

**New Jersey  
Interagency Council  
on  
Homelessness  
Final Report**

**December 31, 2014**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**O**n April 18, 2012, Governor Chris Christie signed Executive Order 92 establishing the Interagency Council on Homelessness (Interagency Council). Co-chaired by the Commissioners of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and comprised of fifteen public members and eleven ex-officio representatives of state government agencies, the Council held meetings, heard presentations and convened sub-committees to develop recommendations and provide a State Plan to end homelessness in New Jersey in ten years.

For the framework of its State Plan, the Interagency Council utilized the Opening Doors: Federal Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. This plan was released in 2010 to provide Federal leadership to end veteran and chronic homeless by 2015 and homelessness among family, children and youth by 2020.

The Interagency Council recognized the importance of the Federal Plan and further recommends that the State of New Jersey adopt evidence-based practices to address homelessness that focus on moving individuals and families to housing as quickly as possible and providing the supports to keep them stably housed. Specifically, the practices include the following:

- ❑ Housing First policies to meet the needs of the chronically homeless
- ❑ Rapid Rehousing for homeless families and short term homeless populations
- ❑ Prevention services to keep individuals and families from becoming homeless

The Plan is organized into six themes with recommendations for each:

1. Providing state-level leadership on preventing and ending homelessness through a permanent New Jersey Interagency Council on Homelessness housed in the Governor's office with the capacity to monitor and implement the recommendations in this document and monitor trends and progress through utilization of a Homeless Management Information System with state-wide participation.
2. Increasing access to stable and affordable housing and permanent housing by implementing evidence-based practices to create both new affordable housing options and broaden access to existing housing through a variety of fiscal and regulatory mechanisms.
3. Increasing economic security to address the causes of homelessness by expanding outreach and training efforts to ensure that both providers and homeless individuals and families have access to and knowledge of available sources of financial assistance, job training and employment opportunities.
4. Improving health and stability by integrating primary health care and behavioral health services for homeless individuals and families, including high users of Medicaid services and individuals with continuing medical

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- needs following hospital discharge and/or people with behavioral health needs who are not eligible for either hospitalization or traditional shelters.
5. Retooling the homeless crisis response system using appropriate evidence-based practices such as permanent supportive housing to address the needs of the chronically homeless, and rapid re-housing for many homeless families and short-term homeless, while ensuring a comprehensive array of housing options at the local and/or regional level, that benefit from proven strategies utilized in New Jersey and other states to deliver case management, outreach, and other support services, including peer networks.
  6. Improving collaboration on services for homeless subpopulations, including veterans, older adults, homeless children and their families, youth and young adults, the formerly incarcerated, and the chronically homeless (including those with serious and persistent mental illness); and supporting the compliance of homeless shelters with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is expected that this Council, once established, will refine the recommendations in this document, provide the specific objectives, tasks and timeframes essential to the success of a 10 Year Plan, including updates and monitoring activities.

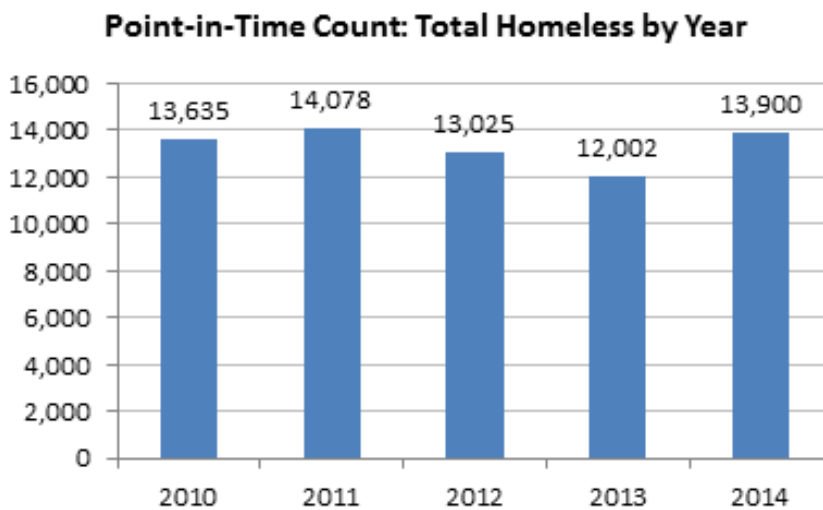
The current Interagency Council recognizes a pressing need for additional affordable housing throughout the state, as well as the need for permanent supportive housing (Housing First and Rapid Rehousing). Important benefits can be obtained by retooling existing programs and fiscal resources so that they are more effective in achieving desired results, providing transparency and improving efficiency.

## Introduction

On April 18, 2012, Governor Chris Christie signed Executive Order 92 establishing the Interagency Council on Homelessness (Interagency Council) in support of the state's commitment to its most vulnerable citizens. Co-chaired by the Commissioners of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and comprised of fifteen public members and eleven ex-officio representatives of state government agencies, the Council was tasked with identifying statutory and regulatory barriers to serving the homeless and preparing a comprehensive 10 Year Plan to prevent and end homelessness in New Jersey.

## Background

The activities of the Interagency Council on Homelessness occurred within the context of significant challenges in New Jersey and major changes at the Federal level.



Source: New Jersey's 2014 Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless: January 28, 2014. Monarch Housing Associates.

The state's economy and residents face a protracted recovery from both the recession and Superstorm Sandy. While the state unemployment rate continues to decline, it remains higher than the national average.<sup>1</sup> New Jersey currently has among the highest foreclosure rates in the nation<sup>2</sup> and with recent casino closures may experience further short-term difficulties in its efforts to eradicate homelessness.

In 2012, the state ranked fifth highest in median gross rent after Hawaii, the District of Columbia, California and Maryland.<sup>3</sup> The high cost of housing in New Jersey remains an impediment to individuals and families seeking permanent housing. These challenges are reflected in the annual Point-In-Time Count which shows a 16% increase from 2013 to 2014 in persons homeless.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.nj.com/business/index.ssf/2014/05/nj\\_now\\_tops\\_nation\\_in\\_foreclosure\\_rates.html](http://www.nj.com/business/index.ssf/2014/05/nj_now_tops_nation_in_foreclosure_rates.html)

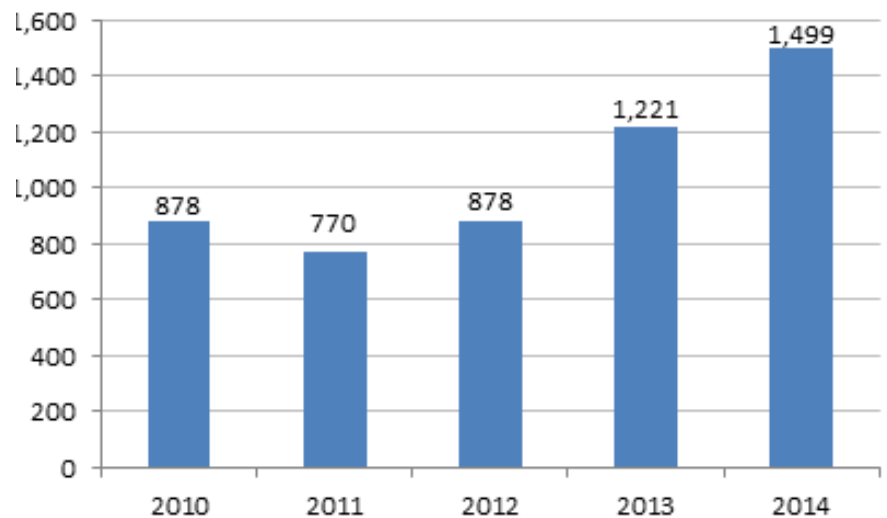
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 1-Year Estimates (Table B25064).

<sup>4</sup> Source: New Jersey's 2014 Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless: January 28, 2014. Monarch Housing Associates. See: <http://cdn.monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/njcounts14/NewJerseyStatewide.pdf>

Of particular concern is the sizable, yearly increase in chronic homelessness after 2012, 39% from 2012 to 2013 and 22.8% from 2013 to 2014 (and 70.7% from 2012 to 2014). New Jersey faces significant challenges, but also can take advantage of numerous opportunities in its efforts to end prevent homelessness.

The Council's deliberations also were informed by the direction of Federal policy and planning. In 2009, the HEARTH (Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing) Act was passed by Congress, mandating the development of a national plan to end homelessness. The resulting plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, was released in 2010 to provide Federal leadership for efforts by national and state partners to end veteran and chronic homelessness by 2015 and homelessness among families, children and youth by 2020. New Jersey's Interagency Council utilizes the framework of *Opening Doors* to present state-specific recommendations tailored to address the myriad needs of New Jersey's homeless residents.

**Point-in-Time Count: Chronic Homeless by Year**



Source: New Jersey's 2014 Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless: January 28, 2014. Monarch Housing Associates.

The Council's recommendations recognize the relevance of the Federal plan and the importance of implementing evidence-based practices tailored to the needs of the chronically homeless, veterans, children, youth and families and other populations including:

- ❑ Housing First policies to meet the needs of the chronically homeless;
- ❑ Rapid re-housing for homeless families and short term homeless populations; and
- ❑ Prevention services to keep individuals and families from becoming homeless.

Given the diversity of the state's population, an underlying principle for this Council's recommendations is a commitment to provide services to the homeless that are culturally-informed and appropriate.

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## Opportunities

Opportunities stem from the participation of nineteen of the twenty-one New Jersey counties in the statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and early participation in HMIS by the State's PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) programs. Data are an important cornerstone for successful local implementation of evidence-based practices.

In addition, Housing First policies already are incorporated into some state funded supported housing programs by regulation and a wide array of supportive services are available in every county. These policies, in conjunction with cutting edge local Housing First and Rapid Rehousing models, support coordinated local systems that can prevent and further the eradication of homelessness and are expected to inspire related developments throughout the state.

## Challenges

Fiscal constraints limit the state's capacity to fully and consistently fund the programs needed to eradicate homelessness. Therefore, this plan primarily focuses on efforts to retool current funding and programs so that they are more effective and at the same time measure results to provide transparency and improve efficiency.

Retooling does, however, present some challenges, including:

- ❑ Improving communication and coordination:
  - Among state departments and agencies serving homeless populations – A general lack of an overall state policy direction and coordination among state agencies adversely impacts communication and coordination at all levels.
  - Among providers and across Continuums of Care (CoCs) – Issues affect client access to services both within and across CoCs, including obtaining identification to access resources, and communication about common clients across programs to improve service delivery.
  - Among Federal agencies – For example, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) allows a two year term in transitional housing when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) goal is no more than 30 days in emergency shelter/transitional housing, leading to funding barriers.
  - Among the state, counties and providers to create sustainable, comprehensive and effective interventions to prevent and end homelessness.

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- ❑ Giving greater consideration of the needs of homeless sub-populations, including veterans, families with children, youth, persons with severe, persistent mental illness and those formerly incarcerated who face unique barriers and regulations that impede their access to housing and services. For example:
    - Many shelters do not accept families and non-paying consumers.
    - Parolees and the formerly incarcerated are ineligible for many housing programs.
  
  - ❑ Emphasizing prevention and other best practices, including case management services and Rapid Re-housing.
    - A key aspect to such retooling is altering traditional ways of thinking about combating homelessness in order to spur innovation and best practices. At all levels, the focus needs to be on providing permanent housing as quickly as possible. Some of the traditional approaches, along with the high cost of housing and inadequate household incomes, represent the primary barriers to eliminating homelessness.



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## Activities of New Jersey's Interagency Council on Homelessness

The Council began its deliberations on September 25, 2012 with a presentation from Laura Zellinger of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness on Opening Doors, the federal plan to prevent and end homelessness.<sup>5</sup> In 2013 and 2014, quarterly meetings included presentation to the full Council by government and provider agencies, while more frequent working sessions were convened after the formation of three subcommittees.

- ❑ An Intergovernmental subcommittee was charged with examining existing state and federal programs to identify statutory and regulatory barriers to delivering effective services. It also was charged with proposing changes to programs and policies that could prevent or reduce homelessness.
- ❑ A Unique Needs subcommittee was charged with considering the different and unique needs among the various homeless populations and developing tailored recommendations to better serve them.
- ❑ A Housing Models subcommittee was tasked with identifying and reviewing innovative and promising approaches operating in New Jersey and other states.

Additional activities of the Council members included:

- ❑ Creation of a web page<sup>6</sup> with documents, testimony, presentations, and links reflecting the Council's activities;
- ❑ Review of the 2010 preliminary report of the previous Interagency Council on Preventing and Reducing Homelessness;
- ❑ Participation in the 2012 and 2014<sup>7</sup> NJ Governor's Conference for Housing and Economic Development ;
- ❑ Attendance at a public hearing on homelessness on March 25, 2014, where providers, homeless persons and community stakeholders provided testimony to Council members.

The following represents a consolidation of the recommendations submitted to the Council from the three subcommittees, categorized by the Federal Opening Doors themes. Identification of federal and state statutory and/or regulatory impediments that can challenge implementation is included. Policy differences among state agencies are not identified in this document as these challenges are within the scope of state policy makers and can be addressed as this Plan is implemented.

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/news/hottopics/USICH\\_NJ\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/news/hottopics/USICH_NJ_presentation.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/news/hottopics/approved/homelessness.html>

<sup>7</sup> The 2013 Conference was cancelled due to activities related to the recovery from Superstorm Sandy.

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## Recommendations

### Theme 1: Increase Leadership, Collaboration and Civic Engagement

#### Objective 1: Provide State-level policy leadership with capacity to monitor and implement the State's 10-Year Homeless Plan.

##### Recommendation

- Create a permanent NJ Interagency Council on Homelessness (the Council) to prevent and end homelessness, housed in the Governor's office. The Council will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of and tracking progress against this 10 year plan; reviewing and analyzing statewide data and performance; and recommending regulations, legislation and policy. The Council's guiding principle will be to promote collaboration among and work with all levels of implementation to meet the needs of the homeless. Representation will include the following:
  - All state departments providing services or housing to the homeless.
  - Provider agencies and CoCs that serve the homeless in their communities.
  - Community stakeholders and representatives, including homeless or formerly homeless individuals.
  - Staff and resources to ensure the Council's ability to work independently and accomplish its mission.

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## **Objective 2: Improve collaboration through data collection and analysis**

### **Recommendations**

- ❑ The Council will encourage a standardized, statewide, coordinated intake assessment tool; the development of the tool will be carried out by members of the permanent Council, staff of the applicable state agencies and community providers.
- ❑ Provide technical assistance services (as needed) to implement the coordinated intake assessment tool; The Council will support the use and enhancement of current systems to provide the infrastructure to implement the tool.
- ❑ As allowed by current law, require all providers of homeless services to report data to the statewide Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS); work to change laws and/or regulations that prohibit or discourage this participation. This can be accomplished either by direct entry or system interface to avoid duplication of data entry.
- ❑ The Council will monitor, review and analyze statewide data to assess needs, trends and measure results. The Council will identify best practices and areas that need improvement, track progress and outcomes, and recommend policies and practices based upon empirical data.

### **Impediments/Challenges**

- ❑ **Statutory/Regulatory:** The lack of mandatory, standard data collection and assessment is preventing the full collection of data to make informed, data-driven decisions.

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## Theme 2: Increase access to stable and affordable housing

### Objective 1: Implement evidence-based, best practices to increase the supply of affordable housing.

#### Recommendations

- ❑ The Council will support legislation to create a homeless trust fund administered at the state level, which will include resources for homeless people with special needs.
- ❑ The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) will explore offering incentives to low income housing developers to increase the production of 3+ bedrooms for families.
- ❑ HMFA will incentivize low-income housing developers to include apartments for the homeless in new housing projects financed by HMFA.
- ❑ The Council will work with DHS to explore the possibility of utilizing Medicaid savings and other non-traditional sources of funds to support increased housing production targeted to high Medicaid users.
- ❑ The Council will promote and support methodologies to fund additional affordable, homeless and special needs housing including HMFA bonding capacity at the state level and the creation of county-level trust funds.
- ❑ HMFA will evaluate a special set-aside in the low income housing tax credit program or bonus points in the qualified allocation plan for the purpose of developing housing for homeless individuals and families.
- ❑ The Council will support efforts to require municipalities to include affordable units in all future housing developments to combat homelessness.

#### Impediments/Challenges

- ❑ Federal: The Federal Low Income Tax Credit allocation is not sufficient to finance the affordable housing needs in the state.
- ❑ Statutory/Regulatory: The uncertainty of the COAH rule process may impact the availability of affordable housing.

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## **Objective 2: Increase access to existing housing**

### **Recommendations**

- ❑ The Council will support enacting legislation (or regulations) to ensure more accessibility to formerly incarcerated clients in any project that receives federal, state, or local government funding.
- ❑ The Council will work with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to expand access by the homeless to subsidized housing programs under DCA's purview.
- ❑ DCA will continue to prioritize homeless applicants for the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP).
- ❑ The Council will work with all state departments to expand the range of housing options available to eligible homeless individuals and families.
- ❑ The Council will work with DHS to examine the use of Emergency Assistance funds for Rapid Re-housing.
- ❑ The Council will support the annual reauthorization of the SRAP program.

### **Impediments/Challenges**

- ❑ Federal: Housing support/resources such as Section 8 vouchers and public housing are not always available for some formerly incarcerated clients. Guidance from US DHHS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) will be needed prior to using TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Emergency Assistance funds for rapid re-housing.
- ❑ Statutory/Regulatory: Housing support/resources such as Section 8 vouchers and public housing are not always available for some formerly incarcerated clients.

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## Theme 3: Increase economic security

**Objective 1: Increase outreach efforts to ensure all providers and clients have access to and knowledge of all sources of financial assistance.**

### Recommendations

- ❑ At first point of entry, homeless veterans will be directed to a state Veterans' Service Officer for counseling regarding financial benefits.
- ❑ The Council will promote financial assistance access and linkage information for providers of homeless services.
- ❑ The Council will work with all state departments to develop a training program designed to empower providers with knowledge regarding trauma intervention, provision of services to clients with mental illness, outreach protocols, required program documentation and VA systems and benefits. Other training programs may be added as necessary.
- ❑ The Council will be represented in membership on the Statewide Employment and Training Commission (SETC).
- ❑ The Council will support the CoC's attendance at WIB (Workforce Investment Board) meetings for the purpose of coordinating employment opportunities.
- ❑ All public and private providers, as part of their case management, will coordinate outreach to homeless and potentially homeless populations with One Stop Career Centers to expand employment opportunities to those populations.
- ❑ The Council will work with homeless providers to develop strategies to increase participation in the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) program among eligible homeless individuals.
- ❑ The Council will work with DHS to investigate the use of Emergency Assistance for Temporary Rental Assistance to homeless populations as a front-end intervention.

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### **Impediments/Challenges**

- ❑ Statutory/Regulatory: Examine existing SETC regulations to determine if a change is necessary in order to add a seat to the Commission.

## **Objective 2: Enhance job training opportunities for all clients**

### **Recommendation**

- ❑ The Council will work with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to increase awareness of and access to job training and retention programs that can assist homeless individuals.

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## Theme 4: Improve health and stability

### **Objective 1: Improve the integration of primary and behavioral health services for individuals and families who are homeless.**

#### **Recommendations**

- ❑ Implement programs that target high utilizers of Medicaid services and prioritize them for appropriate permanent housing. Develop program parameters using results from the current DHS pilot program that is underway in conjunction with Rutgers University and the experience gained from the medical home provider pilot.
- ❑ While affirming the continuing need for shelters under certain circumstances, the Council will support the utilization of emergency shelter and other funds to create low-barrier medical and behavioral health respite beds for individuals who are homeless and are not eligible for either hospitalization or traditional shelters.



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## Theme 5: Retool the homeless crisis response system

**Objective 1: Adopt evidence-based practices that prevent homelessness, quickly move those who become homeless into permanent housing, especially families, and promote permanent supportive housing, case management and other supportive services to assist those who are chronically homeless.**

### Recommendations

- ❑ The Council will support the adoption of evidence-based practices for the chronically homeless:
  - Recognizing that the financial resources committed to this effort may be limited, the Council will work with each department to develop guidance that promotes implementation of a Housing First model that will be primarily funded through re-tooling of available sources.
  - Working with state departments to adopt policies that promote Permanent Supportive Housing as the primary goal for the homeless with longer term housing and service needs.
  - Working with state departments to develop a process to identify and track chronically homeless individuals, including persons with serious and persistent mental illness.
  - Setting aside SRAP, housing trust funds and new construction units for identified persons who are chronically homeless, including individuals with serious and persistent mental illness.
  - Prioritizing service dollars to provide wrap around supportive services to chronically homeless individuals once housed.
  
- ❑ The Council will support the adoption of a Rapid Re-housing policy for homeless families and short-term homeless.
  - All State departments will adopt a policy of Rapid Re-housing for homeless families and short-term homeless.

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- ❑ The Council will examine with all relevant departments strategies for delivering case management services to priority homeless populations
    - The Department of Human Services will consider utilizing Medicaid funding for eligible case management services for eligible individuals and families.
    - The Council will support reallocating/redirecting funding for training, education, legal services and for targeted homeless system navigators (or case management) to help the homeless connect with mainstream resources like income and disability benefits, primary health care, mental health and addictions services, training, education, legal services and employment and housing assistance.
    - The Department of Human Services will examine case management rates across the system to determine if additional funding can be directed to support individuals and families with the county social services system.
    - The Council will support drop-in/assessment centers that will provide 24-hour services for assessment and case management for people needing an immediate place to stay.
  
  - ❑ The Council will support innovative strategies to reach the homeless in high need communities.
    - Public and community-based agencies will provide mobile outreach to the homeless that are on the street, targeting communities and areas of highest need.
  
  - ❑ The Council will support the right sizing of intervention techniques for individuals and families through assessment if homelessness cannot be avoided and support the availability of dignified emergency shelter environments during the assessment process.
  - ❑ The Council will convene a group of state department representatives to study strategies and best practices used by other states to fund case management, particularly for the chronically homeless.
  - ❑ The Council will examine and propose as needed changes to statutes, rules, and regulations that inhibit the effective provision of services to the homeless. The Council will elicit legal and other advice as needed.
  - ❑ The Council will examine data regarding full service communities to determine whether these communities are consistent with state policy and whether these communities can be recommended as a tool to provide services to some homeless populations.

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- ❑ The Council will encourage client-centered social work practice and case management. The Council recognizes that different tools need to be available to provide suitable solutions that are based on an individual's circumstances and needs.
  - ❑ The Council will encourage the expansion of the DHS Social Services for the Homeless (SSH) program in order to address the homeless prevention needs of individuals and families who do not meet the eligibility criteria of entitlement programs. intervention.

### **Impediments/Challenges**

- ❑ Federal: Eligibility criteria for some federal programs should be expanded to allow those funds to be less prescriptive.
- ❑ Statutory/Regulatory: Current practice and regulations impede the utilization of EA funds for Rapid Re-Housing. As part of the retooling effort, substantial changes to state practices and regulations are necessary, and possible, as evidenced by other states' activities.

## **Objective 2: Develop a statewide communication mechanism to ensure access to information for all stakeholders.**

### **Recommendations**

- ❑ The Council will identify and publish the existence of statewide homeless peer networks and facilitate communication with and among these groups. The Council will utilize these peer networks for stakeholder input and advocacy.
- ❑ The Council will develop and maintain a website/webpage dedicated to homeless services across the state that will include information on Federal and State programs, best practices, resource tools and other appropriate items to enable all stakeholders to provide the most comprehensive response to all homeless populations.

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**Objective 3: Support capacity building within each county to respond to the needs of their homeless populations.**

**Recommendation**

- ❑ The Council will support and encourage efforts to develop a comprehensive system of homeless services at the local and/or regional level, including shelters, transitional, Housing First, Permanent and Supportive Housing, and Rapid Re-housing to support the homeless needs of each county with appropriate rates and services for these facilities.

**Impediments/Challenges**

- ❑ The primary funder of homeless services through CoCs is the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. An examination of Federal funding rules will be required to support this effort.

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## Theme 6: Improve access to services among homeless subpopulations

### Objective 1: Improve collaboration of services for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

#### Recommendations

- ❑ The Council will work with The NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) and the regional Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) to improve services for the state's veterans.
- ❑ The Department of Community Affairs will continue to apply for and administer HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) vouchers.
- ❑ The Department of Community Affairs will consult with CoCs for the provision of HUD-VASH vouchers under DCA's purview.
  
- ❑ The Council will work with the Department of Community Affairs and the NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency to encourage local housing authorities to connect with local homeless systems for the provision of the HUD-VASH voucher program.

#### Impediments/Challenges

- ❑ Federal:
  - There is federal ambiguity on transitional housing and limitation on Supportive Services for Veteran's Families (SSVF) funding.
  - National Guard soldiers have not been granted veteran status.
  - The reconciliation of current regulations with HEARTH is challenging.

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**Objective 2: Improve collaboration of services for older adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.****Recommendation**

- ❑ The Council, in collaboration with the DHS Division of Aging Services, will encourage the CoCs to include the participation of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).

**Objective 3: Support children and families who are homeless.****Recommendations**

- ❑ The Council will support the designation of shelters and temporary housing - specifically for families - that enables rapid transition and stabilization toward permanent housing, including programs that will help to minimize the long-term impact of homelessness on children.
- ❑ The Council will encourage CoCs, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to include school homeless liaisons in planning efforts.

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## **Objective 4: Support youth and young adults who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.**

### **Recommendations**

- ❑ The Council will work to enhance collaboration between the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF) and DHS to ensure a smooth transition between the child and adult service systems, when classified and other youth age out of the purview of DCF up to age 21.
- ❑ The Council will work with the CoCs to create more homeless shelters, housing and drop-in centers that focus on the unique needs of youth. These centers can provide job and life skills trainings that are specifically designed to assist youth who are new to entering the workforce.
- ❑ The Council will support DCF in developing a statewide homeless youth committee to create recommendations for best practices, program models, identification of resources and review of data in order to address and prevent youth homelessness. The committee will examine various homeless youth subpopulations (i.e., youth with experience in foster care, LGBTQ youth, pregnant and parenting youth, and youth with criminal histories).

## **Objective 5: Improve collaboration of services for the formerly incarcerated who are deemed homeless in the pre-release assessment.**

### **Recommendations**

- ❑ The Council will work with the Department of Corrections to improve emergency and transitional housing for those recently released from state correctional facilities.
- ❑ The Council will support the utilization of the corrections release ID card by the formerly incarcerated as a form of temporary identification to secure an emergency shelter placement.

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**Objective 6: Support compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) among homeless system providers.**

**Recommendation**

- ❑ The Council will work with DCA to expand shelter inspections to include compliance with ADA regulations.



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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interagency Council on Homelessness Membership**

#### **Co-Chairs**

Richard Constable, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs  
Jennifer Velez, Commissioner, Department of Human Services

#### **Appointed Members**

Sidney Blanchard, Founder & Executive Director, Community Access Unlimited  
Frank A. Cirillo, Director, Mercer County Board of Social Services  
Arnold C. Davis, Public Member  
Robert F. Guarasci, CEO, New Jersey Development Corporation  
Maria Del Mar Lopez, Founder & CEO, M & M Development  
Mary Fran McFadden, Retired Director, Ocean County Board of Social Services  
Constance Mercer, Executive Director, HomeFront  
John J. Monahan, LCSW, President & CEO, Greater Trenton Behavioral Health  
Karen Olson, President, Family Promise  
Julia M. Orlando, CRC, Ed.M., MA,  
Director, Bergen County Housing, Health & Human Services Center  
Reverend Kent R. Pipes, President, The Affordable Housing Group  
Honorable Dana L. Redd, Mayor, Camden City  
Matthew A. Reilly, President & CEO, MEND, Inc.  
Jill Rottmann, Esq., Senior Vice President of Development, Covenant House  
Colleen Velez (for Allison Recca-Ryan – retired), Corporation for Supportive Housing

#### **Executive Branch Representation**

Department of Children and Families  
Department of Corrections  
Department of Education  
Department of Health and Senior Services  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency  
State Parole Board  
Department of Military and Veterans  
Office of the Governor

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Glossary of Terms**

#### **Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)**

An Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is designated in each of New Jersey's 21 counties to serve as the primary entity responsible for developing comprehensive, coordinated systems of community-based services for older adults.

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html>

#### **Continuum of Care (CoC)**

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. New Jersey has 17 CoCs that serve the State's 21 counties.

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/hudprograms/continuumofcare>

#### **Chronic Homelessness**

Under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition, a chronically homeless individual is someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years and has a disability. A family with an adult member who meets this description would also be considered chronically homeless.

[http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/chronic\\_homelessness](http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/chronic_homelessness)

#### **Emergency Assistance (EA)**

Emergency Assistance provides essential food, clothing, shelter and household furnishings; temporary rental assistance or back rent or mortgage payments; utility payments (such as heat, water, and electric); transportation to search for housing; and moving expenses for up to 12 months. Eligible persons include those who are homeless or who have lost housing or basic essentials due to a disaster, e.g., a fire or flood.

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/emergency/>

#### **Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH)**

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 is Federal legislation that amends and reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act with changes that include consolidation of competitive grant programs, changes in the definitions of homelessness and chronic homelessness, an increase in prevention resources, and a greater emphasis on program outcomes and performance.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/hearth-act/>

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### **Glossary of Terms**

#### **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. New Jersey has a Statewide HMIS Collaborative that involves partnerships among state agencies, including the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA), the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and 19 Continuum of Care (CoC) local homeless planning CoCs.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/hmis/> and <https://hmis.njhmfaserv.org/1st/?p=abt>

#### **Housing First**

Housing First is a housing model that emphasizes providing homeless people with permanent housing quickly and then providing appropriate and desired services. Housing is not time-limited nor is it contingent upon compliance with services.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/what-is-housing-first>

#### **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development administers federal housing funds including programs for veterans (HUD-VASH) and the Continuum of Care (CoC) programs.

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD>

#### **HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)**

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA provides these services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics.

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/vash](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash)

#### **One Stop Career Centers**

One-Stop Career Centers are located throughout the state, with at least one in each county, offering an integrated system of employment, education and training programs for both job seekers and employers free of charge.

<http://jobs4jersey.com/jobs4jersey/jobseekers/oscc/>

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#### **Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness**

Federal Plan released in 2010 to end veteran and chronic homelessness by 2015 and homelessness among families, children, and youth by 2020.

[http://usich.gov/opening\\_doors/](http://usich.gov/opening_doors/)

#### **Permanent Supportive Housing**

Permanent supportive housing provides individuals and families who are homeless with safe, affordable, community-based housing and connects them to voluntary and flexible supports and services to help them maintain their housing and meet health and mental health needs. It is “a proven, effective means of reintegrating chronically homeless and other highly vulnerable homeless families and individuals with psychiatric disabilities or chronic health challenges into the community by addressing their basic needs for housing and providing ongoing support.”

[http://usich.gov/usich\\_resources/solutions/explore/permanent\\_supportive\\_housing](http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/permanent_supportive_housing)

#### **Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)**

The PATH program is administered by the Center for Mental Health Services, a component of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; it distributes funds to states, which then contract with local public and non-profit organizations to deliver varied services to persons who have a serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. PATH services are available in all 21 counties. New Jersey’s Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services within the Department of Human Services distribute Federal funds among 16 programs. An additional 9 programs receive only state funding.

<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/super/path/about.aspx>

#### **Rapid Re-housing**

Rapid re-housing is a program model that prioritizes moving a homeless individuals and families into permanent housing as soon as possible, ideally within 30 days of becoming homeless and entering a program. Core components include identifying housing; providing rent and move-in- assistance; and delivering supportive services, including case management. While promoted initially for families and short-term homeless, its use has expanded to some harder-to-serve populations.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rapid-re-housing-a-history-and-core-components>

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#### **Social Services for the Homeless (SSH)**

The Social Services for the Homeless (SSH) program provides assistance to New Jersey residents who are at risk of homelessness, but are ineligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families welfare, General Assistance welfare or Supplemental Security Income. SSH can pay for emergency food or a motel or shelter stay for a limited amount of time. It also can provide rental, mortgage, utility, and security deposit assistance. This program, which operates on a 24-hour emergency basis, also includes referral services and limited case management.

<http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/programs/ssh/>

#### **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is administered by the US Social Security Administration and provides monthly benefits to low-income individuals who are either aged (65 or older), blind or disabled who meet the financial limits. If they have a disability, applicants must also meet the medical standards for disability. Children who are either blind or disabled may also receive SSI.

<http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/ssi.html> and <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/ssi/index.html>

#### **State Employment and Training Commission (SETC)**

The SETC is a legislatively-created commission in New Jersey with representation from business, organized labor and community-based organizations, state and local education and governmental agencies, and private citizens. The SETC identifies and analyzes critical issues relating to workforce readiness and provides policy guidance to the Governor and to state professionals in the fields of employment, training and education; supports innovative programs that advance collaboration among governmental agencies; and, reports to the Governor on the progress that has been made and the issues that must be addressed in the area of employment, training and education.

<http://www.njsetc.net/njsetc/about/>

#### **State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP)**

The State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) is state-funded and administered by the Department of Community Affairs and provides tenant and project-based rental assistance grants with set-asides for the elderly, disabled, and homeless families with children. Any money the program has left over goes to other needy individuals. You must earn less than 40 percent of New Jersey's median income to qualify.

<http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/srap.html>

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#### **State Veterans Service Officer**

Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) are veteran advocates who stand ready to help with veteran-related needs. VSOs have all the forms and other information a veteran may need to obtain services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as well as forms related to State Veterans' Benefits.

<http://www.state.nj.us/military/veterans/programs.html>

#### **Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)**

Under the SSVF program, the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) awards grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives who can provide supportive services including outreach, case management, and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits to very low-income Veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. In addition, grantees may also provide time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help Veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis.

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>

#### **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**

TANF is overseen by the Division of Family Development within the Department of Human Services and administered at the local level by the State's 21 county welfare agencies. TANF or Work First New Jersey, is the State's welfare reform program, providing cash benefits and support services to families for up to five years to help them secure employment and become self-sufficient.

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/workfirstnj/>

#### **Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA) – component of New Jersey's Emergency Assistance program**

A TRA (Temporary Rental Assistance) may be provided when a Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (WFNJ/TANF) recipient is facing eviction, in order to maintain current permanent housing which had previously been affordable but which is no longer affordable due to reasons such as, but not limited to, loss of employment, temporary unemployment, or underemployment and it is anticipated that such housing will again become affordable; or when it is determined that maintaining the unit in the current housing arrangement is both the least costly alternative and serves to preserve the family structure while the search for affordable housing continues. TRAs are authorized by the County Welfare Agency.

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/>

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#### **Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN)**

The VA has 23 regional health networks for veterans. New Jersey is part of a NJ-NY regional network with two medical centers and multiple outpatient clinics throughout the state. Services for homeless veterans are available in East Orange and Lyons.

<http://www.nynj.va.gov/index.asp>

#### **Work First New Jersey**

Work First New Jersey is the state's welfare program. It provides temporary cash assistance and many other support services to families through the TANF program and also provides cash benefits and support services to individuals and couples with no dependent children through our General Assistance program. WFNJ clients may receive Emergency Assistance benefits in certain situations, including but not limited to shelter and housing-related expenses. Eligible persons include those who are homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless, and those who have experienced a substantial loss of housing, food, clothing, or household furnishings due to fire, flood, or similar disaster.

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/workfirstnj/>

#### **Workforce Investment Board (WIB)**

New Jersey Executive Order #36 created WIBs in New Jersey in 1996. Subsequently, the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 mandated them within all states and U.S. territories. Each WIB serves a county or multi-county area, identifying local job market needs, overseeing One-Stop Career Centers, and guiding workforce investment programs within their area.

<http://www.njsetc.net/njsetc/localwib/>