The purpose of the New Jersey Housing Navigation project (NJHNP) is to improve access for the most economically challenged households in NJ to available permanent and affordable housing through improved quality of services and program coordination.

Navigation services, broadly defined, assist individuals and families in identifying and securing permanent and affordable housing. Navigation services are often provided as a point of exit from homelessness and can address many of the barriers experienced by households who are low-income and may have other specific needs.

The NJHNP will operate over three phases over an 18-month period. Phase one of the project includes researching housing navigation practices from around the United States including the local area. Focus groups conducted with New Jerseyans with lived experience and conversations with a range of statewide organizations will assess successful strategies and also barriers to service delivery. This research will guide our work to develop a set of housing navigation best practices, resources and a toolkit designed to help organizations improve housing outcomes.

In phase two, we will establish a multi-sector housing navigation collaborative working over the course of several months to identify changes and opportunities for shared resources and coordinated services. In tandem with the work of this group, we will develop a set of guidelines to help support a range of NJ housing navigation programs.

Finally, in phase three, members of the collaborative will adopt and evaluate appropriate changes in housing navigation services as indicated in the guidelines. This trial implementation phase will help develop final recommendations for housing navigation funding, and procedure and policy improvements guiding efforts to increase access to permanent affordable housing for individuals and families throughout NJ.

The SHANJ project team is led by Kate Leahy: Kate.Leahy@shanj.org and supported by additional SHANJ staff. SRS Strategic Associates, consultant on the project, is conducting the national research. The project resources will be housed on SHANJ’s website.

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