

N.O.W. CAMDEN



Camden County in Focus
Housing & School Funding
Justice Complex Debate
Youth & AI Literacy
Nonprofit Spotlight: VOA,
Library, Project HOPE

A COMMUNITY JOURNAL FOR CAMDEN COUNTY

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

N.O.W. Camden was created to offer residents of Camden County a clear, balanced view of the issues shaping our communities. This journal is not built on urgency or outrage. It is built on attention — to policy, infrastructure, neighborhood concerns, and the people who live here every day.

Across the county, conversations are unfolding about housing, schools, public safety, development, and access to opportunity. These conversations deserve space that is measured, accessible, and grounded in facts.

Issue 1 brings together civic updates, nonprofit spotlights, and forward-looking discussions about youth and technology. Our commitment is simple: document what is happening, clarify how it affects daily life, and create room for informed dialogue.

As we move into spring 2026, Camden County stands at a point of transition — balancing growth, investment, and long-standing challenges. We intend for this publication to serve as a steady civic lens each month.

Thank you for reading.

L. Robinson
Founder & Publisher
N.O.W. Camden

A large suspension bridge, likely the Bix Creek Bridge, spans across a body of water. The bridge's steel structure is a light blue-grey color. The sky is filled with soft, white and grey clouds, and the sun is setting, creating a warm, golden glow on the horizon and reflecting on the water's surface. In the background, a city skyline is visible across the water. The text "CAMDEN COUNTY IN FOCUS" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

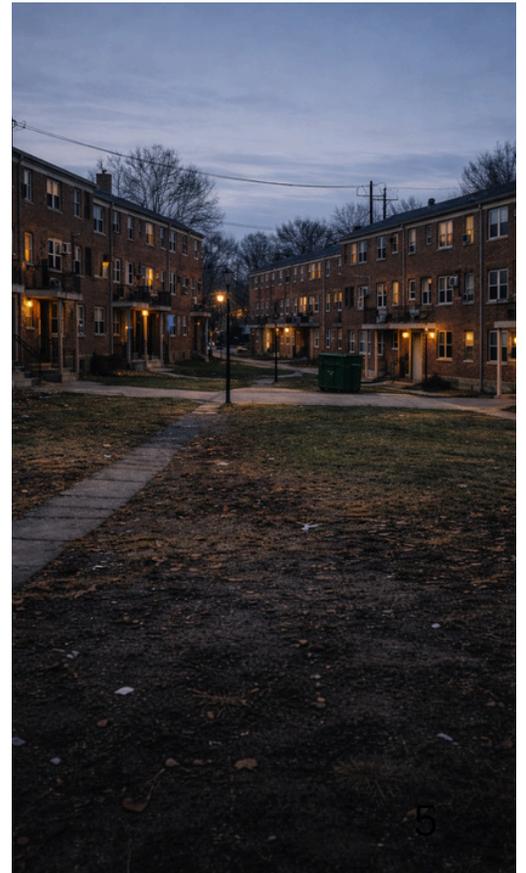
CAMDEN COUNTY IN FOCUS



Immigration Enforcement Incident Raises Community Concerns in Lindenwold

Residents respond after federal immigration enforcement activity near a school bus stop

On the morning of February 12, a federal immigration enforcement operation took place at the Woodland Village Apartments in Lindenwold. According to residents and local reports, elementary school students waiting at a nearby bus stop ran from the area after word spread that immigration officers were present. Some neighbors recorded video as children dispersed and returned toward their homes. Federal agents were reportedly seeking one individual at the complex. No arrest was made, and officers left the area after a brief period.



The incident prompted renewed discussion across Camden County regarding how federal immigration enforcement actions intersect with residential communities — particularly when children and schools are involved.

County officials have previously stated that local law enforcement agencies do not coordinate with federal immigration authorities on routine civil immigration matters. Camden County also ended the practice of honoring federal immigration detainer requests at its correctional facility several years ago.

In recent years, state and local leaders have discussed strengthening “safe zone” policies around schools, houses of worship, healthcare facilities, and legal service providers. These measures are designed to clarify when and where immigration enforcement actions may occur. For many families — including mixed-status households — the Lindenwold incident has underscored ongoing uncertainty about the scope of federal authority in local neighborhoods. Community organizations in the region continue to provide legal information sessions and know-your-rights resources for residents seeking clarity.

N.O.W. Camden will continue to follow developments related to community safety and civic policy in Camden County.



Camden County Rethinks Site for \$1 Billion Justice Complex

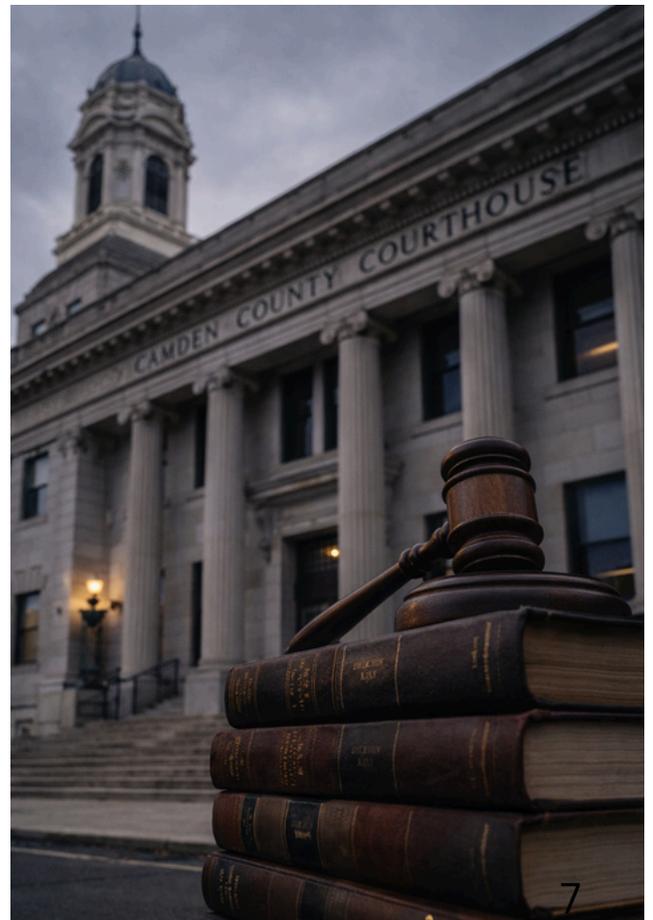
County officials search for alternative location after resident opposition in Winslow Township

Camden County officials are reassessing the location of a proposed regional justice complex following significant community response in Winslow Township.

The project, which has been discussed as a modernized replacement for the county's existing correctional facility in Camden City, could include a 2,000-bed jail, court space, and related administrative functions. Early conceptual plans also referenced possible office or ancillary development components.

At recent public meetings, hundreds of residents voiced opposition to locating the complex in Winslow Township. Concerns raised included environmental impact, long-term community effects, traffic, infrastructure strain, and broader questions about investment priorities.

County leadership has stated that the current jail facility is aging and costly to maintain. Officials have emphasized the need for updated infrastructure, improved technology, and long-term operational efficiency.



They have also described the proposal as part of a broader modernization effort within the county's justice system.

Opponents of the plan have questioned whether expanding correctional capacity aligns with long-term public safety goals. Some residents and advocacy groups argue that additional funding should be directed toward behavioral health services, housing stability, youth programs, workforce development, and violence prevention initiatives.

The proposal has prompted a broader discussion across Camden County about incarceration, public safety strategy, and how major public investments shape community outcomes. While some view the project as necessary infrastructure replacement, others see it as an opportunity to reconsider how justice resources are allocated.

At this stage, no final site has been selected. County officials have indicated that additional review and public input will be part of the process moving forward.

As the conversation continues, residents across Camden County are engaging in an ongoing debate not only about location, but about direction — and what long-term safety and stability should look like for the region.



County Services Under Pressure After 'Worst Storm in a Decade'

Camden County continues recovery efforts following what officials described as one of the most significant winter storms in recent years.

In the immediate aftermath, county and municipal crews worked extended shifts to clear primary roadways, remove downed trees, and respond to service calls involving power lines and blocked streets. As snow and ice recede, public works departments are shifting focus toward debris removal, road repairs, and addressing potholes created by freeze-thaw conditions.

Residents may notice temporary lane closures, adjustments to trash and recycling schedules in some areas, and ongoing infrastructure repairs throughout March.

Beyond visible road work, the storm placed additional demands on emergency management systems, 911 dispatch, and social services.



Code Blue alerts were activated during periods of extreme cold, prompting expanded outreach and warming center operations for residents experiencing housing insecurity. Service providers report that demand for shelter space, replacement food, medications, and other essentials often remains elevated after severe weather events.

School closures and delayed openings also created short-term disruptions for families, particularly those reliant on hourly wages or childcare coordination. Medical appointments and transportation services required rescheduling in many cases, adding strain to already busy service networks.

Severe weather events often serve as a stress test for local infrastructure and communication systems. County agencies continue to evaluate response timelines, resource allocation, and public notification processes as part of standard post-storm review procedures.

Recovery efforts are expected to continue into March as municipalities complete cleanup operations and assess longer-term infrastructure needs.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

Organizations working across Camden County to provide housing, reentry, and essential services.



DELAWARE VALLEY

A One-Stop Door on Federal Street

How Volunteers of America Delaware Valley connects Camden County residents to housing, reentry, and recovery support.

For Camden County residents facing housing instability, reentry challenges, or difficulty accessing public benefits, one of the most direct entry points into help is located at 1812 Federal Street in East Camden.

The Navigational Resource Center operated by Volunteers of America Delaware Valley (VOADV) is designed as a walk-in resource hub. Unlike many programs that require referrals or lengthy intake processes, the center is open to the general public. Residents can walk in without knowing exactly which program they need and begin building a plan.

Case managers assist with obtaining identification, restoring or enrolling in public benefits, and connecting individuals to housing programs, mental health services, addiction treatment, and employment resources. For many, the center transforms uncertainty into direction.

The Federal Street office is intentionally co-located with VOADV's Safe Return reentry services, ensuring that individuals returning from incarceration — as well as families experiencing housing crises — can access multiple forms of assistance in one place.

Housing and Emergency Support

VOADV operates several emergency housing and shelter programs serving Camden County residents, including single adults, families, and veterans experiencing homelessness.

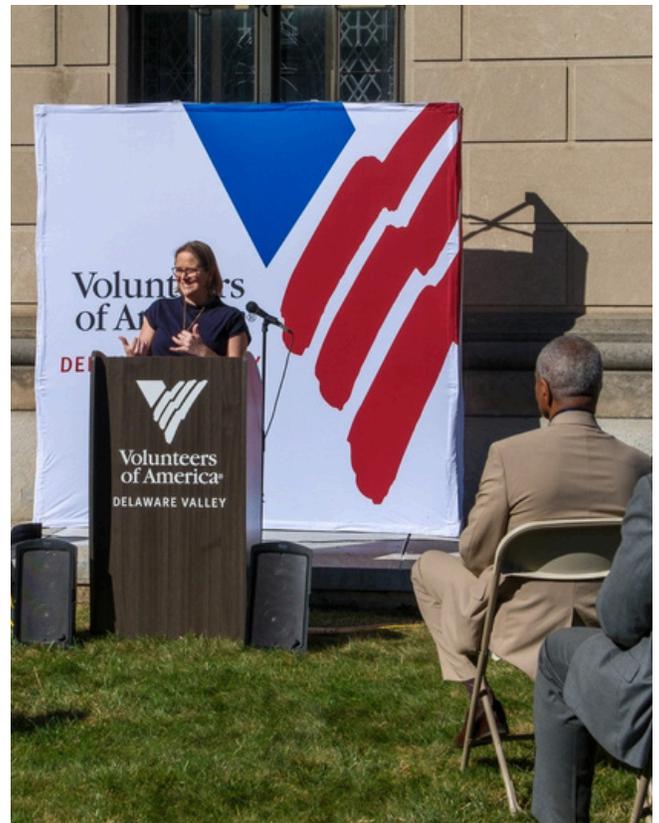
Programs such as the Aletha R. Wright “Vision of Hope” Center and Home for the Brave in Camden provide low-barrier shelter, case management, and connections to permanent housing. These services are designed to move individuals from immediate crisis toward longer-term stability.

Emergency shelter is paired with individualized service planning, helping residents address documentation needs, employment barriers, and health concerns while working toward permanent housing solutions.

Supportive and Affordable Housing Beyond short-term shelter,

VOADV has developed supportive and affordable housing options intended to help individuals and families remain stably housed.

In North Camden and surrounding communities, properties such as Christine’s Corner and other supportive housing residences provide subsidized apartments along with ongoing case management. These programs are often geared toward individuals who were previously homeless and who meet income and disability criteria.



By pairing housing with consistent support services, VOADV aims to reduce repeated cycles of shelter entry, eviction, and displacement.

Reentry and Safe Return Services

VOADV is one of New Jersey's largest providers of reentry support for individuals returning from jail or prison.

Through Safe Return and related programs, staff assist individuals at the critical moment of release.

Services may include transportation from correctional facilities, assistance obtaining identification, benefits enrollment, housing referrals, and continued case management aimed at supporting long-term reintegration.

The presence of reentry staff at the Federal Street office allows residents and families to access support locally, reducing the need to navigate multiple agencies during an already complex transition.



Veterans Services

For veterans experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Camden County, VOADV operates veteran-specific transitional housing programs.

Home for the Brave, located in Camden, offers low-demand housing designed to accommodate veterans who may not fit traditional shelter models. The program works in coordination with VA partners to connect veterans to healthcare, behavioral health treatment, and benefits.

This approach seeks to address housing needs alongside medical, behavioral, and economic challenges many veterans face.

Specialized Services

VOADV also operates programs serving individuals living with substance use disorders, traumatic brain injury, and intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Addiction treatment services in Camden include outpatient and intensive outpatient programming, offering structured support for residents seeking recovery. When combined with housing and case management services, these programs provide an integrated pathway toward stability.



Why This Matters to Camden County

For many residents, navigating public systems can feel overwhelming. Losing identification, falling behind on rent, returning from incarceration, or experiencing a health crisis can quickly create a web of challenges.

The Navigational Resource Center provides a single starting point.

Instead of requiring residents to understand program eligibility or agency structure, staff help identify next steps and connect individuals to appropriate services — whether through VOADV programs or referrals to other community providers.

In a county where housing instability, reentry transitions, and access to care remain ongoing challenges, having a walk-in access point lowers the barrier to help.



HOW TO CONNECT

Navigational Resource Center

1812 Federal Street
Camden, NJ 08105
Phone: 856.671.6101

Walk-in navigation assistance for identification, benefits enrollment, housing referrals, and service coordination.

Safe Return Reentry Services

Phone: 856.833.0249
Email: SafeReturn@voadv.org

Support for individuals preparing for or returning from incarceration.

General Information

Main Office: 856.854.4660

Residents can call to inquire about housing programs, veteran services, addiction treatment, and supportive housing options.

Photo courtesy of Volunteers of America Delaware Valley.



More Than Books

How the Camden County Library System powers everyday life across the county.

For many Camden County residents, the public library remains one of the few truly open doors. On any weekday afternoon, a branch library might hold a mix of teenagers finishing homework, older adults printing forms, parents bringing toddlers to story time, and job-seekers filling out online applications. The Camden County Library System is not just a place to borrow novels — it is a quiet but essential piece of community infrastructure.

In an era when nearly everything has moved online — from job applications to housing assistance to medical portals — access to a reliable computer and internet connection is no longer optional. For residents without stable broadband at home, the library becomes the access point. Staff regularly assist patrons with creating email accounts, resetting passwords, uploading documents, and navigating government websites that assume digital fluency. For many, the library is where bureaucracy becomes manageable.

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Literacy, Learning, and Early Support

The traditional role of the library remains just as important. Children’s librarians build relationships with families through story times, reading programs, and homework support. For families who cannot afford private tutoring, enrichment camps, or paid activities, these free programs provide structured learning outside school hours.

Early positive experiences — checking out books, participating in reading challenges, being welcomed by name — can shape how children see themselves as students. In communities where educational resources vary widely, consistent access to a local library can help level the field.

Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

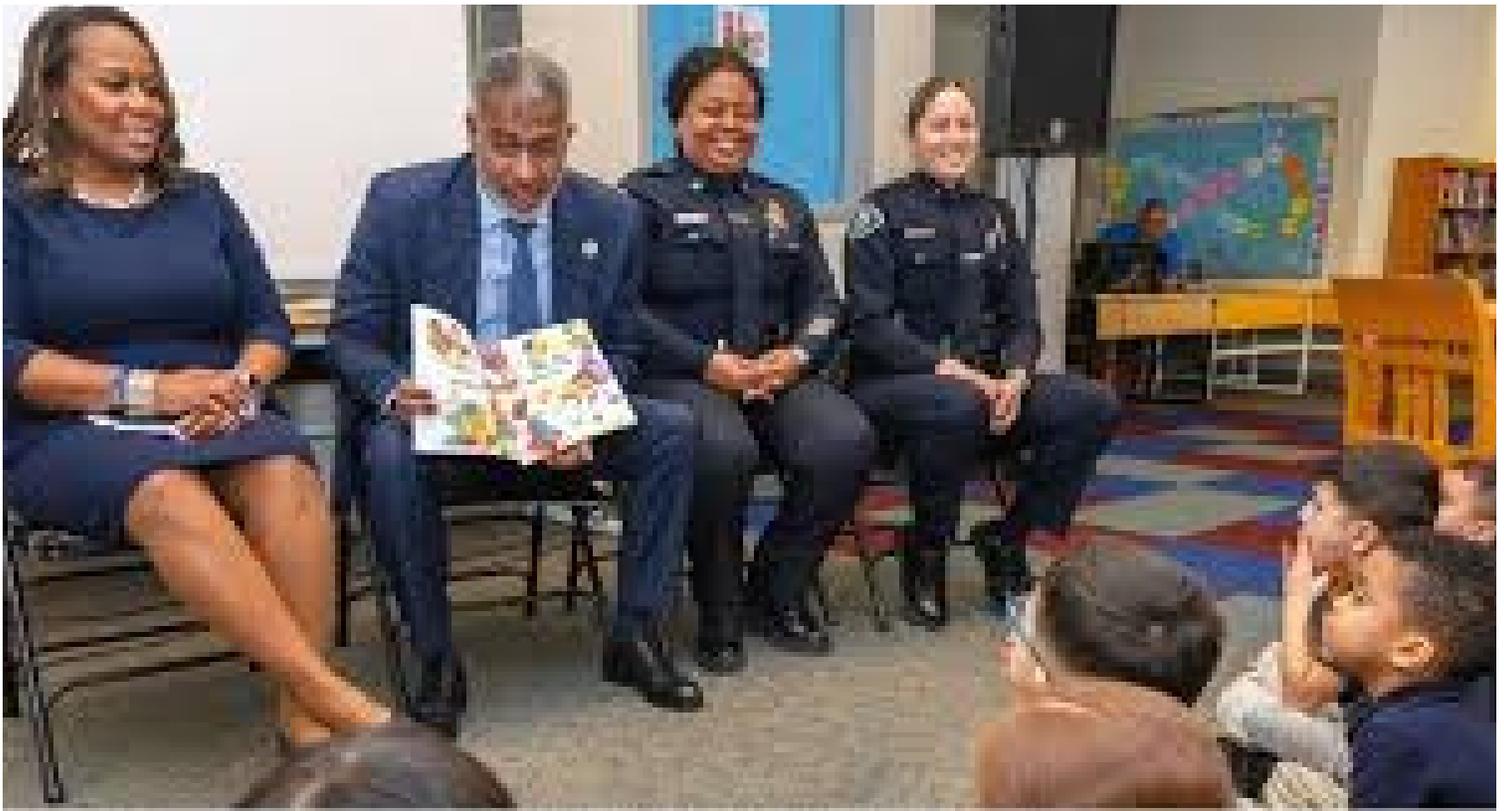
The Camden County Library System also serves adults pursuing new skills at every stage of life. Many branches host English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, citizenship preparation programs, GED support, and workshops focused on financial literacy, health education, and digital navigation.

For immigrants learning English, workers seeking credentials, or seniors trying to understand Medicare or online banking, these offerings are more than supplemental programming — they are pathways to participation in modern civic life.

Workforce and Practical Support

Libraries play a quiet but critical role in workforce development. Public computers are used daily to create résumés, search job listings, and submit applications that are increasingly online-only. Some branches provide résumé review sessions, interview preparation, and connections to local job fairs or training programs.

Even low-cost printing services can make the difference between completing an application or missing an opportunity. Staff often provide one-on-one assistance that goes well beyond basic reference work, helping residents move step-by-step through complicated digital systems.



Social Connection and Community Stability

For residents facing isolation — including seniors, caregivers, and individuals with limited income — the library offers something less visible but equally important: connection. Book clubs, craft groups, lectures, and public programs create regular spaces where residents can gather without financial barriers.

Simply having a place to sit, read, learn, or be around others without expectation to spend money can provide stability in communities where loneliness and stress are increasingly common.

Expanding Digital Access

The library's offerings extend beyond physical walls. With a Camden County library card, residents can access e-books, audiobooks, streaming services, research databases, and online learning platforms. Students preparing for exams, adults pursuing certifications, and lifelong readers alike benefit from resources that would otherwise require paid subscriptions.

Digital access has become a parallel branch — one that ensures residents can learn and explore even outside library hours.

Equity Across the County

The Camden County Library System serves a geographically and economically diverse region. Some branches operate in suburban settings; others serve neighborhoods facing higher levels of poverty and limited investment. Yet the same library card provides access to the same databases, collections, and programming countywide.

That uniform access represents a rare thread of equity. Regardless of ZIP code, residents are entitled to the same opportunity to learn, connect, and grow.



A System Under Pressure — and in Demand

Like many public institutions, the library system operates under ongoing budget constraints and rising demand. While some assume libraries are relics of another era, staff across the county report steady computer usage, strong attendance at programs, and consistent need for digital and social services support.

The question facing the system is not relevance — it is sustainability. As more aspects of daily life move online and public spaces become scarcer, libraries continue to absorb growing responsibilities.

For Camden County residents, supporting the library is ultimately an investment in shared infrastructure. Each open branch, each funded program, and each staff member assisting a patron reinforces a simple principle: access to information, technology, and community space should not depend on income.

In a county navigating economic pressures and digital transitions, the public library remains one of the most reliable foundations available.

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Health Care on the Front Lines

How Project H.O.P.E. brings medical and behavioral health services to Camden's most vulnerable residents.

In Camden, access to consistent health care can depend on more than insurance. For residents experiencing homelessness or extreme poverty, even keeping a medical appointment can be complicated by lack of transportation, unstable housing, or the daily need to secure food and safety.

Project H.O.P.E. (Homeless Outreach Program Enrichment) was created to address that gap.

Based in Camden, the organization operates as a federally qualified health center focused on serving individuals who are homeless or living on the edge of housing stability. Over time, what began as street outreach evolved into a full-service health provider designed around the realities of life without a permanent address.

Today, Project H.O.P.E. operates a primary care clinic, behavioral health services, and mobile outreach programs that bring medical care directly to shelters, encampments, and community sites across Camden.



Where They Operate

Project H.O.P.E.'s main health center is located on West Street in Camden, near several shelters and service agencies. In addition to the primary clinic, the organization operates:

- Satellite clinic services within partner agencies
- A mobile health van serving street locations and encampments
- Outreach teams that meet patients where they are

Patients often include individuals sleeping outdoors or in shelters, people temporarily staying with friends or relatives, and residents living well below the poverty line.

For many, Project H.O.P.E. functions as a medical home in situations where traditional health systems may be difficult to access.



Primary and Preventive Care

Project H.O.P.E. provides comprehensive primary care services, including routine checkups, chronic disease management, vaccinations, and treatment for common illnesses and infections.

Chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, and heart disease are common among individuals experiencing housing instability. Consistent care — including prescriptions and follow-up — can prevent minor issues from escalating into emergency situations.

The clinic also offers basic laboratory services and medication support, helping patients maintain continuity of care even in unstable living situations.

Behavioral Health and Substance Use Support

Mental and behavioral health services are integrated into Project H.O.P.E.'s care model. Counseling, psychiatric evaluation, and medication management are available for patients managing depression, anxiety, trauma, or serious mental illness.

Substance use treatment, including medication-assisted treatment (MAT), is also offered as part of a broader harm-reduction and recovery framework. Rather than requiring immediate abstinence, services are structured to meet patients at their current stage and support gradual movement toward stability.

Mobile Outreach and Street Medicine

One of Project H.O.P.E.'s most distinctive features is its mobile outreach program. Instead of relying solely on clinic visits, staff travel to locations where unhoused residents gather.

Through its mobile health van and outreach teams, Project H.O.P.E. provides:

- Basic medical assessments and wound care
- Vaccinations and health screenings
- Referrals to clinic-based follow-up care
- Assistance connecting patients to shelters and benefit programs

Street-based care often serves as the first point of contact for individuals who have gone years without seeing a medical provider. Consistent outreach helps build familiarity and trust, increasing the likelihood that patients will seek care when more serious health issues arise.



Part of a Broader Community Network

Project H.O.P.E. operates within Camden’s wider network of shelters, food providers, housing organizations, and reentry programs. Partnerships with local agencies allow health services to be integrated alongside housing and case management support.

For individuals navigating homelessness, that coordination can reduce the need to travel between multiple agencies and repeat the same intake information. Health care, housing referrals, and social services are often linked through shared communication and warm referrals.

Why It Matters

Access to primary and behavioral health care does not only affect the individuals receiving services. When chronic illnesses are managed, infectious diseases are treated, and mental health conditions are stabilized, broader community health improves.

Project H.O.P.E. serves residents who might otherwise rely on emergency rooms for episodic care. By providing ongoing, community-based treatment, the organization helps reduce strain on hospital systems while addressing health issues earlier and more consistently.

For Camden County residents experiencing housing instability or living with limited resources, having a provider structured around accessibility can make the difference between crisis-driven care and preventative support.



Raising a Digital Generation

Why AI literacy may become as essential as reading and writing in Camden County.

“I love teaching my daughters how to use AI to ignite their imagination by creating prompts.”

What begins as a simple exercise — typing a sentence into a digital tool and refining the wording — quickly becomes something more. It becomes a lesson in clarity, creativity, and critical thinking.

As they experiment with prompts and adjust their language, the results shift. Better questions produce better outcomes. Specific details generate more accurate images. In that process, artificial intelligence stops being mysterious and starts becoming understandable.

That small, guided experience reflects a larger opportunity for Camden County.

Artificial intelligence tools are increasingly embedded in education, business, health care, and communication. Exposure to these tools — paired with guidance — may soon become as foundational as learning to navigate the internet once was.



For communities that have historically faced gaps in digital access, early familiarity matters. AI literacy is not about shortcuts. It is about understanding how to think clearly while using emerging tools. It requires discernment, verification, and the ability to evaluate automated outputs critically.

When young people experiment with AI responsibly, they are not replacing effort. They are learning how to work alongside evolving technology — a skill that will shape the modern workforce.

Beginning March 8, a free weekly AI literacy session will be hosted each Sunday at 3:00 PM via the Church4TheChosen YouTube channel. Sessions will be pre-recorded and accessible to youth, parents, and educators interested in understanding how generative tools function and how to use them responsibly.

The goal is simple: remove intimidation, increase familiarity, and ensure that young people in Camden County are introduced to transformative technology with guidance rather than guesswork.

Artificial intelligence is advancing quickly. Access to understanding it should move just as quickly.

For the next generation, exposure paired with mentorship may prove just as important as access to the tools themselves.

THE HEALING LIBRARY

Free resources for survivors of
toxic and narcissistic abuse.

The Healing Library.

Available 24/7.

thechurchofrealtalk.com/the-n-o-w-healing-library/



Church of Real Talk | N.O.W. Movement

PUBLIC NOTICES & COMMUNITY CALENDAR

March 2026 | Camden County

Parking Rates

Up to 30 Min. \$ 5.00

21 Min to 1 Hr. 10.00

Daily Max. 30.00

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Camden County Board of Commissioners – Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

520 Market Street, 6th Floor Conference Room, Camden

Camden County Board of Commissioners – Caucus Meeting

Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

520 Market Street, 6th Floor Conference Room, Camden

EDUCATION

Camden County Educational Services Commission – Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 | 5:30 p.m.

Camden County ESC Offices

MUNICIPAL MEETINGS

Gloucester Township Council Meeting

Monday, March 9, 2026 | Evening Session

1261 Chews Landing–Clementon Road, Laurel Springs

Pennsauken Township Committee and Cherry Hill Township Council meetings follow their posted March schedules. Residents are encouraged to review official municipal websites for updated agendas and meeting times.

COMMUNITY EVENTS & HUMAN SERVICES

Say Yes to the Prom Dress

March 20–21, 2026

Camden County Boathouse

Free prom dress and accessory giveaway for Camden County teens.

Camden County Pet Food Pantry

Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Voorhees Animal Orphanage, 419 Cooper Road, Voorhees

Food Bank of South Jersey – Ongoing Community Distributions

Multiple Camden County locations including Coopers Poynt, Forest Hill, and Pennsauken.

Residents may use the Food Bank zip-code locator to confirm distribution dates and times.

Camden County Food Insecurity Resource Network

Year-round food assistance resources, including Oaklyn Community Food Pantry and Camden County Council of Economic Opportunity emergency vouchers.

Visit county resource pages for March partner pantry schedules.

LIBRARY EVENTS

Camden County Library System branches host story times, technology assistance, book clubs, and community programs throughout March.

Visit the Camden County Library website for branch-specific calendars and dates.

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Phone & Computer Tune-Ups

Patient • Local • No Tech Jargon

Is your phone slow?
Too many pop-ups or strange alerts?
Computer acting “not quite right”?

One-on-One Device Clean-Ups for Seniors

- Removal of junk apps, pop-ups & scam alerts
- Storage & speed clean-up
- Safety & privacy check



Simple explanations • No rushing, no pressure

— Pricing (Flat Rate): —

- Phone Tune-Up: \$35
- Computer Tune-Up: \$65
- Phone + Computer Bundle: \$90



Call or Text to Schedule:

518-291-9186

Appointments Available by Request

Friendly, Patient Help You Can Trust.



Coffee & Hope: Clarity Is a Peaceful Choice

A Community Conversation on Boundaries,
Healing & Emotional Strength

MARCH 7 | 11:00 AM — 12:30 PM

BELLMAWR BRANCH | CAMDEN COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

- Why clarity protects your energy
- How peaceful choices rebuild confidence
- The difference between forgiveness and access
- How to break emotional cycles without breaking yourself

FREE EVENT | OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Come as you are.

COMING IN APRIL

- Housing & Stability in Camden County
- Economic Development & Small Business
- Community Creators Spotlight
- Resource Expansion

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