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NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

NEWSLETTER I NOVEMBER 2026

Caregiver Support Hub



Sherrill Administration Launches Caregiver Support Hub, Giving New Jersey Caregivers a One-Stop Online Resource

In recognition of National Family Caregivers Month, New Jersey Human Services announced the launch of the Caregiver Support Hub, a new website designed to help the state's family caregivers find information, training, and services in one place.

More than 1.1 million New Jerseyans provide unpaid care to a family member or friend, contributing an estimated $13 billion in services each year. With the state's population of adults 65 and older expected to nearly double by 2050 — and the ratio of available caregivers to those who need care continuing to fall — the need for coordinated support has never been more urgent.

Developed by the Division of Aging Services in response to recommendations from the New Jersey Caregiver Task Force, the Hub brings together State and community resources in plain language so caregivers can quickly find what is right for their situation, whether they are helping a parent manage medications, coordinating appointments for a child with disabilities, checking in on a neighbor, or supporting a spouse with a chronic condition.

"Across New Jersey, people are helping aging parents, caring for children with disabilities, and supporting loved ones through serious illnesses, often while working full-time jobs," **said Governor Mikie Sherrill.** "They should be able to spend less time searching for help and more time with the people who need them. Our Caregiver Support Hub brings together resources to help families manage costs, get training, and take a much-needed break. It's one way we're making State government work better for the people who count on us."

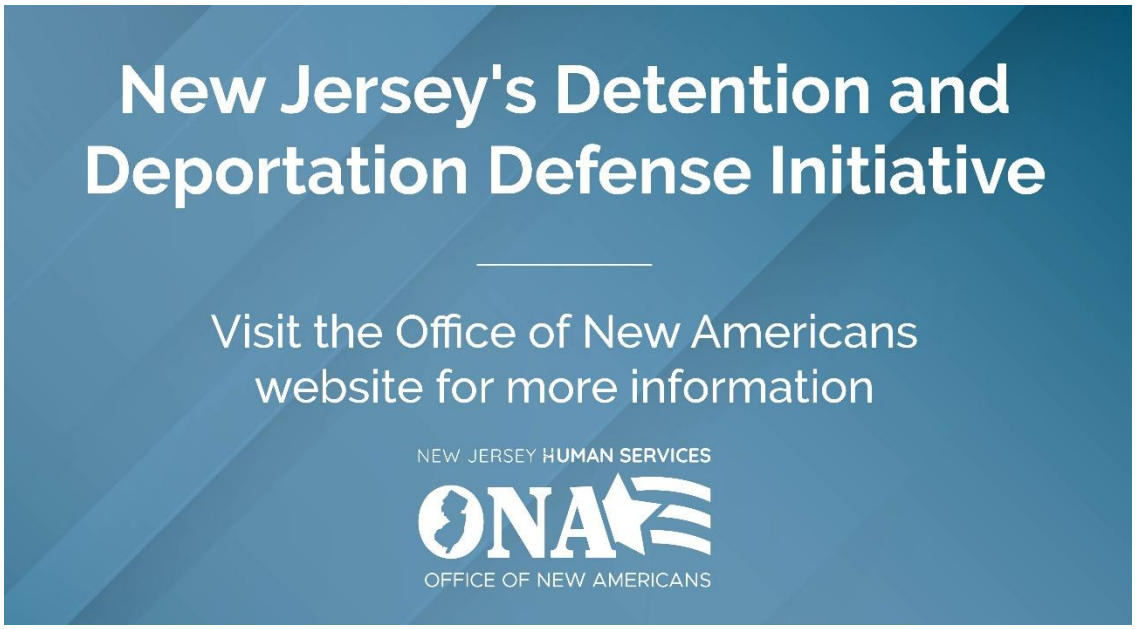
"Caregivers are the backbone of how we support older adults and people with disabilities in New Jersey, and too often they do it quietly and alone," **Commissioner Stephen Cha said.** "The Caregiver Support Hub makes it easier for them to find help, and National Family Caregivers Month is the right time to emphasize that no one has to navigate this journey by themselves."

"New Jersey caregivers are incredibly resourceful, but too often they're forced to

spend precious time and energy searching for help while already balancing work, family, finances, and caregiving responsibilities," **Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.** "The reality is that many helpful programs and supports already exist, but finding the right information at the right time can feel overwhelming. Created with and for caregivers, the Caregiver Support Hub provides a place to start."

"Caring for someone you love can be rewarding, but it can also be exhausting and financially demanding," **Division of Aging Services Assistant Commissioner Louise Rush said.** "Having training, respite, financial information, and peer support in one trusted place can help caregivers assess their own needs and connect with support before stress and burnout become overwhelming. I encourage every caregiver and every employer with caregivers on staff to visit the Hub."

Learn more HERE.



Sherrill Administration Allocates $20.2 Million Across 10 Providers for Detention Deportation Defense Initiative for New Americans

Governor Mikie Sherrill and Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha announced the full allocation of $20.2 million in funding across 10 legal services providers to provide legal representation and related support services to eligible New Jersey residents facing immigration detention, deportation, and removal proceedings, through the expanded Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative (DDDI).

“Everyone in this country is entitled to due process and a fair hearing under the law –regardless of where they were born. With the Trump Administration ramping up ICE activity and creating impossible obstacles for people facing detention and deportation to navigate alone, New Jersey is stepping up to connect residents with qualified legal counsel and equip more attorneys to take on this vital work,” **said Governor Sherrill.** “Our immigrant community should not have to face a complex and daunting legal system without anyone in their corner. I am proud that my Administration has quickly mobilized State resources and partnerships to help put legal counsel in reach for those who have been impacted by the federal government’s detrimental immigration policies.”

“Access to legal representation upholds due process and promotes fairer, more efficient immigration proceedings,” **Commissioner Cha said**. “I am grateful to Governor Sherrill and the Legislature for recognizing the growing need for these services and making the largest investment in the program’s history. As ICE activity continues to impact immigrant communities, we remain committed to ensuring that those facing detention or deportation have meaningful access to counsel and the opportunity to be heard.”

Since its inception in 2018, the Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative has provided free, expert legal representation to low-income residents facing detention and deportation through State-funded legal services programs. Human Services issues grants to pro-bono legal services providers who deliver services to clients from New Jersey. The initiative was established in partnership with community-based legal services providers including Legal Services of New Jersey, American Friends Service Committee, Rutgers Law School, and Seton Hall Law School, with implementation overseen by the Office of New Americans (ONA). Together, the program functions to address the lack of guaranteed legal counsel in immigration removal proceedings. Unlike defendants in the criminal justice system, individuals in deportation cases generally do not have the right to a government-appointed attorney. In June, Governor Sherrill announced DDDI’s expansion, increasing the State’s funding for the program from $8.2 million to $20.2 million, nearly triple the amount available in past fiscal years.

“New Jersey is committed to expanding access to legal counsel and strengthening the State's detention and deportation defense network amid continued ICE enforcement,” **Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Michael J. Wilson said.** “As these organizations undertake this work, we will support them in building on their existing expertise and preparing to meet the growing need for legal services. Together, we can expand our reach and ensure that individuals navigating these proceedings do not have to face these challenges alone.”

“The ONA has continued to grow and advocate for the DDDI program, because we recognize the critical need for these services in our immigrant community,” **ONA Director Johanna Calle said**. “I am grateful to the returning organizations increasing their work and the new partners joining this effort—together expanding our collective impact. We are here to support them as they strengthen their capacity to make immigration legal services accessible to those who need them

most."

Read more HERE.

Human Services Report Highlights Importance of Legal Representation in Deportation Proceedings

Human Services also released an impact report highlighting the outcomes and accomplishments of legal services programs supported by the Department's Office of New Americans (ONA). Through ONA-administered State Fiscal Year 2026 funding, covering July 2025 through June 2026, legal service providers delivered critical legal assistance to income-eligible New Jersey residents facing deportation proceedings.

ONA continues to oversee the implementation of these State-funded programs through grants to pro-bono legal services providers, helping ensure that unrepresented income-eligible individuals navigating deportation proceedings have access to legal representation. This support is especially critical because individuals facing detention and deportation, including children, are not guaranteed an attorney.

The programs are the Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative (DDDI), the Unaccompanied Minors and Youth Legal Services Program, and the Rapid Legal Response Initiative. Together, these programs play an important role in keeping families together, keeping children in school, ensuring access to due process, and increasing legal capacity, as immigration enforcement and detention continue to increase and the legal landscape becomes more challenging.

The Impact Report notes that DDDI served over 2,400 New Jerseyans and filed over 1,500 legal matters in State Fiscal Year 2026. The Unaccompanied Minors and Youth Legal Services Program served over 2,400 New Jerseyans and over 200 state-court petitions for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

Earlier this month, the Department announced the full allocation of $20.2 million in expanded Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative funding across 10 legal services providers to provide legal representation and related support services to eligible New Jersey residents facing immigration detention, deportation, and removal proceedings. In June, Governor Sherrill announced DDDI's expansion, increasing the State's funding for the program from $8.2 million to $20.2 million, nearly triple the amount available in past fiscal years.

Read more HERE.



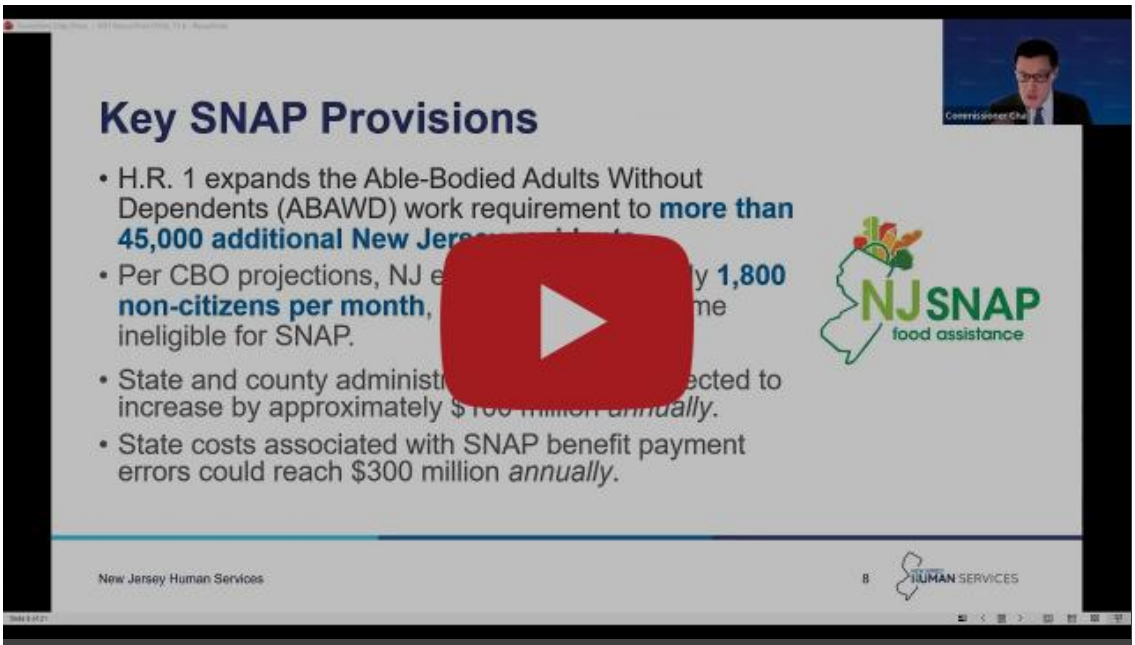
Human Services & Labor Departments Announce College Credit Opportunity through New Jersey Registered Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program

Building on the success of the New Jersey Registered Early Childhood Education (ECE) Apprenticeship Program, the New Jersey Department of Human Services and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) today announced the program's expansion to include an opportunity for eligible apprentices to receive college credits from Thomas Edison State University.

Launched as a pilot in 2024 by Human Services' Division of Family Development and the NJDOL, the program provides apprentices with paid employment, on-the-job learning, mentorship, and support toward earning the Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate Credential. Apprentices who successfully complete the program are now eligible to receive up to nine college credits from Thomas Edison State University, in addition to a
$500 merit award and a minimum three percent wage increase upon completion.

"This initiative reflects New Jersey's commitment to elevating early childhood education as a profession and supporting the educators who help shape our children's growth and development," **said Human Services Commissioner Stephen Cha.** "This is more than an investment in educators; it is an investment in our youngest residents, our working families, and the future of our state. We are excited to welcome the second cohort and look forward to building on this success."

Read more HERE.



New Jersey Human Services held its annual Virtual Budget Listening Session on November 9th. This event provided individuals, families, stakeholders and advocates an opportunity to offer input into the budget planning process for the Department's many programs and services.



Commissioner Stephen Cha joined State of Affairs with Steve Adubato to discuss 988, child care, and the impact of federal cuts to Medicaid and SNAP.





Commissioner Stephen Cha shared updates on H.R. 1, the Sec. 1115 Medicaid Waiver Renewal, and the start of the Disability Mortality and Abuse Prevention Advisory Council at a recent Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities board meeting. He shared his vision for continual improvement in Human Services and from I/DD providers.



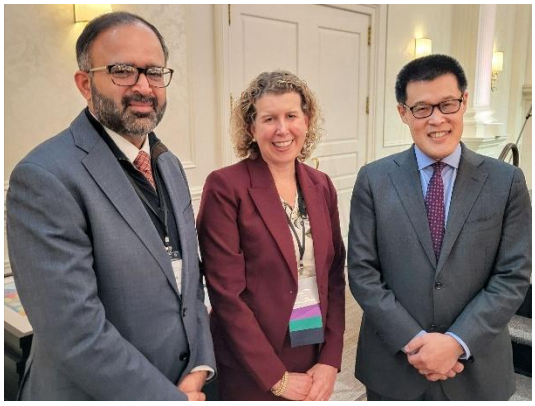
Affordability, flexibility, and improving the system for patients were discussed during a panel on state Medicaid programs at the CMS Innovation Center state population health retreat. Commissioner Stephen Cha shared New Jersey's successes and challenges with colleagues from National Academy for State Health Policy Duke University, and The Department of Health Care Finance.





"The system as it exists today, before HR 1 really takes ahold, isn't working for anybody," Commissioner Stephen Cha joined the conversation on evolving health care at the Rutgers Health Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy's Bowers Conference. *"Can we work together, in light of these challenges, to find a new pathway forward?"*











"You see this world where your clients are and the world they're trying to walk through, and then you tackle the policy, bureaucracy world, and it feels like how are these two worlds not talking?" Commissioner Stephen Cha shared his vision for NJ to adapting to the changing health care system at the 28th Annual New Jersey Supportive Housing Conference.





Commissioner Stephen Cha provided remarks at the National Caregiver Conference, expressing gratitude for the important work family and professional caregivers provide every day.





Beverly Roberts was a tremendous advocate for individuals with I/DD and a great partner to New Jerey Human Services. Commissioner Stephen Cha provided the keynote address at the third annual Arc of NJ health care symposium held in her honor.





Partnerships are key to keeping communities informed about federal changes to Medicaid and their impact on health care access. Commissioner Stephen Cha joined health care leaders in Newark to discuss the impact on individuals, families and our state's economy, as well as efforts to protect coverage.
New Jersey Human Services is working with partners statewide to keep the public informed and prepared.



Commissioner Stephen Cha joined Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill and Deputy Chief of Staff Laura Long for a tour of the Summit Speech School, highlighting the valuable role that early intervention plays in supporting children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families.

“Summit Speech School provides an essential service to children and families throughout New Jersey, helping ensure that children with hearing loss have access to the specialized education, resources, and support they need to reach their full potential,” Commissioner Cha said.



Deputy Commissioner Michael J. Wilson spoke with video blog TRACE about his work in food policy, navigating challenges posed by federal policies that impact food security, New Jersey’s efforts to expand food access and setting the stage for the next generation of food policy professionals.



Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire and Chief of Staff Jade Bechelli were among those who got flu shots at the New Lisbon Developmental Center. Getting a flu shot protects you and those around you, and helps prevent illnesses and flu-related doctor visits.

Visit here to learn more HERE.


WELCOME TO
CANDYLAND
CANDY CASTLE









Human Services Police from our Central Region participated in a Trunk or Treat event at the Department of Children and Families Regional School Mercer Campus.

During **Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week**, we are highlighting services to help NJ residents who are or know someone who might be food insecure, experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their housing.

Visit NJ211.org for support.



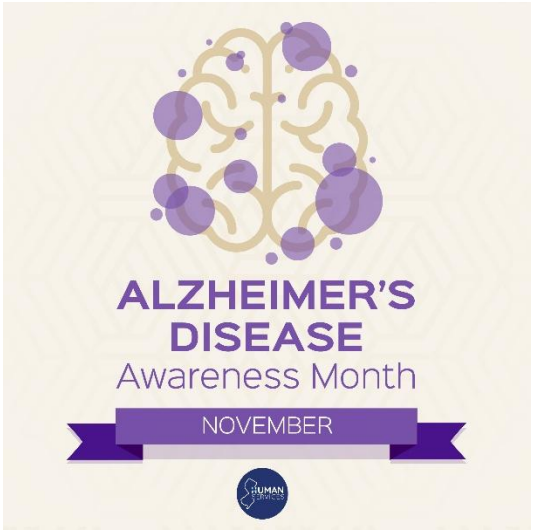


November was **Family Caregivers Month** - a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across NJ and draw attention to the many challenges facing family caregivers. For helpful caregiver resources, visit the new DoAS Caregiver Hub HERE.

November is **Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month**. All people with diabetes are at risk for vision loss and blindness from diabetic eye disease and diabetic eye disease often has no early symptoms.

For information about CBVI's programs and services, visit HERE.





In honor of **National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month**, NJ Human Services is happy to highlight DoAS' Statewide Respite Care Program. Respite care provides caregivers a temporary rest from caregiving. Call 1-877-222-3737 or visit our website HERE.

November 23rd was
Public Health Thank You Day!
NJ Human Services appreciates all the public health workers for their expertise, commitment and essential service.
Thank you for making New Jersey and America safer and healthier.





November 16th was **National Information and Referral Services Day**.

Nationally Certified I & R Specialists are available during regular business hours to provide info & assist with navigating State & County Services available to individuals with disabilities.

Learn more HERE.

November 19th was
Rural Health Day.
Through the Rural Health Transformation Program, NJ continues to expand access to healthcare, improve health outcomes, & expand investments in the rural healthcare workforce.
Learn more HERE.



NJ SNAP | NJ FAMILYCARE | NJSAVE | NJ HELPS

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