



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

NJ HUMAN SERVICES | 2022 in Review

A Message from Commissioner Adelman

Season's greetings,

As we approach the end of 2022, we are reflecting on a very busy year and looking forward to the next. Moving forward from the worst of the pandemic, we are eagerly taking on challenges new and old. And through it all, Human Services remains focused on helping New Jersey's most vulnerable residents.

Working with Governor Murphy, our partners in the community and in government at all levels, we've focused this year on expanding and improving a wide array of services provided daily to millions of residents, individuals and families needing health care, food assistance, emotional support, child care, disability services, mental health and addiction treatment and emergency housing, among so many needs.

Below are a few highlights from the past year from across our Department. I thank all of our partners for their dedication and assistance in turning these initiatives into reality, and for your continued support as we head into 2023.

Warmest wishes for a happy holiday season,

Sarah

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Launches in July



Human Services launched the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline on July 16, allowing New Jerseyans to use the new, three-digit number to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

The 988 number is available for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or a mental health or substance use crisis.

To support 988, the budget signed by Governor Murphy includes nearly \$29 million for call line infrastructure and services that some callers may be connected to after they call.

Since its launch, call volume in New Jersey has increased about 22 percent.

“This launch marked an important milestone in timely access to mental health services and 988 will help save lives,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. “988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number. It is a direct connection to accessible and compassionate support and resources, available 24/7 to anyone experiencing psychiatric or emotional distress or those worried about a loved one.”

“The transition to 988 helped expand access to critical mental health services and ensure we are connecting individuals in distress with the most adequate assistance,” said Valerie Mielke, Assistant Commissioner for the Department’s [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#). “We know the Lifeline makes a difference, and with an easier number to call, text or chat, we hope more people in need of support for themselves or loved ones will reach out for help.”

For more information about 988, visit [here](#)

New Naloxone Distribution Program & Opioid Settlement Funds

NALOXONE SAVES LIVES

Naloxone Distribution Program

Naloxone is now directly available to eligible agencies and providers via online ordering at no cost.



Human Services launched a [Naloxone Distribution Program](#) in partnership with the Department of Health and the Office of the Attorney General. The program allows eligible agencies the opportunity to request direct shipments of naloxone online anytime they need it.

The Department has so far distributed more than 51,000 kits to law enforcement, EMS, harm reduction centers, libraries and community organizations.

“This program builds on existing efforts to get naloxone into as many hands as possible,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. “Reducing barriers for first responders and community organizations to obtain naloxone helps ensure this life-saving antidote is available when it is needed most.”

The distribution program allows for agencies including law enforcement, first responders and certain community organizations to register through a new website and easily request direct shipments of naloxone at no charge. Once approved, naloxone will be shipped on-demand directly from the manufacturer to minimize delay and maximize shelf life.

The Murphy Administration also launched a new [web site](#) regarding the \$641 million in settlement funds from opioid manufacturers that will help fund state and local programs focused on treatment, prevention and other strategies to combat the opioid epidemic.

Support for Child Care



The Department [continued to support child care](#) through the continuation of retention and hiring bonuses and increases to grants aimed at both stabilizing child care programs in New Jersey and supporting child care staff.

The \$1,000 bonuses were provided by the Murphy administration to recruit new child care workers and retain staff. The state has provided more than \$80 million in bonuses to child care workers.

In addition, [child care centers that were awarded NJ American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Stabilization Grants to help with operational expenses](#) could receive up to \$75,000 in additional grant funding as long as they continue to meet program criteria.

That is on top of the remaining balance of the total award already approved.

Family child care providers will receive an additional \$3,000 on top of their remaining balance.

The state has delivered \$150 million in child care stabilization grants to more than 3,700 child care providers.

“We know these grants have been a major support for the child care industry as they continue to recover from the pandemic and we are glad to continue to provide and increase this funding,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.

“Stabilizing the child care industry and its workforce continues to be a top priority for the Murphy Administration,” Deputy Commissioner for Social Services Elisa Neira said.

Since 2018, the Murphy Administration has increased provider rates by 70 percent for infants and close to 50 percent for all other age groups.

Cover All Kids



Since Cover All Kids was initiated in July 2021, 49,000 children have been enrolled.

The Department has worked to strengthen data matching with other state agencies and expand community involvement to develop new partnerships and strategies for enrolling eligible children into NJ FamilyCare.

Standard coverage will soon be available for undocumented children - the same as all other children in the Medicaid program.

Income Limits Increase for Prescription Drug, Hearing & Utility Assistance for Older Adults and Disabled Individuals

Higher Income Limits

for NJ Prescription Drug, Hearing & Utility Assistance for Older Adults and Disabled Individuals

	PAAD/HAAAD/Lifeline	Senior Gold
Individual	\$38,769	\$48,769
Couple	\$45,270	\$55,270



Income limits for the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) and the Senior Gold Prescription Discount drug assistance programs increased by \$10,000, making drug prices more affordable and benefitting over 20,000 seniors.

It was the largest one-time increase in the history of both the PAAD and Senior Gold Prescription Discount drug assistance programs, and was part of the Governor's ongoing and broader commitment and programming to make health care more affordable for New Jersey residents across provider, insurance, and prescription drug costs.

"This historic benefit increase allowed many older residents and individuals with disabilities to qualify for the first time for prescription savings," Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "If you need assistance affording medication and think you may be eligible, we encourage you to apply,"

The PAAD and Senior Gold Prescription Discount drug assistant programs are available to residents 65 and older and those with disabilities. PAAD cuts drug prices to \$5 for covered generic drugs and \$7 for covered name brands. Senior Gold cuts prices in half after a \$15 copay for covered prescriptions.

The [PAAD program](#) income limits are now \$38,769 if single and \$45,270 for a couple.

The [Senior Gold Prescription Discount program](#) limits are now \$48,769 if single and \$55,270 if married.

Income limits for the [Lifeline utility assistance program](#) and the [Hearing Aid Assistance to the Aged and Disabled \(HAAAD\) program](#) also increased by \$10,000, as those programs are tied to PAAD.

Eligible older residents and individuals with disabilities are urged to apply now through the [NJSave online application](#), download an application from the [NJSave webpage](#), or ask for a paper application by calling 1-800-792-9745. Online and paper applications are available in English and Spanish.

Online NJSave application submissions increased 44 percent from 2021 to 2022, and for the first time the Department sent direct mail to individuals over 65 promoting the program.

"Cost should not be a barrier to medicine," said [Division of Aging Services](#) Director Louise Rush. "By expanding the income eligibility to the PAAD and Senior Gold prescription assistance programs, we opened these savings to more residents who need the help."

State Budget Boosts Wages for Workers Who Care for New Jersey's Most Vulnerable Residents



Demonstrating continued support for the frontline workers vital to the health and safety of many New Jerseyans, the budget signed by Governor Murphy's and approved by the Legislature included wage increases for critical workers who care for some of New Jersey's most vulnerable residents.

The budget plan for the fiscal year that started July 1 included wage increases for direct support professionals, home health aides also known as personal care assistants, child care workers, nursing home workers, private duty nurses, community-based mental health and substance use disorder providers, and homeless shelter staff.

"This workforce is the backbone of our state's care economy and we're grateful for their commitment to supporting individuals and families each and every day," Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.

NJ FamilyCare Promotes Effective Perinatal Care as Part of First Lady's Nurture NJ Campaign



As part of New Jersey's continued commitment to making New Jersey the safest and most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby, NJ FamilyCare [initiated](#) a new NJ FamilyCare pilot program promoting high quality perinatal care.

NJ FamilyCare's Perinatal Episode of Care program is a three-year pilot to test a new alternative payment model for prenatal, labor, and postpartum services statewide.

The pilot's goal is to improve maternity care by encouraging NJ FamilyCare obstetrical providers to broadly engage in all aspects of their patient's care beyond direct obstetrical care, from pregnancy through the postpartum period, including emergency room visits and newborn pediatric care. Clinicians who choose to participate in the program are financially incentivized to take on comprehensive responsibility for the quality and cost of their patients' care.

"A perinatal episode of care pilot that promotes high-quality, equitable, accessible and efficient maternity care for NJ FamilyCare members represents yet another step toward our shared goal of helping New Jersey families thrive," Human Services Deputy Commissioner for Health Services Lisa Asare said.

New Call Line Supports Caregivers of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



Support for caregivers of adult individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Callers receive support from a parent of an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities – someone whose understanding comes from similar experiences.

**Call 1-833-NJ-ADULT
(1-833-652-3858)**
8:30am-8pm | Daily



A new help line was [launched](#) to support caregivers of adult individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“Caregivers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities should know they are not alone,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.

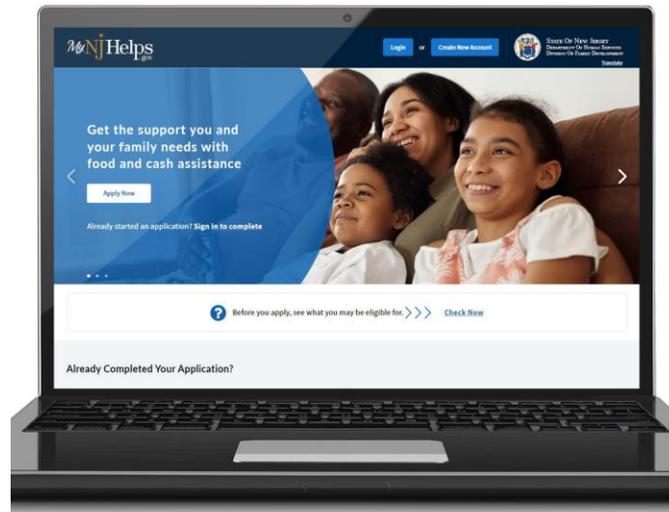
In partnership with Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, help and support is available to caregivers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities at [1-833-NJ-ADULT \(1-833-652-3858\)](tel:1-833-NJ-ADULT) daily from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

A messaging system monitors for caregiver crisis-level calls that may need an after-hours return call.

“Callers receive support from a parent of an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities – someone whose understanding and knowledge comes from having gone through similar experiences,” said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried, who leads the [Division of Developmental Disabilities](#). “Please don’t hesitate to call. Help is available.”

The Department also opened a community-based behavior stabilization home for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities with complex behavior needs, made pandemic flexibilities permanent and continued working to vaccinate residents and staff at developmental centers.

Human Services Unveils New NJ Helps Portal and Online Application for Food & Cash Assistance



The Department launched a modernized benefits portal and online application for residents to apply for the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([SNAP](#)) and Work First New Jersey ([WFNJ](#)) program.

Individuals can check their eligibility for food assistance, cash assistance and health care by visiting [NJHelps.gov](#). Those who choose to apply for SNAP and/or WFNJ will be redirected to the new application.

"We want to make it as easy as possible to navigate our programs and access the services and benefits available for you and your family," Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "This new modernized application is streamlined, easier to complete and is designed to work better for you."

The new application is mobile friendly, making it more accessible and reachable.

When applying for SNAP/WFNJ, individuals can upload required documents online through the new portal to confirm their eligibility and check the status of their application. A video tutorial in English and Spanish on how to apply can also be found online [here](#).

Since spring 2020, the Department has now provided \$3 billion in additional food assistance, including additional monthly SNAP payments and special food benefits to households with children. New Jersey also became the first state to set a minimum SNAP benefit for all households of \$50 a month.

"I encourage anyone in need of food or cash assistance to check their eligibility for SNAP and WFNJ at [NJHelps.gov](#). If you have no health coverage, you can also check your eligibility for health insurance," said Natasha Johnson, who directs Human Services' [Division of Family Development](#), which is responsible for the SNAP program.

Grants Improve Access to Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals



The Department [awarded](#) \$944,000 in total grants to 13 counties to improve communication and language access to county services for deaf and hard of hearing residents.

“Increasing access to key programs, services and information for deaf and hard of hearing residents is essential,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.

The program is supported by the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing ([DDHH](#)).

“It’s important for all New Jerseyans to have equal access, and these grants enhance language and communication access to county programs and services for our deaf and hard of hearing residents,” Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said.

Inclusive Healthy Communities



Through the Division of Disability Services ([DDS](#)), the Department awarded an [additional grants](#) to help communities across the state implement [inclusive initiatives](#) that support individuals with disabilities in the communities in which they live, work, learn and play.

“These awards bolster ongoing efforts to ensure individuals with disabilities thrive in the places in which they live,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.

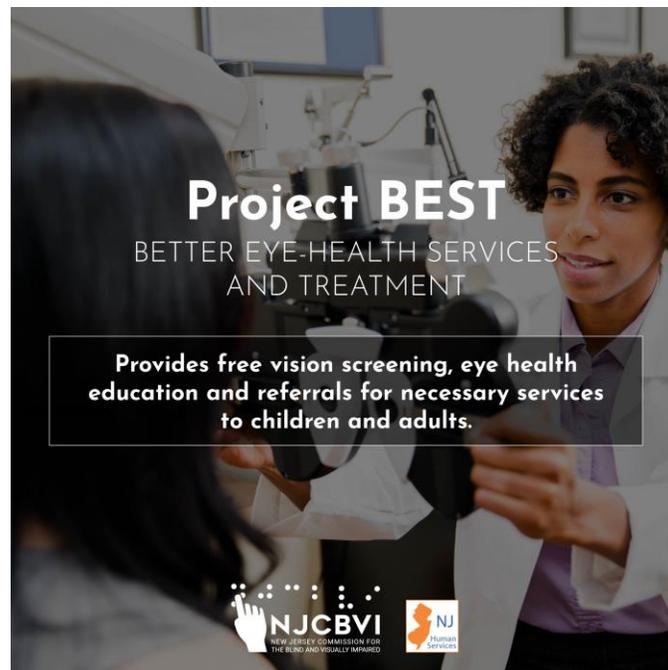
The program included a partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection to continue helping communities implement inclusive initiatives that increase recreational access to coastal resources for individuals with disabilities.

“From making existing nature trails more accessible for people with mobility challenges to developing a monitoring tool to assess disability access in coastal locations, these programs will enhance equitable access to natural areas for New Jerseyans with disabilities,” Deputy Commissioner for Aging and Disability Services Kaylee McGuire said.

“Creating spaces that are accessible for all should be the standard for communities across the U.S, and these additional awards will help establish this in our great state,” DDS Executive Director Peri L. Nearon said.

The Division also received more than 6,500 calls to their Information and Referral line to assist individuals with disabilities and others in navigating services.

Assistance for the Blind and Visually Impaired



The [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) screened more than 11,000 New Jerseyans through its [Project BEST](#) program at more than 400 screening events throughout the state. Also:

- Teachers of blind and visually impaired provided school and home-based Education services to 1,869 students in preschool through grade 12, within 372 school districts;
- 260 infants and toddlers were served in collaboration with the New Jersey Early Intervention System;
- Enrollment and participation in CBVI's Independent Living Services has increased by more than 150 percent;
- CBVI distributed close to \$500,000 in COVID Financial Relief & Restoration payments to assist self-employed blind individuals part of the Randolph-Sheppard Program to offset revenue losses during the pandemic; and
- CBVI received the Leadership Award by the NJ Theatre Alliance's Cultural Access Network for its efforts in promoting accessible cultural activities and providing in-service sensitivity training.



The [Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) also marked October's Blindness Awareness Month with an amazing outreach fair at Cheesequake State Park.

CBVI Executive Director Dr. Bernice Davis read a proclamation from Governor Murphy, information was provided by numerous providers on programs and services, and food trucks contributed to the festivities.

Welcoming New Americans



The Office of New Americans published a welcome booklet with a set of resources intended to support newcomers to New Jersey and their families. It includes information about resources and services including legal services, food and income assistance, health care and mental health services, school enrollment, getting a state identification card, and transportation. All the topics have links that direct to the indicated websites.

There are also flyers and contact information regarding the different services and resources available to New Jersey residents.

Download it below:

[English](#)
[Spanish](#)

The Office also welcomed more than 3,700 newcomers, including 246 refugees, 2,200 Cuban and Haitian entrants, 794 Afghan evacuees and 399 Ukrainians in the past year.

It also invested \$13 million in legal representation for immigrants at risk of family separation, reaching and assisting 2,300 adults and 1,200 children.

Meanwhile, \$50 million in COVID financial assistance was distributed to more than 21,000 households, primarily immigrants left out of federal COVID relief.

844-ReachNJ Promotion

MAKE THE CALL
TODAY

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

NJ
Human
Services

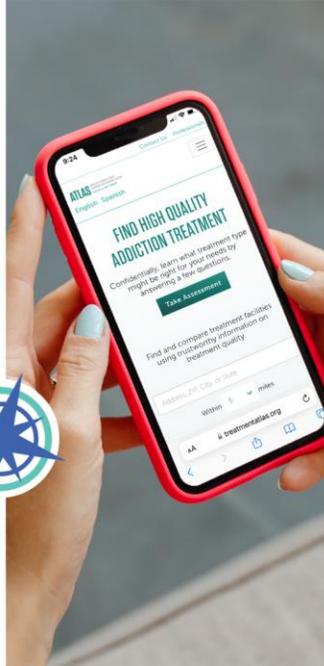
CALL 844-REACHNJ

Human Services continued its promotional efforts to help individuals get connected to addiction treatment through the 24/7 844-ReachNJ help line. The result has been a 412 percent increase in monthly calls, which has also helped increase referrals to medication treatments for substance use disorder.

Human Services Partners with Shatterproof & Horizon to Launch Online Substance Use Disorder Treatment Reference Guide

Recovery should be about options,
not guesses.

Explore your options at
TreatmentATLAS.org



New Jersey launched a free, confidential, first-of-its-kind on-line tool to connect New Jerseyans in need with appropriate addiction treatment care and deliver user-friendly information about the quality of available programs.

ATLAS®, or Addiction Treatment Locator, Assessment, and Standards Platform, at www.TreatmentATLAS.org, offers an easy-to-use dashboard to allow individuals with substance use disorder and their loved ones to search for and compare participating programs using criteria such as location, services offered, and insurance accepted so they can find the best treatment for their unique needs.

ATLAS was created by Shatterproof, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reversing the addiction crisis in America. ATLAS has been made possible in New Jersey through a partnership with Human Services and funding from Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey.

“This is yet another tool in our collective work to make addiction treatment as accessible as possible so individuals and families can get the help they need – because treatment works and recovery is attainable,” Commissioner Sarah Adelman said.

NJ SNAP - [ENGLISH](#) / [SPANISH](#)

NJ FAMILYCARE - [ENGLISH](#) / [SPANISH](#)

NJHELPS - [ENGLISH](#) / [SPANISH](#)

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