

Governor Chris Christie Takes Action to Combat Homelessness in New Jersey

Wednesday, April 18, 2012 Tags: [Other](#)

Signs Executive Order to Form Interagency Council on Homelessness and Develop Ten-Year Plan



Trenton, NJ – Today, Governor Chris Christie signed Executive Order 92 creating the Interagency Council on Homelessness to combat homelessness as part of the Administration’s commitment to protecting the most vulnerable New Jerseyans. The Council is tasked with better identifying and addressing the needs of homeless New Jerseyans as part of a longterm plan to help assist those individuals affected by homelessness and to prevent homelessness from taking hold in the future. This cooperation and planning will strengthen existing efforts by improving the coordination and delivery of programs and services to those in need.

Governor Christie signed Executive Order 92 at HomeFront in Ewing, an organization that works to combat homelessness by increasing the availability of adequate, affordable housing for New Jersey families in need of assistance. The Governor was joined by Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Jennifer Velez and Deputy Commissioner of Community Affairs (DCA) Charles Richman. The Council will be co-chaired by the commissioners of DHS and DCA.

“Homelessness in our society often touches each of our communities in a personal way and too often fails to get the attention it deserves. It is our neighbors, friends and sometimes family members who, having fallen on difficult times, struggle to have their basic housing needs met,” said Governor Christie. “Right now, New Jersey has a strong set of services available to assist our homeless residents get back on their feet, but they are not applied in a strategic and coordinated way. We can do better to serve families who need help now, and deliver services in a more organized way to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place.”

According to a January 2012 report from the National Alliance to End Homelessness, New Jersey’s rate of chronic homelessness has decreased by 20 percent, indicating progress in identifying and working with individuals with substance use disorders, disabilities, mental illness or medical issues. However, overall homelessness has increased over that same period (7%), which means there is still work to be done to support families and veterans.

“Without a place to call home, it’s incredibly difficult to secure and retain a job or nurture a family,” said Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez. “Safe, permanent housing truly is a key factor in helping people attain self sufficiency.”

Governor Christie’s Fiscal Year 2013 Budget proposal acts on a commitment to provide housing assistance for New Jerseyans who are in need. In addition to providing \$2.3 million to expand the successful Veteran’s Haven – the veterans transitional housing program – to the northern part of the state, Governor Christie’s budget provides critical funding for housing assistance programs such as the State Rental Assistance Program (\$21 million), the Homelessness Prevention Program (\$4.4 million), and Shelter Assistance (\$2.3 million).

In addition, the Department of Human Services serves many homeless residents through its General Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. Both provide supports that include temporary shelter placement, rental assistance, medical coverage, food assistance and job training. The Governor’s Fiscal Year 2013 Budget protects \$78.6 million in funding for the WorkFirst New Jersey program, which helps people get off welfare, secure employment and become self-sufficient through job training, education and work activities. Other state services also are provided to homeless individuals who have mental health or addiction disorders.

Stay Connected
with Social Media

Stay Connected
with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



Related Content



April 18, 2012 HomeFront

[View More Photos](#)

These programs have helped make New Jersey a leader in preventing chronic homelessness in New Jersey, but homelessness continues to affect too many New Jersey families. The Governor's action today will mobilize the state government in a more efficient, coordinated and strategic manner around the goal of finally ending homelessness in the state.

"Today, we are taking action to more effectively address the needs of homeless New Jerseyans across every aspect of state government, with the goal of identifying and preventing the many different causes of homelessness. Ultimately, I believe that as leaders we must set high, achievable goals for the serious challenges we face, which is why the Council also will be charged with developing a 10-year plan to combat homeless over the long-term," added Governor Christie.

The Interagency Council on Homelessness will be established within the Department of Human Services, be comprised of 15 public members, and operate until December 31, 2014. Its duties and responsibilities include:

- A review of the findings contained in the Interim Report of the Council on Preventing and Reducing Homelessness;
- Identifying and evaluating the statutory and regulatory impediments to the effective delivery of services to homeless individuals and families;
- Providing recommendations to improve relevant laws, programs and policies to better utilize state resources directed to homelessness and homelessness prevention;
- Preparing a 10-year plan to end homelessness in New Jersey; and,
- Reporting annually to the Governor on the Council's work and progress.

In addition, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Senate Minority Leader, and the Assembly Minority Leader each may appoint a member of the Legislature, or his or her designee, to serve on the Council.

A copy of Executive Order 92

###

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2018
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000