

KEEP PEOPLE HOUSED IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY



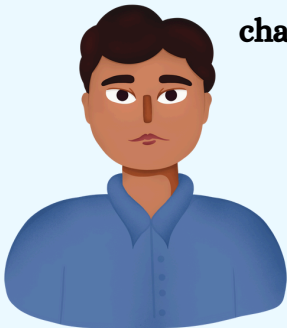
*New federal guidelines will cause major disruptions to
Middlesex County's efforts to end homelessness.*

From the Middlesex County Continuum of Care
Written by Lane Michael Stanley
Illustrations by Kennedy Ketcham

THE ADMINISTRATION'S NEW FUNDING GUIDELINES PUT PEOPLE AT RISK OF LOSING THEIR HOUSING IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

Every year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides billions of dollars across the nation to communities just like ours. These funds support a range of services dedicated to ending homelessness and empowering state and local community-based organizations to create change in their communities.

In 2025, after an executive order from President Trump stating the administration's new approach towards homelessness, HUD released funding guidelines that will dramatically disrupt programs that have been working in Middlesex County for years, **putting people who are currently housed back on the street and treating unhoused people as dangerous criminals instead of vulnerable humans with complex challenges.**



HOUSING FIRST WORKS IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

96%

**OF PEOPLE WHO ENTER PERMANENT
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY
ARE **STILL HOUSED** TWO YEARS LATER.**

*New HUD guidelines threaten the Housing First model that
has proven effective in Middlesex County and beyond.*

HOUSING FIRST & THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

In Middlesex County, we utilize a **Continuum of Care**. This is a collaborative of **organizations, government, and individuals** dedicated to ending homelessness in Middlesex County.

The spectrum of services in our coalition account for **every step** of a person's journey.

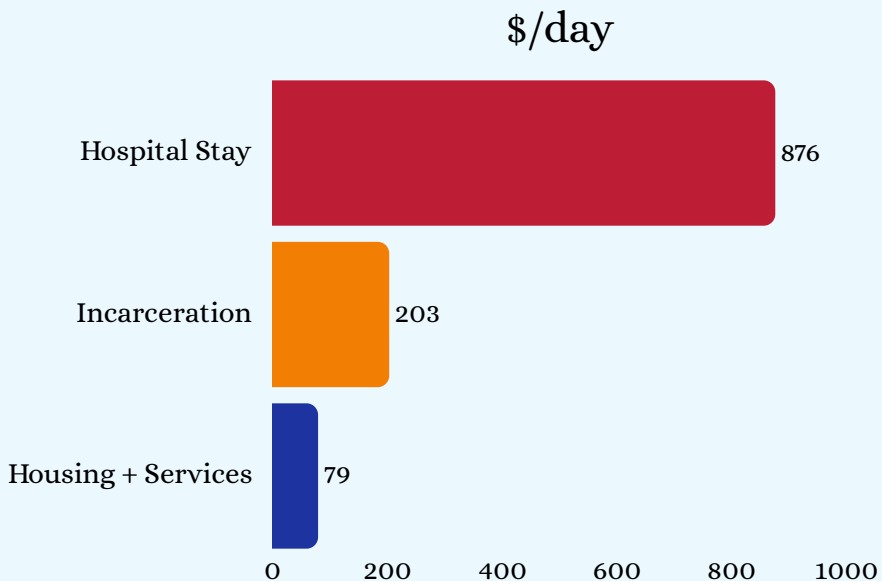


Housing First is the **person-first model** that the Continuum of Care uses to reduce homelessness in Middlesex County.

PRINCIPLES OF HOUSING FIRST

- 1 The root causes of homelessness are varied, complex, and multi-layered.
- 2 Homelessness must be approached on an individual level; because each person brings their own mix of challenges, their care and support must be tailored uniquely to them.
- 3 When people have stable housing, it becomes much easier to address their other ongoing concerns, such as mental health, physical health, substance use, job readiness, or financial literacy. It is therefore more effective to give someone housing first, rather than as a reward for making progress in other areas.

It is cheaper to house someone with full services in the state of New Jersey than it is to pay for their emergency room visits and incarceration.



IN HOUSING FIRST, RESOURCES ARE EFFECTIVELY USED AND COSTS SAVED BECAUSE:



Not everyone is required to go through the same services, ensuring that **services are specifically tailored to those who most need them** and people aren't required to enroll in programs or services they don't need in order to be housed.



Individuals can use the **same services as the rest of the community** for things like health, mental health, and substance abuse, rather than needing specialized services for people experiencing homelessness.



BEYOND THE ECONOMIC GAINS, HOUSING FIRST TREATS PEOPLE AS COMPLEX INDIVIDUALS—IT DOESN'T CRIMINALIZE, SHAME, OR PATRONIZE VULNERABLE PEOPLE.

FEDERAL ATTACKS ON HOUSING FIRST

Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issues funding guidelines for Continuums of Care across the nation to apply for federal funding. These guidelines are called the **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**.

The 2025 NOFO represents a **dramatic departure from Housing First** and harm reduction priorities, and **toward transitional housing and unfounded criminalization measures** that will put people back on the street when their housing supports end.

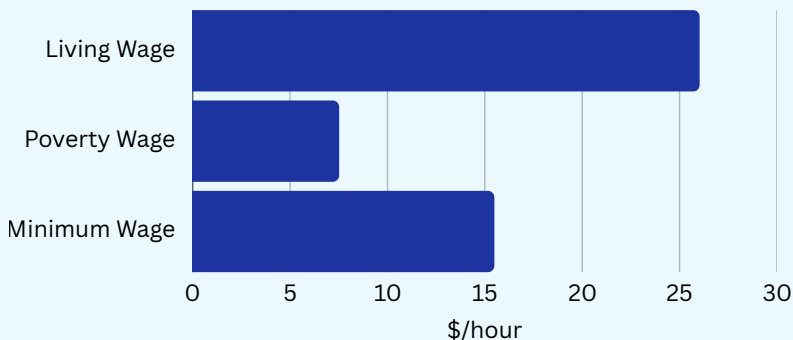
HOUSING FIRST VS. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Transitional Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing
2-year maximum stay	No maximum stay
40 hours/week work or service participation requirement	Work and services are tailored to an individual’s needs
Sobriety requirements, curfews, and other rules	Tenants must comply with their lease, but otherwise treated like any other tenant
Still considered homeless	Considered housed

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING EXPECTS EVERYONE TO BE ON THE SAME SCHEDULE, AND DOES NOT ACCOUNT FOR LARGER SOCIAL STRUGGLES.



Even in the best-case scenario when someone leaves transitional housing with a full-time job, **they still may not be able to afford housing in Middlesex County.**



Transitional housing **treats housing as a reward for jumping through the hoops of the program**, while permanent supportive housing treats people as people and meets them where they are.

LOSSES IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY

The 2025 NOFO requires that **permanent supportive housing represent no more than 30% of units.**



Middlesex County has 103 units of permanent supportive housing, representing 81% of the NOFO funding received, which totals \$2.9 million. This new requirement would **defund 65 units of housing, representing a loss of \$1.8 million**, and putting tenants at risk of eviction and a return to homelessness after being stably housed.



**WE STAND TO LOSE 63% OF
OUR PERMANENT
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS.
THOSE TENANTS WILL BE AT
RISK OF EVICTION AND
RETURNING TO
HOMELESSNESS.**

FUNDING CONTINUITY IS ENDANGERED IN THE NOFO

While the Continuum of Care has to apply for new funding each year, HUD has previously understood the importance of **consistently funding community organizations** so that service providers can keep their relationships with people experiencing homelessness.

In the past, the Continuum of Care has been able to **prioritize 90% of their funding for automatic renewal**. The remaining 10% was decided through the competitive process of the grant.

PREVIOUS YEARS

90%
Continuous
funding ↴



10%
uncertain ↴

THIS YEAR

30%
Continuous
funding ↴



70%
uncertain ↴

This year, **only 30% of funds can be submitted** for automatic renewal, with a full 70% left uncertain.

This represents a potential **loss of over \$2.4 million** in Middlesex County.

THE NOFO USES THIS ADMINISTRATION'S “BOOGEYMEN” TO CREATE FEARS AROUND HOMELESSNESS.

HUD will **award extra points** in application evaluation to organizations that:

- Collaborate with law enforcement around criminalization measures such as public camping bans, **asking social workers to help police punish people for having nowhere to safely stay or sleep.**
- **Track immigration status** and collaborate with immigration authorities.

HUD threatens to **deny funding** to organizations that:

- Recognize and try to **address the racial inequities** in who becomes homeless.
- Engage in activities that “violate the sex binary in humans” (meaning, **providing gender-affirming spaces for trans people**).
- Utilize **harm reduction measures**, such as providing life-saving naloxone, teaching safe use of needles, or offering needle exchanges.
- Have a **proven history** of showing racial preference or violating the sex binary—meaning, even though organizations were required to report on their diversity efforts in past applications when those efforts aligned with HUD’s priorities, those same applications could now get them disqualified from future funding.

YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THIS NOFO FROM PUTTING PEOPLE ON THE STREET IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

Congress will be meeting in January to pass a new resolution. They have the power to **tell HUD to stop this NOFO**.

On 12/8/25, HUD withdrew the NOFO and said that they would re-issue it later. This will **further delay ALL funding**, making even more households at risk of losing their current housing.

Even if the administration doubles down on the priorities in this NOFO, **delaying this shift by a year** would give communities like ours time to prepare—and hopefully prevent devastating losses.

Your representatives can **require HUD to automatically renew all funding for 2025**, empowering communities for another year to continue their work toward ending homelessness. This is a **no-cost provision** that will prevent service disruptions, loss of trust, and evictions of currently housed people.



YOU CAN USE 5CALLS.ORG OR USA.GOV TO IDENTIFY AND CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT THIS CRITICAL ISSUE.

You can make a difference by reaching out to your two US Senators and your Congressperson to **let them know your concerns about this issue** and **your hope not to see people in your community return to homelessness**.

For More Information: CoCAvocado@co.middlesex.nj.us