalities have raised disputes that will be resolved by a panel of retired judges by March 31. The state's goal is to create 84,000 new affordable homes and rehabilitate 65,000 over the next 10 years.



NJ Residents Struggle to Pay Rent, Mortgages, Study Says: Report

Patch

A new study from Deeds.com reveals the growing struggle with housing costs, showing that over 6.6 million U.S. households are behind on mortgage payments. New Jersey ranks fifth in delinquencies, with 5.57% of homeowners late on mortgages and 17.7% of renters falling behind on rent. With housing affordability becoming a bigger challenge, many in the state are feeling the pressure to keep up with payments.



From Client of Housing Initiatives of Princeton (HIP) to Board Member - Luis Estrada's Remarkable Journey

A journey from Guatemala to Princeton became one of resilience, service, and leadership. Raised by a hardworking mother and supported by a local housing initiative during a difficult time, a young leader dedicated himself to giving back to the community that helped him. Now working in finance and serving on a nonprofit board, he continues to uplift others with aspirations to pursue immigration law and help families find stability and opportunity, just as his did.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

[ICYMI: NYT: Trump Drive to Cut Safety Net Could Hit His Voters](#)

War Room

Republicans are considering significant cuts to safety net programs, such as food stamps, Medicaid, and housing aid, in order to offset tax cuts that primarily benefit the wealthy. These proposed cuts not only affect the poorest Americans but also target struggling working-class voters, including those who supported Trump in the 2016 election. Critics argue these cuts could harm people who are working but still rely on these programs to make ends meet.



[Senate Confirms Scott Turner For HUD Post](#)

Politico

The Senate confirmed Scott Turner as Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with a 55-44 vote. Turner, a former developer, football player, and motivational speaker, expressed concerns about HUD's failure to meet its mission and plans to assess the effectiveness of its programs, with a focus on addressing the affordable housing crisis, while potentially reducing funding and overhauling housing and homelessness initiatives.



[What I Learned from 32 Years of Writing About Homelessness](#)

TIME

In his powerful reflection on homelessness, Kevin Fagan shares his personal journey from childhood poverty to a career as a journalist, revealing how his own experiences shaped his deep connection with the people he later reported on. Drawing from decades of firsthand reporting, including the stories of Rita Grant and Tyson Feilzer, Fagan uncovers the humanity and resilience behind the harsh reality of homelessness. With a focus on systemic failures, economic disparity, and the need for real solutions, Fagan advocates for a deeper understanding of the struggles faced by the homeless, reminding readers that



every individual is worth saving.

Focus on Ending Veterans Homelessness:

Gimme Shelter- One City Has A Bold New Plan To Solve The Homeless Crisis. It Just Might Work

Business Insider



Homelessness in the U.S. has surged to a record high in 2024, but the rate among Veterans has decreased to its lowest point since tracking began in 2009. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of homeless Veterans dropped by nearly 8%, thanks to bipartisan support and a "One Team" approach that focuses on collaboration, financial resources, and providing wraparound services for Veterans after they are housed. This unique strategy, alongside ambitious goals for housing and outreach, has played a key role in reducing homelessness among Veterans.

How Veteran Homelessness Is Dropping Amid Record Surge

VA News



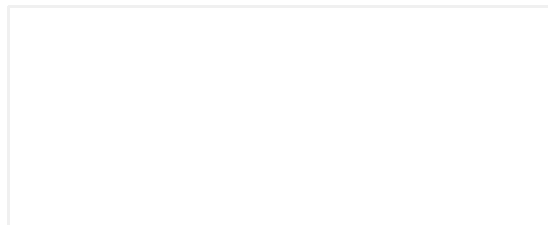
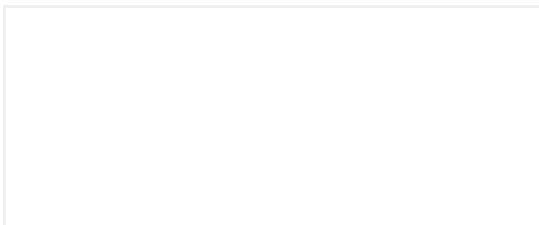
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Hiding Homelessness: Sweeps Show Cities Choose Sports and Entertainment Over Housing

Invisible People



Ahead of major events like the Super Bowl and the Olympics, cities across the U.S. are forcibly removing homeless encampments, prioritizing public image over lasting solutions to homelessness. While intended to improve the appearance of public spaces, these sweeps fail to address the root causes of homelessness and often disrupt efforts to connect individuals with essential services and housing. Advocates argue that such actions only mask the problem and call for more compassionate, long-term solutions to the housing crisis.





['Just Growing' American Rescue Workers Offers Hope for the Homeless](#)

Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Homelessness is more than just sleeping outside; it encompasses individuals who may be temporarily staying with friends or family, or living in places not intended for habitation, like cars or abandoned buildings. These people could be struggling due to a sudden life event, such as job loss, a health crisis, or eviction. The reality is that many individuals who are homeless are working, but their income doesn't stretch far enough to cover rising rents or other expenses. Others may struggle with mental health challenges, substance use, or a history of eviction or criminal records, making it harder to find and maintain stable housing. The misconception that homelessness is solely due to laziness overlooks the complex factors—financial strain, inadequate housing availability, personal trauma—that contribute to it. Even those with temporary housing situations like couch surfing still experience instability, highlighting that homelessness takes many forms, often hidden from view.

[Emergency 'Igloo' Shelters Provide Refuge for Homeless Folks in Freezing Temperatures](#)

Good News

Life-threatening hypothermia can occur when temperatures range from 32 to 50° F, but many warming centers and shelters don't open until temperatures drop much lower, leaving unsheltered individuals at risk. The Igloo, an emergency shelter developed by a Czech



[Temporary Restraining Order Granted in New Grants Pass Homeless Lawsuit](#)

JPR

A judge in Oregon has issued a two-week temporary restraining order preventing the state from citing, arresting, or prosecuting homeless individuals for camping. This order follows a lawsuit alleging the state's treatment of homeless people violates state law, particularly the restrictions on camping and the lack of legal options for daytime shelter. Advocates argue that criminalizing homelessness is not a solution.



organization, provides a temporary solution by offering an igloo-shaped structure made from heat-retaining materials, keeping the interior 18°F warmer than the outside temperature. Designed to be easy to set up and non-flammable, the Igloo is being distributed to cities and charities helping people experiencing homelessness, providing protection from the cold while advocating for more permanent housing solutions.

["We Will Fight Back": Aid Workers Fear Closing a Camp on the Arizona Border Will Endanger Migrants](#)

Pro Publica

Pastor Randy Mayer, co-founder of Green Valley-Sahuarita Samaritans, has been providing humanitarian aid to migrants on the Arizona-Mexico border for nearly 25 years. His group runs a camp in the remote Pajarito Mountains, offering food, water, and first aid to migrants stranded in the area, which has become more dangerous due to increased border crossings and human smuggling. Despite federal pressure to close the camp, volunteers remain committed to their mission, arguing that dismantling it would endanger lives and undermine their religious duty to help those in need.



[Should 'Aiding' Or 'Abetting' A Homeless Camp Be Illegal? It Might Soon Be a Reality in This Bay Area City](#)

ABC 10

Fremont, California, is considering an ordinance that would not only make it illegal to camp on public property, but also criminalize anyone who aids, abets, or conceals such encampments, potentially leading to fines or jail time. This provision has sparked concerns among activists and nonprofit workers, who fear it could be used to target individuals providing humanitarian aid, such as food, clothing, or shelter to the homeless. While the city emphasizes that outreach workers won't be targeted, the broad language of the ordinance has left many uncertain about its enforcement and impact on those helping unhoused individuals.



[House Of Representatives Poised To Send \\$425 Million To Shelter System](#)



Photo taken by Corrie Freeman

Sign at the Capital City of Youth Services (CCYS) administration building that says "Safe Place".

The Massachusetts House of Representatives is set to pass a \$425 million supplemental budget aimed at addressing the emergency shelter system's strain, with policy changes that include tightening eligibility by limiting benefits to U.S. citizens and some permanent residents. The new budget also imposes a 4,000-family cap on the shelter system, even though over 6,000 families are currently using it, and allows non-eligible families to stay for up to 30 days. The proposal has sparked controversy, with some opposing the bill for not addressing broader issues like federal immigration cooperation.

The Homeless Continue To Struggle

The Fam Van

Florida's House Bill 1365, signed into law in March 2024, aims to address urban issues like public safety and homelessness by increasing funding for housing, mental health services, and job training. However, its stricter regulations on loitering and enhanced law enforcement have inadvertently harmed the homeless population by limiting access to public spaces and escalating their interactions with law enforcement, all while failing to address the root causes of homelessness. Critics argue that the bill's focus on urban improvements neglects the needs of vulnerable groups, exacerbating their struggles.

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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