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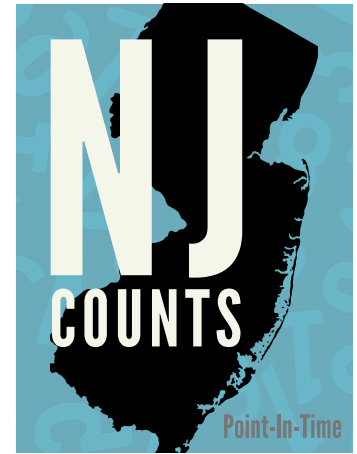
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2025 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT SHOWS HOMELESSNESS CONTINUES TO RISE IN NJ AMONG UNPRECEDENTED THREATS TO SOCIAL SAFETY NET AND HUD PROGRAMS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

July 29th, 2025 - #NJCounts 2025 found 13,748 persons across 10,408 households experiencing homelessness in New Jersey on the night of January 28, 2025.



The statewide Point-In-Time (PIT) report, as well as county-level PIT reports, are available at <https://monarchhousing.org/nj-counts/>. For more information on county-level counts and data, reach out to the local press contact that corresponds to your community of interest:

<https://monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/NJ-Counts-2025-Press-Contacts.pdf>.

Counties across the state conduct NJCounts annually as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). 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 on a single night in January. Every year, communities across the state implement coordinated street outreach efforts and conduct outreach to service locations in an effort to ensure that all persons experiencing homelessness are engaged and surveyed. Monarch Housing Associates coordinates NJCounts activities and analyzes data collected from the PIT survey annually. NJCounts aims to provide communities with valuable information as they develop strategies and plans to end homelessness.

“The PIT Count is one of the most effective tools that we have to assess the trends in homelessness in New Jersey. Increasing rates of homelessness in New Jersey, and across the country, are concerning,” **said Melanie R. Walter, Executive Director, New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.**

“Although we have dramatically increased the production of housing for individuals transitioning out of homelessness in New Jersey, this year’s Point in Time Count results are a critical reminder of the fragility of many families’ housing situations and the importance of tackling the root causes of homelessness.”

The 2025 count represents an **8% increase** in homelessness compared to 2024 (+1,068 individuals) and is the highest number of individuals recorded since the 2014 count (13,900 individuals).

Additional key points from the findings of NJCounts 2025 include:

- **11,753 persons** were in **sheltered locations** (e.g., emergency shelter, hotel/motel placements, transitional housing, safe haven programs). This represents a **7.4% increase** since 2024.
- **1,995 persons** were **unsheltered**, staying outside, in vacant or abandoned buildings, or any other location not meant for human habitation. This represents a **14.9% increase** since 2024.
- **2,261 persons** were identified as **chronically homeless (CH)**, representing 16% of the total homeless population. Though CH individuals represent the same proportion of the total population experiencing homelessness as in 2024, the total number of CH individuals **increased by 8.8%** since

last year, suggesting that the state's most vulnerable are remaining homeless for longer periods of time.

- **1,484 families**, comprising 4,553 persons, were experiencing homelessness. A family is defined as a household with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. The number of families experiencing homelessness remained level between 2024 and 2025.
- **543 veterans** were experiencing homelessness, representing a **4.8% increase** since 2024 and continuing the five-year trend of fluctuation between 450 and 550 individuals.
- Racial disparities in the population that experiences homelessness in New Jersey continue: individuals identifying as Black or African American experience homelessness at disproportionately higher rates than individuals of other racial or ethnic identities. Despite representing **12.0%** of New Jersey's population, Black or African American individuals comprise **47.4%** of the population experiencing homelessness in our state.

Since NJCounts 2022 (8,754 individuals), homelessness in New Jersey has increased by more than 57%; in this time frame, sheltered homelessness increased by 51% and unsheltered homelessness increased by 103%. The 2022 PIT count was the last to take place before the expiration of additional COVID-related homeless service subsidies and the end of the statewide eviction moratorium, both of which were extremely successful in preventing homelessness amid the economic fallout of the pandemic. In the years since, homelessness has risen precipitously.

"The findings in this year's PIT Count highlight the urgency of our housing challenges and the critical importance of our investments in programs that keep people safely housed," said **Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez, NJ Department of Community Affairs**. "At DCA, we remain committed to expanding access to safe, stable, and affordable housing, while tackling the root causes of homelessness with the compassion and determination this crisis demands."

"What stands out in the 2025 PIT data is the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black and Latino communities, and the growing number of unsheltered individuals," said **Janel Winter, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Housing and Community Resources, NJ Department of Community Affairs**. "This reinforces our agency's commitment to equity-centered, data-driven solutions, ensuring that our housing investments reach those most harmed by systemic barriers and persistent housing insecurity."

"This year's PIT Count reveals the human toll of a worsening housing affordability crisis," said **Michael Callahan, Director, New Jersey Office of Homelessness Prevention**. "With over 13,000 people counted, our highest since 2015, the data confirms what our communities have long known: homelessness is being driven not just by poverty, but by deep structural inequities, including systemic racism and the dramatic shortage of affordable homes. It is a call to action for bolder, better-targeted investment in prevention, housing, and justice."

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)'s [2025 Out of Reach data](#) for New Jersey illustrates the scale of the housing affordability crisis. The data shows that to afford a two-bedroom rental home at Fair Market Rent (FMR) without paying more than 30% of income on housing costs (the standard for housing affordability), a household would have to earn \$83,173 annually, the equivalent of working 2.6 full-time minimum-wage jobs. A two-person household earning this income would fall just barely within the statewide "Low-Income" threshold of 80% of Area Median Income (AMI); if this household earned just \$227 more annually, they would no longer be considered "Low-Income". The FMR for a two-bedroom apartment in New Jersey is \$2,079; units at these price points are becoming increasingly difficult to find,

with the average two-bedroom renting for between \$2,000 and \$3,500. The gaps between incomes and market rents that are illustrated by this data continue to widen annually, pushing progressively more households into housing instability. Meanwhile, the stark increase in *unsheltered* homelessness points to an overburdened shelter system that, in recent months, has consistently operated at more than 90% capacity daily and cannot accommodate the increasing number of households that are pushed into homelessness as a result of unmanageable housing costs.

“The State of New Jersey has seen a consistent increase in households experiencing homelessness since 2021, with an average increase of 14% annually,” **said Katelyn Ravensbergen, Senior Associate, Monarch Housing Associates.** “While our systems are working to connect everyone they can with stable housing, the number of households entering homelessness is unfortunately increasing at a rate that outpaces the expansion of housing opportunities and other supports. This issue will be further exacerbated if federal programs historically used to rapidly rehouse these families are reduced or eliminated as proposed.”

Proposed and enacted changes across federal programs could have a significant impact on the landscape of homelessness in the coming months and years. The federal budget reconciliation bill, or “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”, that became law on July 4th of this year spells out massive cuts to the social safety net that the most vulnerable families across the nation and here in New Jersey rely on to maintain stable living conditions and will amplify housing instability across our state. State and national partners estimate that in New Jersey alone, [424,000 families](#) will lose some or all of their monthly Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and [350,000 residents](#) will lose Medicaid coverage. The households that lose these benefits will face even greater strain on already tight household budgets; many may be forced to choose between seeking medical care, buying groceries, or paying rent. As cuts and programmatic changes are implemented in the coming years, New Jersey may see an influx of households that are forced into homelessness seeking support from state and local service and shelter systems.

Meanwhile, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are currently developing FY26 budgets for all federal agencies, including HUD. The FY26 “skinny budget”, as proposed by the Trump administration in May of this year and signaling the administration’s priorities, laid out the elimination of critical programs and drastic cuts to many housing and homeless service programs (see the NLIHC’s analysis [here](#)). The recently approved Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) budget from the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Appropriations Committees do not adopt every proposed change from the skinny budget: for instance, they preserve the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs, the central pillars of the homeless service system, contrary to the administration’s proposal. However, the House does include funding cuts and problematic policy changes, including eliminating the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, which provides critical funding for the development of affordable housing, as proposed by the administration. In 2024, New Jersey, its counties, and its municipalities received a combined \$34.7 million in HOME funding. In the end, even if each program receives the highest possible level of funding from either the Senate or House appropriations bill after negotiations, the budget will still likely fall short of the funding necessary to continue providing assistance to all existing recipients, let alone to accommodate the influx of households facing homelessness and seeking support after losing other benefits.

On July 24th of this year, the Trump administration issued an executive order titled “Ending Crime and Disorder on America’s Streets”, targeting individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness with arrest and forcible institutionalization and pledging to fundamentally restructure the current homeless service

framework to prioritize involuntary treatment as a precondition for services and housing. This executive order attributes homelessness to failings on the part of the individuals experiencing it rather than acknowledging its root cause as the failure of our housing system to provide adequate affordable options to all households, regardless of income. This stance represents a sharp reversal in the federal approach to homelessness, which in recent decades had supported the “housing first” approach, acknowledging housing stability as the precursor to and foundation for continuing treatment, employment training, and other services. Housing first programs have successfully reduced homelessness in several communities across the country, even bringing veteran homelessness in some communities to “functional zero”. In 2024, Monarch and partners throughout the homeless service ecosystem launched initiatives to prevent and end homelessness among veterans and families in our state, modeled on the success of housing first elsewhere. The “Bringing Veterans Home” (BVH) initiative, a joint initiative of the Office of Homelessness Prevention and Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMAVA), aims to bring an “effective end” to veteran homelessness in NJ within the next two years. Simultaneously, Monarch and cross-sector partners are working to develop a statewide plan to end family homelessness. However, these initiatives center a compassionate housing first approach. The withdrawal of federal regulatory and programmatic backing will erode the progress that housing first initiatives, both here in New Jersey and across the nation, have made.

“At a time when we are seeing year-over-year increases in the number of people identified as experiencing homelessness during the annual PIT count, the unprecedented cuts to critical safety net programs will only make things worse,” **said Taiisa Kelly, CEO, Monarch Housing Associates.** “The cuts implemented through the reconciliation bill and proposed for the FY2026 federal budget threaten to destroy the very infrastructure we rely on to support our most vulnerable neighbors. This is happening at a time when we are seeing increasing affordability issues, increases in unsheltered homelessness, and more communities criminalizing homelessness. We know what works to end homelessness, and we need to invest in solutions such as housing first, rapid rehousing, and system navigation services to change the tide and move New Jersey closer to a place where everyone has the right and opportunity to secure safe, stable, permanent housing.”

As we face an impending influx of households into the homeless service ecosystem, it is more crucial than ever that decision-makers in the state and local service system recognize that what works to end homelessness is not forced treatment or incarceration, it is *housing*. New Jersey must enshrine strategies for ending homelessness that are compassionate, effective, and centered on housing access. This is essential not only as we prepare to meet what is expected to be unprecedented imminent need for housing supports in the present, but to ensure that our housing ecosystem is non-speculative, stable, and supportive in perpetuity, regardless of changes at the federal level. Housing is a fundamental human right; to end homelessness, every policy, strategy, framework, and program must be structured to recognize it as such.

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.