

Homelessness MATTERS



October 9th, 2025

Urgent Message from the CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness:



While the government is shut down, the need for advocacy for federal homelessness funding for 2025 is ramping up. As Ann Oliva, CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said in her recent message, this is one of the most critical moments in our work to end homelessness.

New plans being considered by HUD could take away permanent housing assistance from over 170,000 people across the country. We cannot let that happen. Your voice matters —[Speak up Today!](#)

NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



[NJHMFA Launches First-of-Its-Kind Program to Fund Affordable and Workforce Housing](#)

TAPinto Asbury Park

The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency has approved a new State Tax Credit Subsidy Program that will



[Equal Rights Shouldn't Require a Permanent Address](#)

nj.com

More than 112,000 New Jersey households faced eviction in 2024, and that number is expected to rise even higher by the end of

auction state tax credits to raise private investment for affordable and workforce housing. Expected to generate billions in housing development over the next several years, the program will direct half of its funds to workforce housing and half to affordable housing projects. State leaders say the initiative will help middle-income workers and families struggling with rising rents, especially in high-cost areas like Asbury Park and other coastal communities.

2025, leaving thousands in shelters or transitional housing. Yet under current law, it is legal for landlords or employers to discriminate against people based on a shelter address, denying them jobs and housing they need to regain stability. Advocates are calling for the state to expand the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination to include housing status, closing a critical gap that keeps people trapped in homelessness.

Ciattarelli's Pledge for County Homeless Shelters Draws Questions Over Cost and Feasibility

MercerMe

Republican gubernatorial candidate Jack Ciattarelli says he would create and fund homeless shelters and community mental health centers in every New Jersey county if elected, though his proposal may face financial and community opposition. Advocates note that homelessness in New Jersey has increased 57% over the past three years, with more than 13,700 people counted in 2025 and shelters already operating at or above capacity. Connie Mercer, NJCEH's ED, welcomed the attention to the issue but emphasized that expanding shelters alone will not solve the crisis without addressing the severe shortage of affordable housing. Mercer and NJCEH policy associate Raisa Rubin-Stankiewicz stressed that any statewide shelter plan must go hand in hand with major investments in permanent, affordable housing to tackle the root causes of homelessness.



Affordable Housing Challenge by 27 N.J. Towns Rejected by Judge

nj.com

A New Jersey judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by 27 towns seeking to overturn the state's new affordable housing law, ruling that the municipalities lacked legal standing. The decision upholds the 2024 Affordable Housing Reform Law, which replaced the defunct Council on Affordable Housing and created a



Smith Announces \$1M Federal Grant to Fight Teen Homelessness in Ocean and Monmouth Counties

U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Rep. Chris Smith announced a federal grant of more than \$1 million over three years to support Ocean's Harbor House, a nonprofit that helps homeless and at-risk youth in Ocean and Monmouth

new system for calculating local housing obligations. The ruling means towns must move forward with their housing plans for 2025–2035 or risk lawsuits, reinforcing the state’s authority to enforce fair-share housing under the Mount Laurel doctrine.

counties. The funding will expand the organization’s Transitional Living Program, which provides safe housing, life skills training, and workforce preparation for young adults ages 16 to 21. Smith said the grant will make a tangible difference by helping teens complete school, gain independence, and build stable futures.



[Sussex County Commissioners Address Homelessness with Task Force and Site Visits](#)

TAPinto Newton

Sussex County officials say homelessness is a growing countywide issue, not limited to visible populations in Newton. At a recent commissioners’ meeting, leaders reported an estimated 951 people experiencing homelessness and announced the formation of a new task force involving the Newton Town Council, police, and the Department of Community Affairs to respond quickly. Commissioners have been visiting local outreach sites like the Mission Street Market and the Gathering Place to better understand the crisis and identify housing solutions.



[Hanover Township Board of Ed Raises Concerns Over McKinney-Vento Act Costs Regarding Homeless Students](#)

TAPinto Hanover Township

The Hanover Township Board of Education is voicing concern over the rising financial strain caused by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which requires school districts to educate students experiencing homelessness. The district currently serves between 30 and 40 such students, a cost that has reached about \$1.3 million. Officials attribute the increase to local hotels being used as long-term shelters and are urging enforcement of the Township’s hotel ordinance while continuing discussions with state leaders and stakeholders to seek relief.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



Federal Government Shutdown and Mass Layoffs Risks Crippling HUD in Long Term

NLIHC

The federal government shut down, which began on October 1st, is creating new uncertainty for housing programs. While HUD and USDA-assisted households will continue receiving rent payments through November, ongoing staff shortages and potential layoffs threaten to disrupt essential services. Advocates warn that the Trump administration's continued efforts to cut rental assistance, weaken fair housing protections, and limit anti-poverty programs could worsen the nation's housing and homelessness crisis.



Trump Administration Abruptly Cut Off Highly Effective Support for Disabled People Experiencing Homelessness

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The Trump administration has ended federal support for the SOAR program, a proven initiative that helps disabled and unhoused people access critical benefits like SSI and SSDI. The decision will make it far harder for people with serious mental illness or unstable housing to secure the income and health care they need to live stably, despite SOAR's strong success rate of 65% approval for applicants—more than double the national average. Advocates warn the cut will increase homelessness, strain local budgets, and undo years of progress made with minimal federal investment.



How Dying Malls Could Help Solve America's Housing Crisis

Newsweek

Developers across the U.S. are increasingly converting vacant shopping malls into housing as a response to the nation's 3.8 million-home shortage. With roughly 34 million square feet of empty retail space and hundreds of "ghost malls" struggling to survive, these large structures are being reimagined as residential communities. Experts say the trend reflects both overbuilt



Advocates Sue HUD to Preserve \$75M Homeless Grants

THE LOUISIANA WEEKLY

Homeless advocates have filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development over new funding rules that would restrict \$75 million in federal grants to communities complying with Trump administration policies on sanctuary cities. A federal judge has temporarily blocked HUD from enforcing the changes, citing the rushed process that gave providers

retail space from past decades and growing demand for affordable, mixed-use housing in urban and suburban areas.

only a week to revise applications. Advocates argue the policy politicizes life-saving housing resources at a time when homelessness in the U.S. has reached record highs, with more than 770,000 people experiencing homelessness in 2024.



The Wrong Way to Fight Homelessness

The Progressive Magazine

Following the 2024 Supreme Court ruling in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*, which allowed cities to ban public camping even when shelters are full, encampment sweeps have sharply increased nationwide. Cities now regularly clear homeless camps with little notice, destroying personal belongings and disconnecting people from vital services, worsening trauma and health risks. Advocates, including the ACLU and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, condemn these actions as punitive and urge investment in permanent housing, health care, and compassionate outreach instead of criminalization.



America's Courts Have Abandoned the Unhoused

HARVARD POLITICAL REVIEW

The homelessness crisis in the United States has deepened, with nearly 800,000 people now unhoused and many cities responding by criminalizing public camping instead of addressing root causes like poverty and housing shortages. The 2024 Supreme Court ruling in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson* gave local governments broad power to ban camping even when shelters are full, overturning previous protections for unhoused people. Advocates argue this decision worsens displacement and suffering, while states such as Oregon, California, and Hawaii are trying to create fairer, more humane alternatives focused on shelter access and long-term housing solutions.



An Unusual 'Village' Aims to Help People Leave Long-Term Homelessness For Good

NJPR



How Cities Are Reimagining Shelter for People Who Are Homeless

The Other Side Village near Salt Lake City is a unique community that helps people experiencing chronic homelessness rebuild their lives through housing, recovery, and job training. Residents complete a structured program focused on sobriety, mental health, and life skills before moving into tiny homes within the village. Founded by formerly homeless individuals, the program combines accountability, peer support, and employment opportunities to create long-term stability and community for people once considered hardest to help.

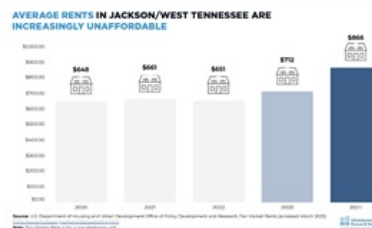
Across the country, new shelter models are challenging traditional approaches that have long been criticized as unsafe, high-barrier, and re-traumatizing for people experiencing homelessness. Nonprofits like Urban Alchemy are creating “wellness campuses” that combine safe shelter with therapy, skill-building, and community connection, while faith-based initiatives like St. Paul’s Sacred Settlement Mosaic are building intentional tiny home communities that foster belonging and support. Cities such as San Francisco are also rethinking zoning and equity in shelter placement through policies like the One City Shelter Act, aiming to distribute responsibility and opportunity for shelter expansion more fairly across neighborhoods.



Tenants' Rights and Taking Out the Trash

SHELTERFORCE

Housing experts and tenant advocates are debating what true “resident control” should look like in the growing U.S. social housing movement. The discussion explores how much power tenants should have in managing and governing their buildings, from co-ops that elect boards to public housing with tenant councils, and how to balance flexibility, accountability, and long-term sustainability. Advocates argue that real resident control means giving tenants not only a voice in rent and maintenance decisions but also a role in shaping the future of their communities while ensuring housing remains stable, affordable, and democratically governed.



Rent Control Will Make the Housing Crisis Worse

THE DAILY ECONOMY

America is facing a deepening housing crisis, with rents up 50% over the past decade and homeownership increasingly out of reach for average earners. In response, cities and states are turning to rent control, but critics argue the policy backfires—reducing new development, worsening housing quality, and inflating long-term rents. While popular among politicians and some tenants, rent control is portrayed as a short-term political fix that ultimately undermines housing affordability.

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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HOMELESSNESS**



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