



NEW JERSEY **HUMAN SERVICES**



NJ HUMAN SERVICES | IN THE COMMUNITY

New Jersey Becomes 9th State Accepted into AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities



Governor Murphy's Budget will raise the income limits for the **PAAD and Senior Gold programs by \$10,000 each**



DHS' Division of Aging Services will launch the **Age Friendly New Jersey initiative**, in partnership with AARP, to help support communities become accessible and inclusive places to live at any age



The Governor's Budget maintains **the 10 percent rate increase for Medicaid nursing facilities** with an investment of \$87 million in state dollars for a total of \$174 million after federal matching

New Jersey has become the ninth state accepted into the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, which works to make communities supportive and accessible places to live for people of all ages.

"In New Jersey, we are making vital investments to help enhance the quality of life for everyone, including our older residents," Governor Phil Murphy said. "I'm honored to be recognized by AARP for our work and committed to building on our efforts to create more accessible and more inclusive communities."

"We are thrilled to receive this designation and are excited about getting to work making New Jersey an even more inclusive place to live at every stage of life," Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah

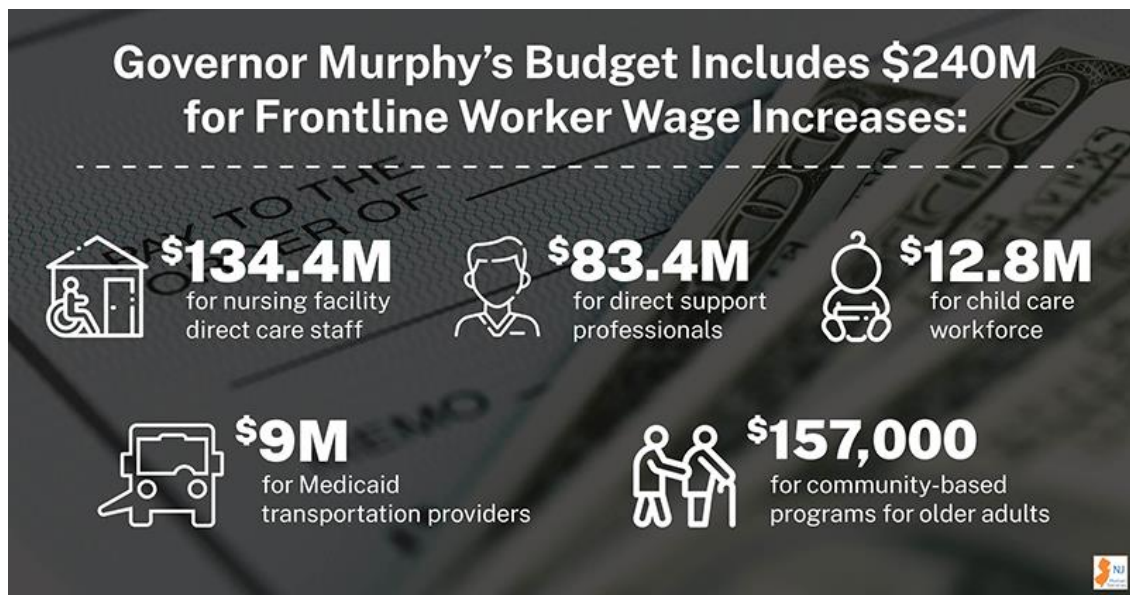
Adelman said. "I thank AARP for approving our designation and look forward to working with them and communities and stakeholders across New Jersey to turn this plan into reality."

"We commend the Governor and his administration for recognizing the need to make New Jersey an age-friendly state, and we look forward to continuing our work together to make New Jersey a great place to grow up, and grow old," said Stephanie Hunsinger, AARP New Jersey State Director.

"We're excited to receive this designation and look forward to turning this concept into reality, for the benefit of older adults – and communities themselves – throughout New Jersey," Division of Aging Services Director Louise Rush said.

[Read more](#)

Governor's Budget Includes \$240 Million in Wage Increases for Workers Who Care for Individuals with Disabilities, Older Residents, Medicaid Beneficiaries & Children



Demonstrating continued support for the frontline workers who are vital to the health and safety of so many New Jerseyans, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Murphy's budget proposal includes wage increases for workers who provide critical care for individuals with disabilities, older residents, Medicaid beneficiaries and children.

The budget plan for the fiscal year that starts July 1 includes about \$240 million for wage increases for direct support professionals, certified nurse aides, personal care assistants, Medicaid transportation providers and child care workers.

"Governor Murphy's budget continues to recognize the crucial work happening on the frontlines caring for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, older adults, Medicaid beneficiaries and children across the state," Acting Commissioner Adelman said.

The Governor's proposed budget includes:

- \$83.4 million to support direct support professionals.
- \$134.4 million to continue and enhance wage increases for nursing facility direct care staff.
- \$157,000 to support wage increases in the Division of Aging Services' community-based programs for older adults.
- \$9 million to support Medicaid transportation providers.
- \$12.8 million to support the child care workforce.

"We are so grateful for the commitment of our child care workers as they have supported families throughout the pandemic," Human Services Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said.

[Read more](#)

Governor's Budget Plan Would Boost Hearing Aid Reimbursement for Qualifying Older Adults & Individuals with Disabilities

GOVERNOR MURPHY'S BUDGET INCREASES REIMBURSEMENT FOR HEARING AID PURCHASES



Human Services' Hearing Assistance Program currently provides a \$100 reimbursement per calendar year to offset the purchase of a hearing aid.



Under the proposed budget, individuals can be **reimbursed up to \$1,000 for hearing aid costs, \$500 per hearing aid, per calendar year.**



Governor Phil Murphy's budget plan for the fiscal year starting July 1 would significantly increase hearing aid purchase reimbursement available under the state's [Hearing Aid Assistance to the Aged and Disabled](#) program.

The program provides eligible individuals with a \$100 reimbursement to offset the cost of purchasing a hearing aid per calendar year. Governor's Murphy's budget plan for next fiscal year would increase the reimbursement to \$500 per hearing aid per calendar year. It would be the first increase since the program was created in 1987.

"The Governor's budget proposal is all about continuing to make New Jersey a stronger and fairer state that works for everybody, and that includes older adults and individuals with disabilities who need hearing assistance," Acting Commissioner Adelman said.

"This would be meaningful help to New Jersey residents in need of hearing aid assistance," Deputy Commissioner Neira said.

"Too many members of our deaf and hard of hearing community struggle to afford hearing assistance that is vital to their quality of life, especially older adults and those with disabilities," Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said. "This increase would lead to better lives for those in need."

"This increase would mean so much to so many," Director Rush said.

Residents not enrolled in the PAAD or Lifeline program are encouraged to complete an [NJSave application](#) to verify age or disability status, residency and annual income.

For additional information on the HAAAD program please visit [here](#).

[Read more](#)

NJ Human Services Delivers Extra May Food Assistance Benefits to 426,000 Households



NJ Human Services delivered extra food benefits for May to the 426,000 New Jersey households who receive food assistance through the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([NJ SNAP](#)). They received \$73.9 million in total extra benefits in May.

Human Services has been providing NJ SNAP households with maximum benefits since March 2020 when the pandemic began. Under a change implemented in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

households that had already been receiving that maximum available SNAP benefit are also now also eligible for the temporary extra assistance.

A 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits also remains in effect through September.

Human Services has now distributed \$694.1 million in supplemental monthly SNAP payments to households since March 2020.

“We’re committed to providing as much additional food security as possible to New Jersey families for as long as possible,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “These additional food assistance benefits will again prove vital to many New Jersey households as this public health emergency continues.”

“We’re dedicated to helping as many families as we can as this challenging time continues,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said. “We will continue taking advantage of all available resources to help New Jersey households afford groceries as much and for as long as we can.

[Read more](#)

NJ Human Services Seeks Proposals for New Community-Based Program for Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities and Co-Occurring Behavioral Needs



Human Services is seeking proposals to open three four-bedroom homes to serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities experiencing significant behavioral challenges that make it temporarily unsafe to live at home.

The \$4 million initiative seeks to create short-term placements in home-like environments staffed with professionals trained in supporting individuals with IDD who are experiencing significant behaviors or behavior crises.

The program will not replace in-patient hospitalization when medically indicated, but will help prevent hospitalization for some individuals and will help provide a hospital discharge option to a safe and professional environment for others.

During the short-term stay, trained professionals will assess individuals and implement new behavior management techniques so they may return home safely.

“Through this program, we are creating a short-term, highly structured, nurturing housing environment complete with professional assistance to help individuals get through or prevent a behavioral crisis so they can get back home safely and successfully,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said.

“The intent is to stabilize crises while diagnostic assessments, services, and supports that meet the individual’s needs are provided,” said Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Seifried, who directs the DDD.

The submission deadline for providers is July 2, and Human Services expects to make a final award in September.

For more information on the request for proposals, visit [here](#).

Governor's Budget Proposes \$4M for Scholarships to Provide More Psychiatrists in New Jersey



NJHopeline 1-855-654-6735

NJMentalHealthCares Helpline
1-866-202-HELP

ACCESS American Sign Language and Videophone Helpline
973-870-0677

HEAL NJ Healthcare Workers COVID Hope & Healing Helpline
1-833-416-8773

RISE NJ First Responders COVID Hope & Healing Helpline
1-833-237-4325

Assistance and Referrals to Addiction Treatment
1-844-ReachNJ



The Murphy Administration aims to expand access to in-demand psychiatric services by increasing the supply of trained professionals in the field.

The Governor's proposed budget calls for \$4 million to fund 10 four-year psychiatric residencies. In exchange, the residency programs will ensure these physicians will have rotations in a range of publicly funded and community-based mental health settings during their residencies. The initiative will focus on the treatment of lower income individuals, especially those with serious mental illness and those co-occurring mental health substance use disorders.

"There has been a need for more psychiatrists for years, and now the need is even greater," Acting Commissioner Adelman said. "Professional help is often the key to recovery for people with emotional and behavioral health issues. We have to invest in the pipeline so the help is available for people who need it."

"We can't underestimate the emotional impact of COVID, especially on people who are already struggling," Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke said. "The worry, uncertainty, and personal and

financial losses can seem overwhelming.”

[Read more](#)

Mental Health Month



Governor Murphy [declared May 2021 as Mental Health Month in New Jersey](#), noting New Jersey is committed to providing children and adults with a robust array of person-centered inpatient and community-based treatment and peer support services that are compassionately delivered affordable and effective.

National Nurses Week



May 6-12 was National Nurses Week. To all the nurses, who have worked so hard through the COVID-19 pandemic, we thank you for your service. The world is a better place thanks to your hard work and dedication.

Public Service Recognition Week



The first week of May is Public Service Recognition Week, and Acting Commissioner Adelman thanked Human Services staff for all they've done during challenging times to serve New Jersey residents.

Acting Commissioner Adelman had the chance to note the staff's hard work during a Monday Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee hearing.

"Throughout the pandemic, our Department's dedicated leaders and staff have risen to the occasion in extraordinary ways," Acting Commissioner Adelman said.

NJEDA in partnership with Nurture NJ and First Lady Tammy Murphy Seeks Input on Establishing Trenton-Based Center Dedicated to Maternal & Infant Health

The [New Jersey Economic Development Authority \(NJEDA\)](#), in partnership with Nurture NJ and First Lady Tammy Murphy is seeking input to inform the establishment of a Center for Maternal and Infant Health in

Trenton dedicated to innovation and research, with an emphasis on addressing racial disparities and ensuring equity in care and outcomes for mothers and infants.

The Center for Maternal and Infant Health is a key recommendation from First Lady Tammy Murphy's recently released Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan. The Request for Information can be found [here](#). Responses are due by June 1.

"Establishing this Center and investing in research and innovation here in our Capital City are pivotal steps forward in our Administration's commitment to combat disparities in care for mothers and babies of color and make New Jersey a safer place to give birth," Acting Commissioner Adelman said. "NJ Human Services looks forward to working with our partners in the First Lady's Nurture NJ campaign to make these plans the reality, improve outcomes, and save lives."

[Read more](#)

Considerations for Individuals with Disabilities at COVID-19 Vaccination Sites



Above is a [video](#) produced by the Department of Human Services in collaboration with Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at Rutgers University regarding considerations for individuals with disabilities at vaccine sites across New Jersey. Please take a look and use it as a guide to help ensure vaccines are accessible to all New Jerseyans, including individuals with disabilities. Together, by ensuring accommodations, we can help ensure a healthier New Jersey for everyone.

SPOTLIGHTS ON NJ HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

ReachNJ



[ReachNJ](#) is Human Services' 24-hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week addictions hotline where people who have Substance Use Disorder or their friends and family can get immediate assistance and support from live, New Jersey-based, trained addiction counselors. An individual who calls the program's toll-free number at 1-844-ReachNJ (844-732-2465) will reach a live staff member who will help connect you to treatment. ReachNJ will assist callers regardless of their insurance status. ReachNJ. Always here. Always live.

[En Espanol](#)

NJ ABLE



The graphic is split into two main sections. On the left, a light grey background contains the text 'Save with NJ ABLE' in green and blue, with 'NJ ABLE' in a larger font. Below this, it says 'A member of The National ABLE Alliance' and 'TAX-FREE SAVINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES'. On the right, a teal background features a pink piggy bank with a gold coin on top, surrounded by stacks of gold coins and green banknotes. A small logo for 'NJ Human Services' is in the bottom right corner.

NJ ABLE helps *New Jersey* residents with disabilities save for qualified disability expenses without the risk of losing their benefits from assistance programs. Individuals with disabilities can save tax-free for eligible expenses such as education, housing and transportation without losing eligibility for Medicaid and other benefits. The program also offers a range of investment options. Learn more [here](#).

[NJ SNAP](#) | [NJ FAMILYCARE](#) | [NJHELPS](#)

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