



State of New Jersey

**CHRIS CHRISTIE**  
Governor  
**KIM GUADAGNO**  
Lt. Governor

**JENNIFER VELEZ**  
Commissioner

**RICHARD CONSTABLE**  
Commissioner

January 3, 2013

Honorable Chris Christie  
Governor  
State of New Jersey  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie:

Executive Order 92 created the Interagency Council on Homelessness (the Council) which requires that an Annual Report be submitted to the Governor. As Co-Chairs of the Council, we are pleased to submit this report.

The Council began its work during the last quarter of calendar year 2012. The report provides details of each Council meeting, as well as a look ahead to 2013. Members of the Council were provided with useful and resourceful information, which will help with their deliberations.

We are available to answer any question you may have on this report or the Council.

Sincerely,

Richard Constable, Co-Chair

Jennifer Velez, Co-Chair

RC:JV:jc  
Enclosure  
c: Deborah Gramiccioni  
Anthony Welch  
Rosemary Iannacone

# **Annual Report of the New Jersey Interagency Council on Homelessness**

**Respectfully Submitted to Governor Chris Christie**

**By**

**Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III, Co-Chair**

**and**

**Commissioner Jennifer Velez, Co-Chair**

**December 28, 2012**

Pursuant to Executive Order 92, Commissioners Constable and Velez submit this first annual report of the New Jersey Interagency Council on Homelessness.

On April 18, 2012, Governor Chris Christie signed into law Executive Order 92 creating the New Jersey Interagency Council on Homelessness, as part of the Administration's commitment to caring for homeless individuals and families, who are among the State's most vulnerable residents. The Interagency Council on Homelessness (the Council) was established within the Department of Human Services with 15 public members, and 11 state agency representatives who serve ex-officio.

The Council's duties and responsibilities include:

- Reviewing the findings contained in the Interim Report of the Council on Preventing and Reducing Homelessness;
- Identifying and evaluating the statutory and regulatory impediments to the effective delivery of services to homeless individuals and families;
- Providing recommendations to improve relevant laws, programs and policies to better utilize state resources directed to homelessness and homelessness prevention;
- Preparing a 10-year plan to end homelessness in New Jersey; and,
- Reporting annually to the Governor on the Council's work and progress until the Council's charter expires on December 31, 2014.

The first year of operation was devoted to providing the Council with a framework and context to support their charge of preparing the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. To that end, the 2012 meetings were structured to educate the Council on the scope of the problem in New Jersey, the organization and condition of the State's service delivery system, and to provide an examination of practices employed in other jurisdictions. Council members listened to presentations by experts who came from the federal government, national experts, and New Jersey state agencies.

At the close of 2012 the Council has a good sense of the government programs that are available and those that are being successfully implemented elsewhere. This introduction has set the stage for more in-depth discussion within a common context and understanding.

The Department of Human Services created a web page specifically for the Council and members of the public interested in the work of the group: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/news/hottopics/approved/homelessness.html>. This page contains the presentations of guest speakers and useful resources to support the work of the Council.

The first meeting of the New Jersey Interagency Council was held on Tuesday, September 25, 2012, at the Department of Human Services. Led by its co-chairs, Commissioners Constable and Velez, the Council members and state agency designees reviewed the terms of Executive Order 92. The meeting proceeded with introductions, recognizing the diverse representation of constituent agencies among the Council. Council members were asked to review the documentation found on the Council webpage and begin to think of their charge in the context of the presentations to be offered through 2012.

Laura Zeilinger, Director of National Programs and Field Support at the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, provided an overview of "Opening Doors," the federal ten year strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. Information on the US Interagency Council and a copy of "Opening Doors" can be found at <http://www.usich.gov>. A link to "Opening Doors" has also been included on the Council webpage.

The second meeting of the Council was held on October 16, 2012, as part of the Governor's Conference on Housing and Economic Development. The conference offered several sessions that focused on housing vulnerable populations, including those who are homeless. Through the conference, Council members were afforded the opportunity to hear from a panel of national experts on homelessness. The session was moderated by Commissioner Velez and panelists included: Jeremy Rosen, Policy Director, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty; Sharon McDonald, Director for Families and Youth, National Alliance to End Homelessness; and Joan Montbach, Ph.D., Senior Advisor to the President/Vice President of Policy and Communications, Palladia, Inc. A podcast of the session was created and made available on the Council webpage.

A third meeting was scheduled for November 20, 2012. However, disaster recovery activities ongoing at both the DHS and DCA and the general disruption caused by Super Storm Sandy necessitated the cancellation of that meeting. The third meeting of the Council took place on December 11, 2012, and followed the agenda designed for the November meeting. The focus of that meeting shifted from the national to the state level. The Departments of Community Affairs (including the Housing Mortgage Finance Agency), Education, and Human Services provided the Council with data on State programs and details of new initiatives to address homelessness. These presentations included statistics on capacity and people served.

The December 11, 2012 meeting concluded with a discussion of the objectives for calendar year 2013 and the formation of subcommittees to begin a deeper analysis of different aspects of homelessness in New Jersey. Three subcommittees were formed on intergovernmental coordination, effective housing models and current practices, and unique needs and challenges of specialized populations. Subcommittees were charged with meeting independently in order to examine the issues in each of these topic areas. Meetings of the subcommittees will take place throughout calendar year 2013.

The Council will regroup on January 15, 2013, with additional state department presentations and an opportunity for Council members to present on their area of expertise. The membership presentations will focus on services at the county and local level. With the local level information, the foundation for the work of the Council through the next calendar year will be set. We look forward to a productive 2013.