

Homelessness MATTERS



May 6th, 2026

IN THIS EDITION:

- **Opportunities for Action:** Register unhoused voters—apply for \$100 event support before May 12 deadline; Contact your legislators to advocate for the S.H.I.E.L.D. NJ Campaign to protect the homeless response system; Act now against HUD proposals that threaten housing stability
- **Resources for Providers:** Free training for frontline service providers on co-occurring disorders; Discounted National Alliance to End Homelessness Trainings available; Mental Health Basics Training for Homeless Service Providers; Free "BATHE" training available to improve communications with clients
- **NJ Homelessness in the News:** Sen. Andy Kim highlights Trenton Rescue Mission eviction prevention efforts keeping tenants housed through local solutions; Gov. Sherrill and "Jeopardy!" champion back NJ plan accelerating affordable housing to prevent housing instability and homelessness
- **News From Around the Country:** HUD May 2026 overhaul shifts homelessness funding away from housing-first model toward transitional housing and self-sufficiency programs; Utah scraps large homeless campus plan, pivots to expanded shelter, housing, and treatment programs amid debate over coercive care vs voluntary housing solutions; Rep. Rashida Tlaib proposes sweeping homeless "Bill of Rights" redirecting defense funds to housing, healthcare, and public access protections, sparking backlash over encampment enforcement conflicts

And much more...

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION



[Homeless Does Not Mean Voteless: Voter Registration Deadline \(Tuesday, May 12\) for the Primary Election Less than a Week Away!](#)

We are less than a week away from **Tuesday, May 12th**, the deadline to register to vote in the 2026 primary election. The primary election (June 2nd) will determine each party's candidate in the November midterm elections.

To prepare, the Coalition is bringing back its statewide *Homeless Does Not Mean Voteless: Power to the Polls* campaign to register and empower unhoused voters.

We want to help you and other agencies serving unhoused residents host voter registration events! **Please complete the form to request \$100** to cover the costs of hosting a voter registration event focused on registering unhoused voters: <https://forms.office.com/r/TPKTnVn0pL>

To request voter registration materials and ask any questions, please contact Coalition Policy Associate Raisa at rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org or **(609) 865-2534**.



Your Voice Needed: Urge the Governor and NJ Legislature to Invest \$100 Million to S.H.I.E.L.D. NJ Residents from Homelessness

Homelessness in NJ has surged 57% in just three years, pushing the system to the brink. Without immediate action, the NJ Department of Community Affairs projects that by 2026, **emergency shelter demand could rise 91% and street homelessness 94%**.

NOW is the time to act. **Use this sign-on letter to contact Governor Sherrill and your state legislators**—New Jersey must take bold, decisive steps to address this growing crisis and ensure everyone has a safe place to call home. With \$100 million, we can S.H.I.E.L.D. New Jersey residents from homelessness. Funds will be used for:

S — Shelter: emergency shelters and operations

H — Housing: rapid re-housing and supportive housing

I — Intervention Through Outreach: street outreach connecting unsheltered individuals to services and housing

E — Eviction Prevention: sustainable funding to prevent homelessness

L — Landlord Engagement: housing navigation and landlord partnerships

D — Data & Coordination: tools to strengthen NJ homelessness data systems and municipal supports

For more information or to get involved, contact Coalition Policy Associate Raisa at rrubinstankiewicz@njceh.org

RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS



The Intersection of Crisis: Co-Occurring Disorders and Homelessness in New Jersey

The Coalition is excited to partner again with SAMHSA's Opioid Response Network to offer a free training for frontline staff in New Jersey's homeless response system.

This free training designed for frontline service providers will be led by Dr. Dolores Blackwell, LMSW and will explore how co-occurring disorders present and provide practical, evidence-informed tools to support engagement and connection to care.

With over 172,000 NJ residents experiencing homelessness or seeking homelessness prevention services, this is a critical conversation for frontline providers.

Register for a session by clicking on a date below:

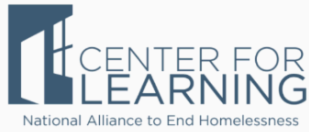
- [May 12, 2:00–3:30 PM](#)
- [May 19, 7:00–8:30 PM](#)

[Click here](#) to download the flyer with more information.

Discounted Trainings for Service Providers From the National Alliance to End Homelessness

Courses include:

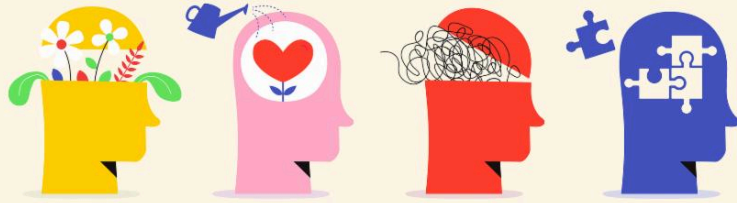
- *Key Skills for Shelter Staff: a 7 course series*
- *Understanding How We Got Here: How Historic and Ongoing Structural Racism Creates Racial Disparities*
- *Fueling Connections: Strategies for Homeless Outreach Staff*



- Deep discounts for organizations with smaller budgets
 - Contact us at learning@naeh.org
- 15% off all courses for NJCEH member organizations
 - Use NJCEH15 at checkout
- 20% off specific courses for NJCEH member organizations
 - Use NJCEH20 at checkout

Contact Jessica Cantermen with any questions: jcantermen@njceh.org

Mental Health Basics



Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Join us for a *Mental Health Basics* training, designed to build foundational understanding and practical awareness of mental health in everyday settings.

This training will cover:

- * The difference between mental health and mental illness
- * An overview of common mental health conditions and the impact of stigma
- * How mental health challenges may present in shelter settings and within the community

Session times:

6-7 AM
8-9 AM
10-11 AM
2-3 P
4-5 PM
6-7 PM



bit.ly/20mayMHB

This training is ideal for anyone looking to strengthen their knowledge, reduce stigma, and better support individuals experiencing mental health challenges.

- * Please register for this workshop in advance by scanning the QR code or visiting the URL.
- * When registering, be sure to indicate the time slot you plan to attend.



Mental Health
Association in
New Jersey, Inc.

Please contact Jaime Angelini with any questions regarding this training:
jangelini@mhanj.org



GIVE YOUR STAFF ANOTHER TOOL TO CRAFT BETTER CLIENT COMMUNICATION

NJCEH is offering a free, virtual, 45-minute class designed to:

- Increase the positive outcomes of interviews for clients
- Help staff keep control of their time
- Keep initial intake to 15 minutes
- Highlight and define the 5 key markers of a good interview

This class, known as “BATHE” – *the Background, Affect, Trouble, Handling, Empathy Technique* – will be tailored to meet the needs of your specific program and can be held at your convenience.

Email JCantermen@NJCEH.org now to schedule a BATHE Technique training for your staff.

The NJ Coalition to End Homelessness is working for your program to make every day a better day.



NEW JERSEY HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEWS



Senator Kim Joins Rescue Mission of Trenton to Combat Homelessness

Andy Kim Senator

Senator Andy Kim recently visited the Rescue Mission of Trenton to highlight efforts to address homelessness in New Jersey. During his visit, he spoke with staff and volunteers

about the growing need for shelter, recovery services, and stable housing, as well as the critical role federal funding plays in sustaining these programs. Advocates warned that proposed cuts to HUD’s Continuum of Care program could significantly disrupt services, pushing vulnerable individuals back into homelessness. Kim emphasized his ongoing work in Congress to expand affordable housing and strengthen support systems aimed at preventing and ending homelessness.



'Jeopardy!' Star Helps NJ Governor Showcase NJ Affordable Housing

AOL/NorthJersey.com

“Jeopardy!” champion Jamie Ding, a Lawrenceville resident who has won 31 games and nearly \$900,000, joined Gov. Mikie Sherrill as she announced a new executive order aimed at expanding affordable housing across New Jersey. The plan seeks to cut red tape and speed up construction of mixed-income and other housing options in response to what officials describe as a severe housing shortage. The initiative is intended to increase the supply of affordable homes for families, seniors, and workers struggling with rising costs—efforts that advocates say are critical to preventing housing instability and homelessness by making stable housing more accessible.



Hear from The People Being Helped by This Renter Service in Paterson

northjersey.com

Hear from those who have been directly assisted by Paterson native Barbara Martinez through the Tenant Assistance Program Services (TAPS), which helps low-income residents avoid eviction and housing instability. The program provides hands-on support with rental assistance applications, paperwork, and landlord–tenant issues, while also advocating on tenants’ behalf during financial or personal crises. Through this individualized guidance, TAPS helps prevent homelessness by stabilizing residents before they lose their housing.



Middlesex Co. Launches Community Survey To Identify Gaps, Needs

Patch.com

Middlesex County has launched an anonymous community survey asking residents to share feedback on local services, including those related to housing instability, homelessness, mental health, food assistance, and other basic needs. Officials say



Bon Jovi Charity Kitchen Closes After Feeding Thousands, to the Annoyance of Some

NJ 101.5

A pop-up “pay it forward” restaurant run by the JBJ Foundation at a Toms River library has served thousands of meals to people experiencing homelessness and others in need but will close April 30 amid local controversy. Supporters say it provided healthy meals, jobs, and community support, while critics argued

responses from individuals experiencing homelessness or unstable housing will help identify service gaps and improve support systems across the county. The goal is to better understand unmet needs and strengthen programs that help prevent homelessness and support residents in crisis, including those relying on public assistance or emergency services.

it drew homeless individuals to the area and relied too heavily on charitable services. The closure highlights ongoing tensions over how communities respond to homelessness and the role of public-facing aid programs.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



[HUD to Try Again to Change Homelessness Assistance Program](#)

Roll Call

HUD is rolling out a major new homelessness funding overhaul in the first week of May 2026, signaling a sharp pivot away from the long-standing “housing-first” model. The Trump administration wants to redirect federal dollars toward transitional housing and “self-sufficiency” supports like job training and addiction services—and is even floating the elimination of the Continuum of Care program altogether. Advocates are pushing back hard, warning that the shift abandons evidence-based housing strategies and could destabilize an already strained homelessness system.



[Trump Backed Forced Treatment for Homeless People. Utah Shows the Challenges](#)

The New York Times

Utah’s plan to relocate about 1,300 people experiencing homelessness to a centralized campus on the outskirts of Salt Lake City—where some would have faced mandatory addiction or mental health treatment—has been shelved amid concerns about cost, civil liberties, and feasibility. However, state leaders are still moving forward with a scaled-down approach that increases funding for shelter, housing capacity, and treatment programs aimed at people who frequently cycle through jails and emergency rooms. The debate highlights a broader shift in homelessness policy, as officials grapple with whether to prioritize voluntary housing supports or expand more coercive treatment-based models to address addiction, mental illness, and street homelessness.



Rashida Tlaib's New 'Unhoused Bill of Rights' Would Protect Homeless Camping

FOX NEWS

Rep. Rashida Tlaib introduced a nonbinding “Unhoused Persons Bill of Rights” that would significantly expand protections for homeless individuals, including guaranteed access to public spaces, transit, internet, and protections from law enforcement action. The resolution also calls for redirecting about \$168 billion from defense spending toward ending homelessness within three years and includes broader provisions like housing, healthcare, and a “livable wage.” Critics highlighted in the report argue the measure could effectively legalize public camping and conflict with recent Supreme Court rulings allowing stricter enforcement against encampments.



The 80 Million

substack.com/@80million

The 80 Million is a Medicaid newsletter powered by Manatt Health.



More Proof that Housing is Health Care and Lowers Costs

The 80 Million

Housing is increasingly recognized as a critical component of health care, especially for people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Evidence from Medicaid demonstration programs shows that providing housing-related supports not only improves health outcomes but can also reduce costly emergency and inpatient care—often offsetting the cost of the services themselves. As states face budget pressures, experts argue that cutting these supports would be counterproductive, since they ultimately save money while improving care for high-need populations

Avoiding Evictions: How State and Local Policy Can Keep Tenants in Their Homes

SHELTERFORCE

A Shelterforce feature highlights how local and state governments are increasingly focused on preventing evictions as a key strategy to reduce homelessness, especially as federal support shifts and housing protections face political pressure. The article follows tenants like a Kansas City mother who avoided homelessness with legal aid, and shows how tools such as right-to-counsel programs, court reforms, and emergency assistance can dramatically reduce eviction rates and help people stay housed. While these approaches require upfront investment, research shows they can save cities money long-



Bill to Reduce Homelessness Advances Despite Concerns About Using Criminal Courts

4WWL

A Louisiana bill advancing through the Legislature would make unauthorized public camping a misdemeanor as part of a broader effort to address rising homelessness, backed by Gov. Jeff Landry. The proposal also creates “homelessness courts” that would allow individuals to enter diversion programs offering treatment and services, but only if they first plead guilty to an offense. An amendment was adopted ensuring that no homeless person could be convicted of a felony under the bill, even after repeated violations, a change aimed in part at protecting vulnerable populations such as veterans. Supporters say the measure is intended to connect people to resources and create accountability, while critics argue it could still criminalize homelessness by using the court system rather than expanding housing solutions.



Research Suggests a Little Cash at the Right Time Can Help Prevent Youth Homelessness

PIX 11

New research highlighted by PIX11 shows that small, one-time cash payments can significantly reduce youth homelessness by helping young people cover immediate housing and basic living costs during critical moments of instability. A Johns Hopkins study found that 92% of recipients who received targeted cash assistance were still housed six months later, with most using the funds for essentials like rent, food, transportation, and job training. Advocates say stories like those of formerly unhoused youth in New York demonstrate how direct financial support can stabilize housing situations and prevent a return to homelessness, challenging concerns that cash aid will be misused.



Why Continuums of Care and the Aging Network Must Work Together



No Place to Grow Old

kpbs

A new documentary, “No Place to Grow Old,” highlights the growing crisis of

Older adults are one of the fastest-growing populations experiencing homelessness, often driven by rising housing costs, fixed incomes, and health challenges. A blog from the National Alliance to End Homelessness highlights how older adults frequently fall through gaps between aging services, health care, behavioral health, and homelessness systems, which often operate separately and lack coordination. The article emphasizes that stronger partnerships between Continuums of Care and Area Agencies on Aging are essential to better connect housing support with health and social services, helping prevent and address homelessness among older adults. It calls for more integrated planning, shared funding strategies, and prevention-focused approaches to improve housing stability and ensure older adults can age with dignity and support.

older adult homelessness in the United States, where people age 55 and older are now the fastest-growing group entering homelessness and are projected to triple by 2030. The film follows seniors in Portland, Oregon, whose experiences illustrate how rising housing costs, fixed incomes, and predatory financial practices are pushing older adults into housing instability and homelessness. The documentary underscores how easily older adults can become unhoused and often overlooked, drawing attention to the need for stronger affordable housing options and supports tailored to aging populations.



[Trans People Could Soon be Banned from Homeless Shelters](#)

The 19th

A new HUD proposed rule would require federally funded homeless shelters to house people based on their birth sex rather than gender identity, a shift advocates say could effectively block many transgender people from accessing safe emergency shelter. The policy, tied to a Trump-era executive order redefining sex in federal programs, is being condemned by LGBTQ+ advocates as discriminatory and dangerous, especially given high rates of homelessness among



[How to Make America Great: Invest in Her People](#)

Newsweek

An opinion piece argues that a proposed \$1.5 trillion increase in U.S. defense spending would likely worsen poverty and homelessness by diverting funds from health, education, and housing programs. The authors point to multiple global rankings suggesting the U.S. is declining in quality-of-life measures and contend that underinvestment in “human capital” contributes to worsening outcomes like housing insecurity. They argue that countries with stronger social investments—including affordable

transgender and LGBTQ+ youth. The rule is now in a 60-day comment period and could become final later this year, marking a major potential rollback of previous protections in shelters.

housing and homelessness prevention —tend to achieve higher overall well-being, and that the U.S. should shift priorities toward those areas.

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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