

NJ Counts FAQ

What is NJ Counts 2014?

NJ Counts is the annual Point in Time count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in the state of New Jersey.

Why is NJ Counts Taking Place on January 29, 2014?

NJ Counts takes place during the last 10 days of January in accordance with requirements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Why are the homeless being counted?

While HUD mandates an annual count of sheltered homeless population and a biennial count of un-sheltered homeless populations, New Jersey and local Continuums of Care employ the annual count to not only obtain consistent data about the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, but also to understand the causes of homelessness and the service needs of those experiencing homelessness.



Who is coordinating NJ Counts 2014?

Monarch Housing Associates is coordinating the Count. For more information, contact Richard Brown or Kate Kelly at 908-272-5363 or visit Monarch's website at www.monarchhousing.org.

New Jersey Homelessness Fact Sheet

2013 Point in Time Count Results

- There were 11,818 homeless men, women and children counted across the state of New Jersey. Compared to 2011's mandated HUD count; there was an overall decline of 8.5% from 2011. Compared to 2012 it was an increase of 77 persons.
- Using the statistical formula developed in the publication "Estimating the Need," it is projected that over the course of a year, 25,612 adults and children are homeless in the State of New Jersey. In 2012, the estimate was 29,011. The change from 2012 was a decline of 3,399 of 11.7%.

Key 2013 Point in Time Count Findings

- There were 11,818 homeless men, women and children counted across the state of New Jersey as part of the 2013 PITC.
- The estimated number of men, women and children that are homeless over the course of the year in the State of New Jersey is 25,612.3
- There were 8,002 adults counted as homeless on the night of January 30, 2013. Of those adults, 1,271 (15.8%) were unsheltered and 6,731 (84.1%) were sheltered. The largest percentage of the homeless population was living in emergency shelter on the night of the count (40.6%).
- A total of 3,816 children under the age of 18 were homeless on the night of the count. Of the 3,816 children, 2,211 (57.9%) were six years or younger, and 1,065 (27.9%) were between the ages of seven and seventeen.
- The County of Essex had the highest percentage of homeless in New Jersey with 14.7% of the total homeless population.
- The largest percentage of homeless had been homeless for more than one year (30.5%). 23.0% of the total homeless population reported having at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (since January 30, 2010).
- The largest HUD homeless sub-population in the 2013 count was people who are homeless with mental health issues (33.2%).
- The top reported financial resources for the homeless population on the night of the count included Food Stamps, Medicaid, and Welfare. The largest percentage of homeless respondents had an estimated yearly income of \$5,000 or less.
- The top reason reported for current living situation was loss of job and inability to find work.
- As reported by respondents, over the past three years, the institution that discharged the largest number of respondents into homelessness was City/County jails at 12.3%.

This data comes from the Corporation for Supportive Housing's report on the 2013 Point in Time Count of the Homeless. Which is available here: <http://monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/2013StateReportFinal.pdf>.

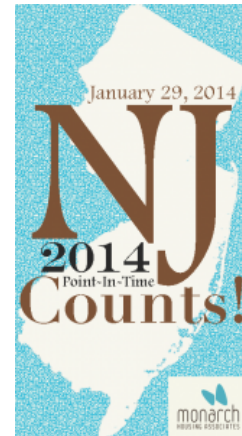
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Best Practices for Ending Homelessness In New Jersey

The following strategies can work to end homelessness in New Jersey.

Housing First

Housing First is an evidence based best practice designed to end homelessness and support recovery by housing individuals as quickly as possible and then wrapping services around them as needed. This housing model has proven effective in housing a wide variety of homeless population subsets including chronically homeless households and families and the general homeless population. Within this model, housing is not contingent upon participation in services and services provided are designed to promote housing stability.



Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid Re-Housing is an emerging strategy that has proven successful in helping communities cost effectively reduce homelessness. Homeless households entering the emergency shelter and transitional housing system are immediately provided with services to connect them with permanent housing. Once housing has been located, households are provided with temporary rental assistance and short term, intensive case management to help them stabilize and maintain their housing.

New Jersey is in a unique position to utilize Emergency Assistance (EA) funds to provide intensive case management to households placed in permanent housing through Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA) and create a statewide opportunity to implement rapid re-housing.

Create Centralized and/or Coordinated Assessment Systems

Centralized and/or Coordinated Assessment, also known as coordinated entry or coordinated intake, paves the way for more efficient homeless assistance systems by:

- Helping people move through the system faster (by reducing the amount of time people spend moving from program to program before finding the right match);
- Reducing new entries into homelessness (by consistently offering prevention and diversion resources upfront, reducing the number of people entering the system unnecessarily); and
- Improving data collection and quality and providing accurate information on what kind of assistance consumers need.

Coordinated assessment is ideally a system-wide process and can serve any and all populations. Systems may accomplish coordinated assessment through the use of a centralized phone hotline (e.g. a 2-1-1), a single physical point of assessment (through an emergency shelter or a dedicated assessment center, for example) or a decentralized coordinated system (with multiple assessment points all employing the same assessment and referral process).

Set a Prioritizing Homelessness Within the State Public Housing Agency (PHA) and local PHAs

Setting PHA priority for homelessness directs rental assistance voucher to households with the greatest housing need and savings money by keeping households out of the shelter system.

In a priority system, referrals for homeless households would come from pre-approved organizations. The referring organization accepts responsibility to verify homeless eligibility and keep referral information current. The referring organization can be required to follow up with and provide services to the household for one year. To be fair to those already on a waiting list, a cap of 20% for homeless households can be set.

“Retooling” Transitional Housing

Retooling transitional housing includes shortening the amount of time people stay in programs before moving into housing, shifting to rapid re-housing strategies, or providing permanent housing.

To improve homeless assistance, many transitional housing providers are retooling their programs by helping people move more quickly into permanent housing, while providing the support they need to remain stably housed. Retooling can take many forms, including shortening the amount of time people stay in programs before moving into housing, shifting to rapid re-housing strategies, or providing permanent housing.

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