

Grantee News

Policy Victories:

- Due to advocacy by the Education Law Center (ELC), the NJ Department of Education (DOE) and School Development Authority (SDA) announced a new round of funding – the 2016 Potential Emergent Projects program – for emergent needs (such as lead remediation, roof leaks, and boiler replacements). After elevated levels of lead were found in the water in Newark schools in May 2016, ELC wrote a letter demanding that the State pay for facilities improvements there, as required by *Abbott* litigation. Read more [here](#).
- Due to efforts by the Freehold Borough School District, Latino Action Network, and the Education Law Center, NJ Education Commissioner Hespero announced that the State would contribute \$28 million to new construction in Freehold Borough in order to alleviate overcrowding, with the Borough responsible for covering the remaining \$5 million. This comes eight months after an administrative law judge recommended that Hespero authorize the issuance of bonds to cover school facilities improvements. Freehold Borough School District and its partners petitioned the state to authorize the issuance of bonds or provide funds for construction after voters in the district voted down two local bond proposals. Read more [here](#).
- After years of advocacy and community organizing by the Ironbound Community Corporation, NJ Environmental Justice Alliance, Clean Water Fund, and partners in the Coalition for Healthy Ports, Newark adopted the Environmental Justice and Cumulative Impacts Ordinance in July 2016. The ordinance directs the City of Newark to develop a Natural Resource Index that details existing environmental conditions and related public health and demographic information, requires that an Environmental Review Checklist is submitted with major site plan applications that require permits from EPA or NJ Department of Environmental Protection or inclusion into the Essex County Solid Waste Management Plan, and allows for the Environmental Commission to prepare and submit a recommendation to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment after review of the Environmental Review Checklist. Read more [here](#).
- Due to advocacy by the Keep It Green coalition and partners, Governor Christie signed implementation legislation for the \$146 million in open space, farmland, and historic preservation funds allocated from the corporate business tax by a 2014 constitutional amendment. Governor Christie had initially vetoed the implementation legislation, citing a lack of funding for the Blue Acres program, but compromised with the Legislature after legislators added in funding for Blue Acres and threatened to overturn his veto. Read more [here](#).
- As a result of longstanding advocacy by Drug Policy Alliance, Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, and partners, Governor Christie in late August signed a law expanding the state's syringe access program from five pilot locations to statewide access and appropriating \$200,000 to purchase syringes to keep the existing programs operational. Read more [here](#).
- As a result of litigation by ACLU-NJ, the NJ Appellate Division issued a scathing decision in *Mejia v. NJ Department of Corrections (DOC)*, condemning DOC's excessive use of solitary confinement and calling on DOC to improve its mental health screening and translation services. Read more [here](#).
- Due to efforts by Fair Share Housing Center, NJ Superior Court Judge Douglas K. Wolfson rejected the conclusions of a study produced by municipalities that argued that properties that have sold for

more than \$300,000 and as high as \$500,000 meet NJ's definition of affordable housing. The judge also rejected the municipalities' attempt to redefine who qualifies as "low-income" in New Jersey. Read Fair Share Housing Center's statement [here](#).

Policy Setbacks:

- Governor Christie vetoed bills that would have increased TANF funding (NJ Policy Perspective, Anti-Poverty Network of NJ, and partners), incentivized breakfast after the bell (Advocates for Children of NJ), expanded preschool education (Pre-K Our Way and Advocates for Children of NJ), advanced gun control, made health care more accessible to uninsured people, restored funding for women's health clinics, and provided tax relief for seniors. Read more [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- In early 2016, the State Legislature approved a concurrent resolution to prevent the weakening of NJ's Flood Hazard Area Control Act regulations by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by arguing that the proposed rules violate the intent of the Clean Water Act and other environmental protections. NJDEP had 30 days to revise or withdraw its proposed rules; DEP made only minor revisions to the rules despite promising to rewrite the rules to address concerns over weakened protections for NJ's waters. The State Assembly approved a second resolution to invalidate DEP's proposed rules, but the State Senate did not follow suit. Instead, legislators and DEP reached a compromise that will continue to harm public health and safety. NJ Highlands Coalition, ANJEC, and partners have been active in this ongoing effort. Read more [here](#).
- The NJ Appellate Division ruled that municipalities are not obligated to calculate and zone for affordable housing needs that went unmet between 1999 and 2015 (the "gap period"), but must consider them in their future calculations. This ruling comes after years of advocacy and litigation by Fair Share Housing Center. The organization has argued that municipalities are obligated to zone for units that were not provided (about 200,000) during the gap period. Read more [here](#).
- Despite advocacy by the NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice, American Friends Service Committee, Faith in NJ, Wind of the Spirit, ACLU-NJ, and partners, Hudson County renewed its 287(g) agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The 287(g) program is a "voluntary federal training program for local jurisdictions to assist in identifying, arresting and detaining undocumented or potentially deportable immigrants." 287(g) program agreements have led to civil rights abuses around the country, and the number of jurisdictions participating in the program dropped from 77 in 2009 to 32 in 2016. Read more [here](#).

Policy Updates:

- Due to advocacy by ACLU-NJ and partners, S-51, a bill to restrict the use of solitary confinement in NJ's prisons and jails, was passed by the NJ Senate 23-16, and is now awaiting action by the NJ Assembly. If passed and signed into law, the bill would require facilities to use solitary confinement only as a last resort, prohibit solitary confinement for more than 15 consecutive days or 20 days in a 60-day period, ban the isolation of vulnerable populations, and require medical clearance and daily evaluations for prisoners in solitary confinement. Read more [here](#).
- Due to advocacy by Drug Policy Alliance, Anti-Poverty Network, and partners, a bill to require racial and ethnic impact statements for bills and regulations affecting sentencing was passed with overwhelming support by the State Senate. It currently awaits further action by the State Assembly. Learn about the bill [here](#).
- Due to advocacy by NJ Conservation Foundation, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association,

Eastern Environmental Law Center, Pinelands Preservation Alliance, and partners, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman introduced a bill to reform the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) approval process for natural gas pipelines. Read more [here](#).

- Due to advocacy by NJ Work Environment Council, State Senator Loretta Weinberg revived a bill to regulate the transportation of crude oil through NJ. The legislation would impose new rules on railroad companies in order to increase public safety and transparency. Read more [here](#).

Policy Reports:

- ACLU-NJ released *Police Accountability in NJ: A Blueprint*, which included five policy reforms to advance transparency, accountability, and an end to aggressive over-policing. The five policy reforms are as follows: 1) independent prosecutors and investigations when officers kill or seriously injure people, 2) body cameras for police with public access to the footage and privacy protections, 3) an end to policing of low-level offenses, 4) ending civil asset forfeiture seizures, and 5) increased transparency through the collection and public release of data from police departments. Read more [here](#).
- Advocates for Children of NJ released its *2016 Newark Kids Count* which tracks trends in child well-being in Newark, NJ. The report focuses on child poverty, births, child care, education, juvenile arrests, and family economics. Read the full report [here](#).
- New Jersey Policy Perspective released *Access to Financial Aid is Essential to Give Undocumented New Jerseyans a Better Shot at a College Education*. While New Jersey policy allows for undocumented students who attend a NJ high school for at least three years and graduate to pay in-state tuition rates at the state's public college, college remains inaccessible for many due to a lack of state and federal financial aid. Read the full report [here](#).
- Regional Plan Association released its *State of the Region's Health: How the NY Metropolitan Region's Urban Systems Influence Health* report. The report includes an analysis of how income inequality and segregation influence health in the region. Read the full report [here](#).

Events

- September 9— [Building a Consumer Health Care Movement for 2017 and Beyond](#) conference (NJ Citizen Action Education Fund)
- September 12— [Moving NJ's Communities Forward: A Critical Conversation about Race and Policing](#) (NJ Institute for Social Justice)
- September 14— [Showing Up Matters: The State of Chronic Absenteeism in NJ](#) (Advocates for Children of NJ)
- September 28— [Anti-Poverty Network of NJ General Meeting \(Health\)](#)
- September 30— [43rd Annual Environmental Congress](#) (ANJEC)
- October 7— [Finance Reform Summit](#) (NJ Citizen Action Education Fund)
- October 14— [NJ Spotlight On Cities 2016](#)
- October 21— [Housing and Community Development Network of NJ 2016 Annual Conference](#)
- October 28— [Anti-Poverty Network of NJ Poverty Summit 2016](#)
- November 16— [Anti-Poverty Network of NJ General Meeting](#)

Job Announcements

- Education Law Center—[Fundraising Coordinator/Administrative Assistant](#)
- Housing and Community Development Network of NJ—[Office Coordinator](#)
- Isles, Inc.—[Grant Writer](#)
- Isles, Inc.—[Job Developer](#)
- Isles, Inc.—[Urban Agriculture Coordinator](#)
- NJ Conservation Foundation--[Land Steward](#)
- NJ Future—[Development and Outreach Coordinator](#)
- NJ Future—[Program Coordinator](#)
- NJ Future—[State Policy Manager](#)
- NJ Institute for Social Justice—[Director of Philanthropy](#)
- NJ Institute for Social Justice—[Human Resources Administrator](#)
- NJ Work Environment Council—[Industrial Hygienist Consultant](#)
- NJ Work Environment Council—[Campaign Organizer, Stop Runaway Inequality Campaign](#)
- NJ Working Families Alliance—[Communications Director](#)
- Regional Plan Association—[Director, New Jersey](#)
- Regional Plan Association—[Planner, Community Planning and Design](#)
- Regional Plan Association—[Research Analyst, Transportation](#)
- Supportive Housing Association of NJ—[Executive Director](#)

The Fund for New Jersey's news updates will be distributed monthly. Please send policy news and updates, job announcements, and staff updates to Lucy Vandenberg at lvandenberg@fundfornj.org.