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## Advocates Launch Campaign to Renew New Jersey Special Needs Housing Trust Fund

by Michael Anderson // 2013, Winter



More than forty organizations across New Jersey have endorsed the HOME for New Jerseyans—a plan to create housing for residents with special needs and to end homelessness. While the plan suggests several steps New Jersey could take to use current housing resources to subsidize permanent supportive housing with support services, the campaign suggests the first thing to do is to renew the Special Needs Housing Trust Fund.

*“The Special Needs Housing Trust Fund has proven it can help end homelessness and create housing for all New Jersey residents with special needs. We have embarked on a campaign to get it renewed and will continue until we are successful,”* said Arnold Cohen, Policy Coordinator for the Housing and Community Development Network.

The Special Needs Housing Trust Fund was signed into law in 2005. It authorized the issuance of \$200 million in bonds to create housing for people with special needs and the homeless. The Fund has spent almost all of these funds on supportive housing for persons with disabilities throughout the state of New Jersey. And as of Fall 2011, the Special Needs Housing Trust Fund is closed to new projects.

The program, administered by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, has helped create quality affordable housing with needed supportive service for more than 2,000 families and individuals.

The Special Needs Housing Trust Fund provided financing for permanent, affordable and supportive housing for persons with special needs including the homeless across New Jersey. Among the 178 developments supported are:

- Life Link in Glassboro, which developed permanent supportive housing for thirty young adults (ages 18-21) who aged out of foster care or were homeless. Robins’ Nest, Inc. provides supportive services for the youth. The developer leveraged 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

- Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey, Inc. constructed a four unit independent living residence in Neptune City for people with special needs.
- Eva’s Village developed a 50-unit housing project with affordable rentals and 26 supportive housing units set aside for homeless and those with special needs. The project leveraged Low Income Housing Tax Credits as well as other resources as a match to funds from the Trust Fund.
- Community Hope created supportive housing facility in Morris County for four mental health consumers.

Kraft Foods Foundation and KaBOOM supported a new playground at Eva’s Village in Paterson. Children, living at Eva’s affordable apartments, were involved in creating a dream playground.



For New Jersey, the Special Needs Housing Trust Fund’s \$200 million investment leveraged another \$200 million in total housing investments. The activities supported created 8,800 one-time jobs, including both construction jobs and related secondary jobs—these workers earned \$576 million in total income and paid \$12.4 million in state income taxes. Purchases of construction materials and spending by the workers hired generated another \$14.4 million in sales tax revenues for the state.

Adding these homes to New Jersey communities has long term benefits by generating 1,600 on-going jobs, \$1.76 million per year in state income taxes, and at least \$5 million per year in local property tax revenues. Over five years, the state and localities within the state will realize more than \$88 million in total sales, income, and property tax revenues.

The Campaign’s Finance sub-committee has begun investigating alternative sources of funds to restore the NJ Special Needs Housing Trust Fund. There is no plan or sources identified by State government, at this time.

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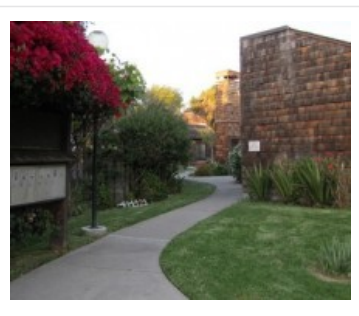
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