

Veteran Homelessness Report

December 8, 2019

Annual Count of Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness in NJ

NJCounts 2020 will take place on Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

NJCounts is the annual Point-in-Time Count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in New Jersey. As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the count takes place during the last 10 days of January and identifies those persons residing in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, safe havens and living on the streets or other locations not fit for dwelling.

In New Jersey, NJCounts is coordinated on a single day across the state allowing for comparable data across all communities from year to year. Monarch Housing Associates has coordinated NJCounts since 2014 as commissioned by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA.) Monarch is proud to partner with local governments, service providers, community advocates and volunteers to conduct NJCounts as we work to collect critical data that assists communities in developing a deeper understanding of the need as they work to end homelessness.

Partnering with Hospitals to Fund Supportive Housing Developments

The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) is working directly with hospitals to develop more supportive housing throughout New Jersey.

NJHMFA Executive Director Charles A. Richman recently spoke with Monarch Housing Staff going into the details about the recently launched Hospital Partnership Subsidy Program and its goals.

The \$12 million Hospital Partnership Subsidy Program was created after the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) released research suggesting that providing supportive housing leads to health care and government cost savings. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) reports (https://d155kunxf1aozz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CSH-supportive-housing-outcomes-healthcare_Final.pdf) that supportive housing results in nearly 50% fewer emergency department visits, days spent in hospitals, and detox visits.

NJHMFA is partnering with New Jersey hospitals to develop affordable and supportive housing in close proximity to hospitals. Every dollar that hospitals in the program contribute to developments will be matched by NJHMFA for up to \$4 million. NJHMFA, which administers the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, will contribute 4 percent credits to the projects.

“Housing is health care, and as anchor institutions in their communities, hospitals have an incredibly important role to play in both the creation of housing that is affordable to families as well as supportive housing,” Richman said. “We know that permanent supportive housing can result in improved health outcomes and quality of life. This program will help reduce the hospital costs associated with the frequent and unnecessary use of emergency hospital services

and provide at-risk individuals with the supportive housing they need to sustain healthy living.”

Each project is expected to create 60 to 80 new apartments. Richman highlighted that a significant portion of the apartments in these developments will go to low-income people in addition to providing affordable housing for families including potentially hospital employees as well.

Currently, four supportive housing developments are part of the initiative. Richman highlighted one of the projects, which is an apartment complex in Paterson proposed by Saint Joseph’s Health. This project is currently in the design stage. There are other developments in the pipeline in different areas of New Jersey that will provide needed housing to various populations.

Without the hospitals’ contributions, this program would not be feasible. When asked about whether hospitals are interested in taking part of the cost burden of these projects, Richman said that hospital leaders and executives have embraced the initiative, understanding the important role that hospitals play across New Jersey communities.

According to Richman, NJHMFA is incredibly excited about this innovative initiative and looking forward to announcing additional partnerships in the near future. For more information about the Hospital Partnership Subsidy Program, please read more on the NJHMFA website.

<https://www.njhousing.gov/dca/hmfa/media/news/2018/approved/20181107.html>

Federal Veteran Homelessness Legislation

H.R.95 Homeless Veteran Families Act - This bill updates the Department of Veterans Affairs per diem payment calculation for entities furnishing services to homeless veterans to include funding for a minor dependent. The rate for per diem payments is the daily cost of care as estimated by the grant recipient or eligible entity.

This bill would expand the per diem payment amount for a homeless veteran who has care of a minor dependent to the daily cost of care plus, for each minor dependent, an amount that equals 50% of such daily cost of care. Passed House.

New Jersey cosponsors Rep. Norcross, Donald [D-NJ-1], Rep. Van Drew, Jefferson [D-NJ-2], Rep. Kim, Andy [D-NJ-3], Rep. Pallone, Frank, Jr. [D-NJ-6], Rep. Malinowski, Tom [D-NJ-7], Rep. Sires, Albio [D-NJ-8], Rep. Payne, Donald M., Jr. [D-NJ-10], Rep. Sherrill, Mikie [D-NJ-11], Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12]

H.R.165 - Improving Access to Homes for Heroes Act of 2019 - To require the inclusion of veterans in housing planning and an annual report on housing assistance to veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R.715 - HOMeS Act of 2019 - To amend section 428 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to provide incentives to grantees under the Continuum of Care program to re-house all former members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

H.R.716 - Homeless Veterans Legal Services Act - To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into partnerships with public and private entities to provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness.

H.R.1448 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to waive fees for Purple Heart recipients serving on active duty for loans guaranteed under the home loan program of Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R.1527 - Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act - To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the placement of veterans in non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.

H.R.1750 - Supporting Veteran Families in Need Act - H.R.1750 - Supporting Veteran Families in Need Act

H.R.1856 - Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 - To provide a path to end homelessness in the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R.1978 - Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act - To fight homelessness in the United States by authorizing a grant program within the Health Resources and Services Administration for housing programs that offer comprehensive services and intensive case management for homeless individuals and families. NJ cosponsor Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12]

H.R.1988 - Protecting Affordable Mortgages for Veterans Act of 2019 - This bill revises loan seasoning requirements related to a refinanced Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) housing loan. Under current law, the VA is prohibited from guaranteeing a refinanced home loan until the date that is the later of (1) the date on which the sixth monthly payment is made, or (2) the date that is 210 days after the first payment is made. This bill modifies this date to (1) when the borrower has made six consecutive monthly payments, or (2) 210 days after the first payment is due. Passed House.

H.R.2223 - Helping Homeless Veterans Act of 2019 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent certain programs that assist homeless veterans and other veterans with special needs, and for other purposes. NJ cosponsor Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12]

H.R.2224 - Homeless Veterans with Children Reintegration Act - To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Labor to prioritize the provision of services to homeless veterans with dependent children in carrying out homeless veterans reintegration programs, and for other purposes. NJ cosponsor Rep. Kim, Andy [D-NJ-3]

H.R.2225 - To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a refundable credit against tax for landlords of veterans receiving rental assistance under the Veterans Affairs Supported Housing program.

H.R.2398 - To amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 and title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the HUD-VASH program, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit annual reports to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives regarding homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R.2399 - Homes for Our Heroes Act of 2019 - To provide for greater transparency in the HUD-VASH supported housing program for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R.2924 - Housing for Women Veterans Act - To amend title 38, United States Code, to reauthorize the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Grant Program, and for other purposes.

H.R.2999 - Tribal HUD-VASH Act of 2019 - To provide for rental assistance for homeless or at-risk Indian veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R.3272 - Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act - To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to place in permanent supportive housing, and provide supportive services, to individuals who have physical or mental health conditions or substance use disorders and are chronically homeless or at risk of becoming chronically homeless, and for other purposes.

H.R.3504 - Ryan Kules Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for improvements to the specially adapted housing program and educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. Passed House.

H.R.3640 - Housing Access for Blind Veterans Act - To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assist blind veterans who have not lost use of a leg in acquiring specially adapted housing, and for other purposes.

H.R.3749 - Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act - To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to entities that provide legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness. NJ cosponsor Rep. Payne, Donald M., Jr. [D-NJ]-10]

H.R.5135 - Housing Homeless Veterans Act of 2019 - To give priority in allocation of rental assistance vouchers under the Veterans Affairs Supported Housing program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to areas having the largest populations of homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S.8 - Preserving Our Commitment to Homeless Veterans Act - This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide case management support to local housing authorities under the VA-supported housing program. The program assists veterans who are homeless and their families in finding and sustaining permanent housing.

S.91 - Creating a Reliable Environment for Veterans' Dependents Act of 2019 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize per diem payments under comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans to furnish care to dependents of homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S.257 - Tribal HUD-VASH Act of 2019 - o provide for rental assistance for homeless or at-risk Indian veterans, and for other purposes. Passed Senate.

S.923 - Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act - To fight homelessness in the United States by authorizing a grant program within the Health Resources and Services Administration for housing programs that offer comprehensive services and intensive case management for homeless individuals and families.

S.980 - Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2019 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of services for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S.1749 - Protecting Affordable Mortgages for Veterans Act of 2019 - This bill revises loan seasoning requirements related to a refinanced Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) housing loan. Under current law, the VA is prohibited from guaranteeing a refinanced home loan until the date that is the later of (1) the date on which the sixth monthly payment is made, or (2) the date that is 210 days after the first payment is made. This bill modifies this date to (1) when the borrower has made six consecutive monthly payments, or (2) 210 days after the first payment is due. 07/25/2019 Became Public Law No: 116-33.

S.2022 - Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for improvements to the specially adapted housing program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S.2061 - Veteran Housing Opportunities and Unemployment Support Extension Act of 2019 - To amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 and title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for the HUD–VASH program, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit annual reports to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives regarding homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S.2489 - Keeping Our Commitment to Ending Veteran Homelessness Act of 2019 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authority for financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing, and for other purposes.

S.2613 - Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 - To provide a path to end homelessness in the United States, and for other purposes.

S.2835 - Access to Affordable Housing for Veterans Act of 2019 - To include information regarding VA home loans in the Informed Consumer Choice Disclosure required to be provided to a prospective FHA borrower who is a veteran, to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the provision of a certificate of eligibility for VA home loans during the pre-separation counseling for members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

New Jersey Veteran Homelessness Legislation

A1918/S733 Permits up to seven dollar increase in surcharge for document recordation with county in support of county Homelessness housing trust funds. This bill increases the amount of a surcharge that may be applied to documents recorded with a county, in support of the county’s Homelessness Housing Trust Fund.

Under present law, a county governing body may adopt a resolution or ordinance that levies a surcharge of three dollars on documents to be recorded with the county. The funds collected from this surcharge are then placed in a homelessness prevention trust fund and dedicated towards local government programs that address the problem of homelessness. This bill would expand the amount of the surcharge that may be levied by the county for this purpose.

Under this bill, when a county governing body adopts a resolution or ordinance to allow for a homelessness trust fund surcharge, the resolution or ordinance would set the amount of the surcharge. The county governing body would have discretion to set this amount, but it would be at least three dollars and at most 10 dollars. A subsequent resolution by the county governing body would be necessary to revise the amount of the surcharge.

Homelessness is a persistent and devastating problem that continues to affect counties and families throughout New Jersey. Local governments have authority to create homelessness trust funds in an effort to alleviate this problem, devise workable solutions, and improve the lives of many individuals. By increasing the amount of funds collected for this purpose, this bill provides greater flexibility and resources to counties in order to address homelessness head-on.

1/9/2018 introduced, referred to Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee. 1/9/2018 introduced in the Senate, referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee.

A4022/S2525 Directs Adjutant General to enter into agreements with legal services organizations to provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of Homelessness. 8/5/2019 approved P.L.2019, c.207.

A4632 Requires each county to establish County Homelessness Trust Fund. This bill requires that each county establishes a plan to address the housing needs of homeless persons within the county's jurisdiction by establishing a County Homelessness Trust Fund. Despite the efforts by all levels of government, private individuals, nonprofit organizations, and charitable foundations, the State's homeless population is unacceptably high. The creation of county homelessness trust funds will provide the additional funds necessary to aid homeless persons in finding permanent and affordable housing.

The bill also requires that the plan include a strategic local scheme to identify and address the needs of the homeless within the jurisdiction, including strategies to reduce the need for emergency room care, hospital care, law enforcement, foster care, and other social services associated with the homeless and homelessness.

10/22/2018 introduced, referred to Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee.

A5204/S3585 Establishes Office of Homelessness Prevention; appropriates \$3 million to DCA. 4/30/2019 approved P.L.2019, c.73.

Prepared by Robert E. McNulty, Sr.
Vietnam Veterans of America
New Jersey State Council
Veterans Homelessness