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## Christie Administration Strengthens Efforts to Combat Homelessness with Launch of 'Single Point Of Entry' in Atlantic County

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*Public/Private Coalition Coordinates Services and Provides Comprehensive Approach to Help Those in Need*

**Trenton, NJ** - Building on his commitment to focus services on the individual and to help pull families from the cycle of homelessness, Governor Christie today announced the launch of a coordinated homeless prevention program to serve low income residents in Atlantic County with a single point of entry to access services and supports. The Atlantic Homeless Alliance - Single Point of Entry is a comprehensive, coordinated system of services for Atlantic County residents who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The program provides a single point of entry for residents and personalized case management that will connect them with programs they need to become or remain self-reliant.

"The Atlantic Homeless Alliance single point of entry takes a common sense approach to fight back against homelessness – by making state government and critical local supports work together more effectively by focusing on the individual," said Governor Christie. "By making it easier for our homeless residents, or those at risk of becoming homeless, to have access to a whole spectrum of services, we will help pull more families away from the devastating spiral homelessness causes. This program will help get people back on their feet with dignity, strengthen communities, and allow our taxpayer resources to go farther and reach even more people."

Superstorm Sandy destroyed several motels and low-income rental properties that once served as housing for single adults and families at risk of homelessness. These residents have increased challenges in storm recovery because they cannot financially compete for available housing with the larger population of displaced storm survivors in the county.

"Sandy really exacerbated the low-income housing struggles facing Atlantic County. According to the Annual Point in Time Homeless Count conducted in January 2013 Atlantic County ranked 5th among New Jersey's counties for its percentage of homeless on the night of the count." said Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "Establishing a coordinated system of services will work to reduce and prevent homelessness in the county."

Jewish Family Services (JFS) of Atlantic and Cape May Counties was awarded the contract to conduct the day-to-day operations of the single point of entry through a competitive bid process in November 2013. JFS' collaborative affiliations include the Atlantic City Rescue Mission, Pleasantville Housing Authority, and John Brooks Recovery Center. DHS has partnered, through an intergovernmental agreement, with Atlantic County, which will oversee the program's implementation.

JFS provides a broad array of social services. Its mission is to support individuals and families in economically challenging times, during transition and in times of crisis. The agency partners regularly with state and county agencies as well as community-based organizations to fulfill its charge.

Under its contract, JFS will assess clients for factors related to homelessness including: job loss, eviction, mental illness, disability, incarceration and/or substance use in order to provide information and referral services along with case management that monitors their progress and ongoing needs.

The program is funded by a \$1.9 million federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) administered by DHS through the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA).

SSBG funding is crucial to preserving the social services safety net in the areas most impacted by Superstorm Sandy. In the months and years to come, these services will be essential to rebuilding and restoring residents' very basic needs in storm recovery. The Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) supports the project through the Traveler's Assistance Fund used to reunite homeless individuals from other jurisdictions with family or support systems in their home county or state.

The Single Point of Entry program also provides a model to study for the Interagency Council on Homelessness, created through Executive Order 92 by Governor Christie in April 2012. The Council is tasked with identifying and addressing the needs of homeless New Jerseyans as part of a long-term plan to help assist those individuals affected by homelessness and to prevent homelessness from taking hold in the future.

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