

Combating Homelessness In New Jersey

Governor Christie Is Committed To Protecting New Jersey's Most Vulnerable Citizens

"We are taking action to not only more effectively address the needs of homeless New Jerseyans across every aspect of state government, but also to find the shortcomings in how we identify and meet the many different causes of homelessness."

– Governor Chris Christie, On His Executive Order Creating The Interagency Council on Homelessness, April 18, 2012

A Coordinated Approach To Helping Atlantic County's Homeless:

Continuing his commitment to assist Sandy victims in their recovery and rebuilding, Governor Christie joined with local and county officials for the launch of a coordinated homeless prevention program to serve low income residents in Atlantic County.

- According to the [Annual Point in Time Homeless Count](#) conducted in January 2013, Atlantic County ranked 5th for its percentage of homeless individuals.

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.
- Jewish Family Services (JFS) of Atlantic and Cape May Counties was awarded the contract to manage the program through a competitive bid process.
 - 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 the Department of Human Services (DHS) through the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA).*

Combating Homelessness In A More Effective And Strategic Manner:

In April 2012, Governor Christie signed Executive Order 92 creating the Interagency Council on Homelessness as part of the administration's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable New Jerseyans. The Governor's action mobilized state government in a more efficient, coordinated and strategic manner around the goal of combating homelessness in the state.

The Council meets every quarter and is tasked with better identifying and addressing the needs of homeless New Jerseyans as part of a long term plan to help assist those individuals affected by homelessness. Its duties and responsibilities include:

- 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;
- Reporting annually to the Governor on the Council's work and progress.

The Atlantic County Single Point of Entry program will provide a model to study for the Council.

Expanding The Veterans Haven Program:

The Christie Administration expanded the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs' successful Veterans Haven program to provide access to homeless veterans in the northern part of the state. After being medically evaluated at a VA Medical Center, eligible veterans participate in a long-term program focusing on psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation.

- Under the Christie Administration, the Veterans Haven program was expanded into north Jersey in 2012.
- The Veterans Haven facility in Gloucester County has been helping homeless veterans since opening in 1995.
 - Three of every four veterans who complete the program remain off the streets for good and return to purposeful lives.
 - The facility recently underwent a 20,000-square-foot expansion to serve an additional 44 homeless veterans.

Providing Funding For Critical Housing Assistance:

The Christie Administration continues to act on the Governor's commitment to protecting the state's most vulnerable citizens by maintaining funding for a variety of housing assistance for low-income New Jerseyans.

- **State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP).** Governor Christie is providing funding for SRAP at *\$18.5 million*, which helps low-income residents afford housing by providing rental assistance grants to individuals and families.
- **Homelessness Prevention Program.** This program provides financial assistance to low- and moderate-income tenants and homeowners in imminent danger of eviction or foreclosure due to temporary financial problems beyond their control. Governor Christie's budget protects funding at *\$4.4 million*.
- **Shelter Assistance.** The Christie Administration provides *\$2.3 million* in assistance to homeless shelters in the state.
- **Assistance for Needy Families.** In addition to these programs to assist homeless families and prevent homelessness, DHS 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 budget provides *\$167.7 million* in funding for the WorkFirst New Jersey program and TANF, which helps people get off welfare, secure employment and become self-sufficient through job training, education and work activities.
- **Social Service for the Homeless Program.** SSH provides assistance to New Jersey residents who are at risk of homelessness, but are ineligible for other programs. SSH can provide emergency financial assistance to cover the cost of necessities. SSH receives *\$14.1 million* of state funding.

Providing The Necessary Resources To Address And Prevent Homelessness:

Shelter Support Grants: In Fiscal Year 2014, the Christie Administration awarded *\$3.5 million* in Shelter Support grants to

27 nonprofit and local government agencies operating emergency homeless shelters and transitional housing facilities located throughout the state. The grants will be used to create new emergency shelter beds, abate code violations, address life safety issues in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities, support existing shelter beds, and purchase equipment, furnishings and vans, resulting in improved living conditions for homeless individuals, victims of domestic violence and military veterans. These awards follow the over **\$4 million** in grants that were awarded in **Fiscal Year 2013**.

Homelessness Prevention Grants: In **Fiscal Year 2014**, the Christie Administration announced the award of **17** Homelessness Prevention grants totaling **\$2 million** to nonprofit agencies administering Homelessness Prevention Programs.

- The agencies will use the state-funded grants to provide assistance to low and moderate-income tenants who are in imminent danger of eviction because of temporary or extraordinary financial circumstances.