

Contacts:

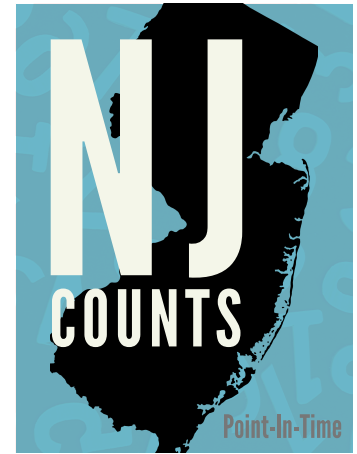
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RECOGNIZING HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT CREATES PATHWAYS TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN NEW JERSEY

October 22nd, 2024 - #NJCounts 2024 found 12,680 men, women, and children, in 9,148 households, experienced homelessness across New Jersey. NJCounts 2024 counted individuals experiencing homeless on the night of January 23, 2024.



The full report and county by county reports are available at this link:

<https://monarchhousing.org/nj-counts/>

Local county press contacts are available at this link:

<https://monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NJ-Counts-2024-Press-Contacts.pdf>

These contacts can provide additional information and details about the local county counts.

Other key findings from NJCounts 2024 include:

- 9,525 persons were in sheltered locations (emergency shelter, hotel/motel placements, transitional housing, safe haven programs)
- 1,737 persons were unsheltered
- 2,079 persons, in 1,836 households, were identified as chronically homeless representing 16% of the total homeless population
- 1,484 households were counted as families, which included 4,606 persons (a family is defined as a household with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult)
- 31 unaccompanied youth under 18 were identified in the count

“We continue to see a rise in persons experiencing homelessness in New Jersey. There was a 24% overall increase in persons experiencing homelessness since 2023, and a 14% increase in households with children experiencing homelessness. The continued increase highlights the critical need for more affordable housing in our communities,” **said Kasey Vienckowski, Senior Associate at Monarch Housing Associates.** “The data shows, that while the homeless numbers continue to rise, we also have a decrease in vacancy rates for rentals across the state, dropping to 3.1% in 2023 from 3.7% in 2022. In a state that’s fair market rents are far higher than national averages this creates a crisis for persons in the state with low or very-low incomes making it incredibly difficult to find and secure affordable housing.”

Counties across the state annually conduct NJCounts, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to secure federal funding for programs serving persons experiencing homelessness. Commissioned by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), NJCounts reflects the collaborative efforts of social service providers, local government, and community advocates and volunteers to identify and enumerate persons experiencing homelessness within each county. Monarch Housing Associates coordinates NJCounts activities and completes an analysis of data collected from the Point-in-Time (PIT) survey. NJCounts aims to provide communities with valuable information as they develop strategies and plans to end homelessness.

Data for NJCounts 2024 was collected via two methods: household surveys and information from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). About 50% of the information for persons staying in

sheltered locations was drawn from the HMIS, with the remaining information submitted through household surveys. Data for persons staying in unsheltered locations and in programs not utilizing the HMIS was collected through household surveys administered by trained homeless service providers. Communities across the state implemented coordinated street outreach efforts and outreach to service locations to identify individuals and families that might be experiencing unsheltered homelessness the day/night of the count.

The 2024 Count represents a 24% increase in persons experiencing homelessness since 2023. These numbers represent a convergence of many system changes.

- New Jersey, like the rest of the nation, is in the midst of a housing crisis. There are not enough homes affordable to those making 30% of the area median income or less. The National Low Income Housing Coalition's Gap Report has identified that within NEW JERSEY for every 100 households looking for a place to call home, there are only 31 units available to them creating a shortage of 224,531 homes for extremely low-income households.
- New Jersey municipalities have seen significant rent increases that in many cases exceed national averages. According to the Rent Report for April 2024, prepared by rent.com, NEW JERSEY saw an 6.02% increase in rents year over year.
- The St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank – Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) highlights that in 2023 NEW JERSEY had a vacancy rate of 3.1% for rental units, a significant drop from an 11.2% vacancy rate in 2012.

"New Jersey's 2024 Point-In-Time Count is a crucial resource for understanding and addressing the needs of New Jersey's most vulnerable families as they experience increasing housing insecurity amidst the unprecedented housing market challenges in evidence across our nation" **said Melanie R. Walter, Executive Director of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.** "We are committed to continuing to increase production of permanent supportive housing to help all New Jersey residents access the stable housing and supportive services they need to thrive."

"The 2024 Point-in-Time Count results serve as a stark reminder of the work that lies ahead in addressing homelessness in our state," **said Jacquelyn Suárez, Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.** "While the numbers are sobering, they also reinforce the importance of our ongoing initiatives and partnerships across sectors. The Department of Community Affairs remains dedicated to expanding affordable housing options, enhancing support services, and implementing data-driven policies to turn the tide on homelessness in New Jersey."

"The 2024 Point-in-Time Count results highlight the critical importance of homelessness prevention efforts in New Jersey," **said Mike Callahan, Director of the Office of Homelessness Prevention within the Department of Community Affairs.** "We're particularly alarmed by the increasing prevalence of both formal evictions and informal 'soft' evictions as major contributors to homelessness. The data shows that 11% of persons entered homelessness due to income loss, 12% of homeless households attributed their situation to eviction or risk of eviction, while 14% reported being asked to leave a shared residence. These numbers underscore the urgent need for stronger tenant protections, expanded prevention programs driven by real-time data, and more robust early intervention strategies. By focusing on prevention and addressing the root causes of housing instability, we can work to stem the tide of homelessness before it begins and provide more stable futures for vulnerable New Jerseyans."

"The 2024 Point-in-Time Count provides crucial insights into the changing landscape of homelessness in New Jersey," **said Janel Winter, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs Division of Housing and Community Resources.** "We're particularly concerned by the 26% increase in emergency shelter occupancy and the 23% rise in unsheltered individuals. The data also reveals that 35.2% of homeless households had no source of income, highlighting the complex economic challenges

many face. Additionally, the disproportionate impact on Black and African American individuals, who make up 48.8% of the homeless population despite representing only 12% of the state's population, underscores the urgent need for targeted, equitable interventions.”

New Jersey continues to see disparities in who experiences homelessness. Similar to national trends, persons identifying as Black or African American experience homelessness at disproportionately higher rates. On par with trends observed in prior years, Black people in New Jersey represent about 12% of the state population but about 49% of the identified population experiencing homelessness.

Communities across New Jersey are working to integrate voices of persons impacted by homelessness in their local planning processes. Monarch Housing Associates in partnership with the Office of Homelessness Prevention and CoCs are working to implement the Community Led Planning Development (CLPD) Project. These communities are working to address racial disparities in their homeless service systems by increasing access and lowering barriers to entering shelters and permanent housing. Monarch Housing Associates is partnering with all communities to incorporate voices of persons with lived experience of homelessness to provide recommendations on how to change policies and procedures to ensure all those experiencing homelessness can access critically needed services. For more information about Monarch Housing Associates’ work to ensure that every person will have quality, affordable, and permanent supportive housing that fosters freedom, independence, and community integration, visit www.monarchhousing.org.