

# Homelessness MATTERS



February 19th, 2026

## IN THIS EDITION:

- **New Jersey Homelessness in the News:** *Governor Sherrill's transition team proposes preventing homelessness through more affordable housing, stronger tenant protections, and zoning reform*
- **News From Around the Country:** *Obama says Democrats should change approach on homelessness, The high cost of low nonprofit pay*

## NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



### [Gov. Sherrill's Transition Report Build's on NJ's Affordable Housing Framework and Lays Foundation to Lower Housing Costs](#)

*Insider NJ*

A new report from the Sherrill-Caldwell transition team urges aggressive action to confront New Jersey's deepening housing and homelessness crisis by expanding affordable housing under the state's Mount Laurel framework. It calls for stronger tenant protections, eviction prevention funding, enforcement against housing discrimination, and a new Homelessness Prevention and Housing Gap Subsidy Program to keep families from losing their homes in the first place. By pairing these safeguards with zoning reform and investment in affordable development, the plan aims to stem rising housing instability and reduce the flow of residents into homelessness.

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### Op-Ed: Boost Behavioral Health Funding Now or Pay Much More Later

*NJ Spotlight News*

In New Jersey, growing behavioral health needs since the COVID-19 pandemic are closely linked to rising housing instability and homelessness, as untreated mental illness and substance-use disorders push more residents into crisis. Advocates warn that without sustained state investment in prevention, outpatient care, youth services, and workforce stabilization, individuals will deteriorate, leading to increased emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and homelessness. They argue that funding behavioral health infrastructure now is essential to preventing more costly downstream impacts on shelters, hospitals, and the broader social safety net.



### Toms River Mayor Endorses Church's Plan for Temporary Housing for Women, Children

*Toms River Shorebeat*

In Toms River, Mayor Daniel Rodrick voiced support for a transitional housing program run by Interfaith Hospitality Network at a home owned by St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, which provides temporary shelter to displaced women and children, often fleeing domestic violence. The small-scale program contrasts with a previously rejected proposal by Christ Episcopal Church to open a larger general homeless shelter, reflecting ongoing local tensions over how homelessness should be addressed. Supporters argue the transitional model helps families avoid prolonged homelessness by offering stable, short-term housing while they secure permanent homes.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



### The High Cost of Low Nonprofit Pay

*The Chronicle of Philanthropy*

Low pay in the nonprofit sector has left many workers classified as ALICE—earning above the poverty line but not enough to meet basic living costs—creating financial strain and threatening



### 'Be Practical'. Obama Says Democrats Need to Change Approach on Homelessness

*USA TODAY*

In a Feb. 14 interview with Brian Tyler Cohen, Barack Obama described homelessness as a moral failure in a wealthy nation but urged Democrats to

long-term workforce stability. Reliance on underpaid, overworked staff has led to burnout and high turnover, with many employees considering leaving the sector altogether. Leaders argue that nonprofits and funders must acknowledge the true cost of operations and invest in fair wages and benefits to sustain their missions and retain skilled workers.

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**Select Americans Receive \$1,200 in Monthly Payments as Rents Soar**

*AOL*

Amid soaring rents in high-cost regions across the United States, select low-income residents in certain cities and states are receiving \$1,200 in monthly payments through guaranteed income-style pilot programs designed to prevent eviction and homelessness. These initiatives, often targeted at renters in areas with acute housing shortages and rising living costs, aim to provide flexible cash assistance that helps households remain stably housed. As housing affordability worsens regionally, such direct payments are increasingly being used as a homelessness-prevention strategy to reduce displacement and keep vulnerable families from falling into crisis.

take a more practical approach that acknowledges public frustration with large encampments in cities like Los Angeles. He argued that lasting solutions require building broad political support for policies that both uphold the dignity of unhoused people and respond to community concerns. His remarks come as homelessness hits record highs nationwide and as Donald Trump advances enforcement-focused measures, including encampment sweeps and efforts to move away from Housing First strategies.

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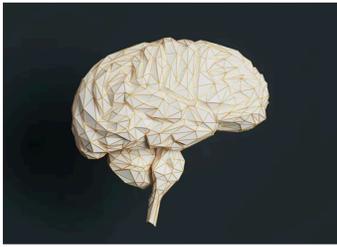


**Those Living Outside Say Homelessness is Like Being Stuck in Quicksand**

*The Columbian*

A national survey by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the University of Chicago found that six in 10 Americans believe homelessness is primarily driven by personal choices, substance use, or mental illness. However, interviews with people living unhoused in Vancouver point instead to structural causes such as unaffordable housing, job loss, eviction, and domestic violence—factors echoed in local data from Council for the Homeless. Those experiencing homelessness describe how daily survival challenges, long waits for housing, and the trauma of living outdoors make it extremely difficult to regain stability, reinforcing that homelessness is more often a result of systemic barriers than personal failure.

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## **Brain Injury is Almost 10 Times More Common in Unhoused People**

*The Conversation*

On any given night in Canada, about 60,000 people are homeless, and research suggests more than half have experienced a brain injury—often before losing stable housing—with moderate to severe injuries occurring at nearly 10 times the rate seen in the general population. These injuries can leave people struggling with memory, concentration, impulse control and decision-making, triggering mental health or substance use challenges and unraveling employment, relationships and financial stability. Stigma, siloed health and housing systems, and a severe shortage of affordable, supportive housing then trap many in a cycle that is difficult to escape without coordinated, long-term support.

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**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](mailto:info@NJCEH.org)**

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