

September 25th, 2025

COALITION NEWS

Garden State Leaders Program Featured at Governor's Conference on Housing and Economic Development



Last week's Governor's Conference on Housing and Economic Development, featured a panel called "Lived Experience: The New Power in Community Change" which spotlighted leaders who have transitioned from homelessness into powerful advocacy roles. Alicia Alvarez, NJCEH Program Coordinator for the Garden State Leaders and Advocacy Coordinator at nourish.NJ, was joined two fellow Garden State Leaders graduates—Raquel Kooper (Monarch Housing Associates) and Tanika Moss (Heart of Hannah Women's Center Inc.) as well as by Pamela Baker (CSPNJ) —to discuss how their lived experience informs their work. Their stories illustrated how centering lived experience fosters trust, drives innovation, and leads to more effective, community-driven solutions.

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Housing and Community Development Network Launches Action Fund to Advance Housing Justice

The Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey (the Network) today announced the launch of its new 501(c)(4) organization, the Housing and Community Development Network Action Fund (HCDN Action Fund). The Network Action Fund will primarily focus on strengthening advocacy efforts around housing and community development by lobbying and organizing community education and awareness initiatives

to support policies that prioritize housing as a human right. It will also be able to engage directly in the political process to identify and promote leaders who share these same values.

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



NJEDA Approves Five Redevelopment Projects for Tax Credit Awards

ROI-nj.com

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) has approved five redevelopment projects in Essex, Mercer, and Middlesex counties, awarding over \$576 million in tax credits through the Aspire Program and the Historic Property Reinvestment Program. Together, these projects will create more than 1,100 new housing units, including 544 affordable homes, while also rehabilitating historic properties and supporting mixed-use development. NJEDA leaders say the investments will strengthen communities by expanding affordable housing, revitalizing neighborhoods, and driving long-term economic growth.



HIP Fights Housing Insecurity with a Special Formula at its Annual "Rent Party"

TAPinto Princeton

Housing Initiatives of Princeton (HIP) is tackling Mercer County's growing housing crisis through its annual Rent Party fundraiser, *Elements of Change: A Formula for Housing*, on Saturday, October 18, at Princeton's Frick Chemistry Lab Atrium. The event will feature food, music, a silent auction, and a keynote from a former client, with all proceeds funding HIP's eviction prevention, transitional housing, wrap-around services, and advocacy. With homelessness up 74% in Mercer County since the pandemic, the Rent Party is HIP's largest fundraiser and critical to helping families stay housed and build sustainable futures.

Absecon Officials Say Towns Are Sending Homeless to Rt 30 Motels

97.3 ESPN SOUTH JERSEY

Officials in Absecon and Galloway Township say their motels along Route 30 have increasingly become long-term housing for people experiencing homelessness, often with subsidized vouchers. In response, Absecon passed a new ordinance limiting motel stays to 14 consecutive days within a 30-day period, arguing that hotels were never intended to function as shelters and that the practice strains local services. The move has sparked controversy, with some motel owners calling the law too harsh and neighboring towns accused of "dumping" their homeless populations in Absecon — allegations that some local leaders deny.





Trump's Medicaid Cuts Could Hamper Efforts to House The Homeless

The Seattle Times

States have increasingly tapped Medicaid to fund housing-related services for people experiencing homelessness, such as case management and landlord mediation, on the grounds that stable housing improves health and reduces costly ER visits. President Trump's recent law cutting more than \$900 billion from Medicaid threatens these efforts, raising fears that states will scale back programs that connect vulnerable people to housing support. Supporters argue these services save lives and money, while critics say they stretch Medicaid beyond its core purpose of providing health care.



Advocates Sue HUD to Preserve \$75 Million Homeless Grants

THE WASHINGTON Informer

Homeless advocates have sued HUD after the Trump administration tied \$75 million in federal homelessness funding to compliance with its policies on sanctuary cities, a move that could make projects in 36 states and D.C. ineligible. A federal judge issued a temporary order blocking the change, which had given providers only seven days to revise plans. Advocates warn that politicizing Continuum of Care grants threatens essential housing and support services at a time when homelessness has reached record levels nationwide.



Trump is Wrong. I've Been Homeless. I Wasn't a Criminal, I Just Needed a Home.

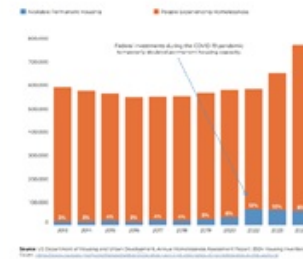
USA TODAY

A former unsheltered person and longtime homelessness advocate warns that President Trump's recent executive actions conflate homelessness with criminality, relying on encampment raids and law enforcement rather than housing solutions. The opinion piece argues that this one-size-fits-all, punitive approach silences communities and providers while offering no real investment to end homelessness. The author calls on the administration to instead fully fund HUD's housing and prevention programs, noting that housing — not criminalization — is what ends homelessness.

Dire Underfunding: Providers Can Only House 8 Percent of Homeless People

NAEH

The federal government provides far too little funding to meet the need for permanent housing in 2024, only 8% of people experiencing homelessness could be housed with available units. Temporary COVID-era investments showed progress, nearly doubling capacity from 2020 to 2022, but those gains disappeared when funding expired. With FY2026 budget negotiations underway, advocates stress that Congress must boost Continuum of Care (CoC) investments to expand permanent housing and address the crisis.



To Help Solve Homelessness, Recognize Necessity as a Right

NEW AMERICA

The necessity defense, traditionally used in property law, excuses illegal acts if they are required to prevent greater harm. Advocates argue that because food and shelter are basic human needs, the defense could apply to unhoused people forced to break laws simply to survive — especially in light of rising anti-homeless ordinances like *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*. While not a substitute for adequate housing policy, recognizing necessity underscores the government’s responsibility to ensure access to safe, affordable shelter.



VA Awards \$84M in Grants to Fight Veteran Homelessness

VA News

The Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded \$84 million in grants to 176 organizations nationwide to support Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The funding is split evenly between legal services — such as eviction prevention, benefits access, and criminal defense — and case management, including housing placement, home visits, and educational support. VA officials say the grants will help thousands of Veterans stabilize housing and move toward long-term independence.





Trump's HUD Secretary Spreads Falsehoods About Homelessness

invisible PEOPLE

HUD Secretary Scott Turner's recent op-ed misrepresents the root causes of homelessness, blaming addiction and mental illness while dismissing Housing First as an "ideology." In reality, research shows homelessness is driven primarily by a shortage of affordable housing, and Housing First has decades of bipartisan support and proven success in reducing homelessness. Critics warn that Turner's call for policing and faith-based funding would perpetuate harm, while real solutions require investments in affordable housing, supportive services, and nondiscriminatory programs.

Most US Adults Think Individuals Choices Keep People in Poverty, a New AP-NORC/Harris Poll Finds

AP

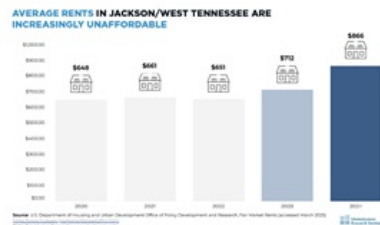
A new poll finds most Americans believe personal choices are a major driver of poverty and homelessness, though many also say the government spends too little to help those in need. Nearly 8 in 10 say homelessness has risen over the past 25 years, reflecting the visibility of encampments despite overall declines in poverty rates. Views on clearing encampments and government responsibility are divided along partisan lines, but a majority agree that federal and state governments should play a leading role in addressing the crisis.



CEO Corner: Week of September 22

NAEH

With HUD silent since July on the FY2025 Continuum of Care (CoC) funding process, it now appears unlikely that funds will be awarded before current grants begin expiring in January. Advocates fear HUD may introduce major program changes in the upcoming NOFO that could endanger existing permanent housing and LGBTQ+ programs. Congress has a chance to intervene through the FY2026 appropriations



Housing-Focused Responses to Unsheltered Homelessness: Spotlight on Jackson/ West Tennessee

NAEH

This case study highlights how the Jackson/West Tennessee Continuum of Care (CoC) is addressing unsheltered homelessness through collaboration, landlord partnerships, expanded housing capacity, and strong outreach across its 23 largely rural counties. With 93% of people experiencing homelessness in the region living unsheltered, the CoC has leaned on data-driven strategies

process, making it urgent for advocates to press lawmakers to prioritize a provision requiring HUD to renew all expiring CoC grants.

and lived experience engagement to scale up permanent housing connections. The report is part of a broader series showcasing housing-focused solutions as alternatives to criminalization, pointing to long-term strategies that can truly end homelessness.

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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