



The Fund for New Jersey

September Newsletter 2025

News from The Fund

In this month's newsletter we highlight our recent Crossroad NJ Conversations event, policy updates, and news from The Fund's grantee partners.

Crossroad NJ Conversations

We're thrilled to celebrate the success of our third *Crossroads NJ Conversation: The Future of the Environment and Transportation New Jersey!* The event kicked off with inspiring remarks from Brandon McKoy, president of The Fund for New Jersey, and featured a stellar panel including Peter Kasabach, Adriana Abizadeh, Tamara Toles O'Laughlin, and Doug O'Malley. We're deeply thankful to all the panelists who brought wisdom, passion, and expertise which centered on actionable solutions to some of our state's most pressing environmental challenges.

A special thanks to [Cathedral Kitchen](#) for hosting us and for the incredible work they do for the Camden community. Their dedication is a powerful reminder that strong communities are built through care, commitment, and action. Here's to continuing the conversation and working together to create a New Jersey we deserve!

If you missed previous events, we invite you to [watch the recordings](#) of the discussions.

Save the Date: *Crossroads NJ Conversation: The Future of Housing and Education in New Jersey* will open soon. Join us on October 15 in Princeton to discuss the future of education, housing, and land use in New Jersey, exploring strategies for equitable learning, growth, and sustainable community development. Register at www.fundfornj.org/crossroadsnj



Fellow Announcement

The Fund for New Jersey is thrilled to announce the hiring of its Leonard Lieberman Philanthropy Fellow, Beauty Okunbor. This two-year fellowship position is named in honor of New Jersey public policy leader Leonard Lieberman, who served The Fund with distinction from 1987 to 2015 and led the Board as Chair from 1997 to 2008. The Lieberman Fellow/Program Associate will learn about all aspects of the work of a private foundation and will work to address many of New Jersey's most significant policy issues.

Beauty Okunbor earned a dual master's degree in public policy and public informatics from Rutgers University, with concentrations in education policy, economic development, and the regulation of artificial intelligence technologies. Prior to joining the Fund, she served as a data analyst intern at the Department of Health and Human Services in Jersey City, where she supported data visualization efforts to inform public health initiatives. As a policy intern at the New Jersey State Policy Lab in New Brunswick, her research explored effective strategies for increasing AI literacy among K–12 educators. In addition to being an Eagleton Institute alumna, Beauty has legislative experience from her time as a policy intern at the New Jersey Senate Majority Office in Trenton.

Please join us in extending Beauty with a warm welcome!

What are we thinking about and what issues we are watching?

Summer may be coming to a close but the staff at the Fund are still trying to find ways to enjoy the warm days. For example, [Pinelands Adventures](#) is offering a variety of programs throughout September and The Turtle Back Zoo is hosting a [Sloth Social](#).

We have also been following a variety of issues at the state and federal level and wanted to share an article about a proposed change to New Jersey's State Police and enforcement of the Immigrant Trust Directive which could have major impacts on our immigrant communities. [Why N.J. lawmakers want to strip control of the State Police away from the Attorney General](#) (NJ.com)

Policy Updates

- **Asian American & Pacific Islander New Jersey (AAPI-NJ)** AAPI-NJ concluded their first Teach Asian American Stories (TAAS) workshop initiative in July. TAAS is a multi-day professional development workshop for New Jersey K-12 teachers designed to equip educators with knowledge of Asian American and Pacific Islander history to help them design curricula that meaningfully integrate these studies into the classrooms. TAAS is an offshoot of Bill S4021 signed into law by Governor Murphy in 2022, which requires New Jersey schools to create an AAPI curriculum. [Read more here...](#)
- **Green and Healthy Home Initiative (GHHI):** The Minneapolis Foundation, GHHI, and Philanthropy Northwest (Seattle, WA) won a lawsuit filed against the Environmental Protection Agency and its administrator for terminating a \$180 million grant that had been authorized by Congress in 2023 to support environmental initiatives across 15 states and 315 federally recognized tribes. [Read more here....](#)
- **Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey (HCDNNJ):** HCDNNJ and fellow housing advocacy partners celebrated the announcement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA) that \$35 million will be restored to the state's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, with an additional \$10 million allocated for Habitat for Humanity projects, and that the application process for development projects will reopen. This major win for New Jersey families and enables the Trust Fund is used for its intended purpose: creating and preserving affordable homes. [Read more here...](#)
- **Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey (HCDNNJ):** AmeriCorps VISTA members returned to service with HCDNNJ after a federal court last month halted the Trump Administration's attempt to dismantle the program. The legal decision ensures that AmeriCorps VISTA members can continue serving New Jersey communities. [Read more here](#)

- **New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA):** The NJ Environmental Alliance and partner groups responded to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) recent decision on Safety-Kleen's permit in Linden -the first ruling under the Environmental Justice Law since it was established five years ago. While recognizing the decision as a milestone, the groups argued that DEP misapplied the law by treating the application as an "expansion" instead of a "new facility". They also emphasized the need for stronger requirements, including cleaner trucks and boilers, continuous emissions monitoring, and better community engagement. [Read more here.....](#)

Grantee Reports

- **Asian American & Pacific Islander New Jersey (AAPI-NJ):** AAPI- NJ published its first "State of Language Access in New Jersey Progress Report", which reviews how state agencies are complying with the language access law enacted in January 2024. The report highlighted that several agencies still lacked a language access plan and often relied on machine translation tools like Google Translate instead of employing language access coordinators. [Read more here...](#)
- **New Jersey Center for Nonprofits:** The New Jersey Center for Nonprofits in its annual *NJ Nonprofits: Trends & Outlook 2025* report, highlighted that among 271 nonprofit organizations surveyed between February 7 and 21, 2025, the main challenges reported were financial uncertainty (65%), the potential impact of federal government directives (51%), need for a strong board (35%), and increased benefits/insurance costs (35%). [Read more here...](#)
- **New Jersey Future (NJ Future):** In its 2025 report on *the Mismatch Between an Aging Population and the Homes and Neighborhoods They Need*, NJ Future found that between 2000 and 2020, New Jersey's population of people age 65 and older grew to about 16.5% and is expected to reach nearly 23% by 2050. But many towns lack enough affordable, safe and senior-friendly homes, making it especially hard for older adults like the 60% of renters over 65 who spend much of their income on housing to find places to live that meet their needs and budget constraints. [Read more here...](#)

Events

- **September 4** – [Lead Free NJ Advocacy Coordinating Meeting](#) (Lead-Free NJ)
- **September 15** - [WNYC Democracy Day 2025](#) (WNYC/NJPR)
- **September 18** – [Progress Summit 2025: Guaranteed Income — Repair. Reimagine. Redistribute.](#) (New Jersey Policy Perspective)
- **September 20** – [FutureFEST: Climate Reimagined](#) (New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance)
- **September 26-27** - [Our Time, Our Power: A Participatory Democracy Learning Exchange](#) (The HUUB in Orange)
- **September 30** - [Disrupting Microaggressions Against Asian Americans: An Anti-Bias Workshop for Educators](#) (AAPI-NJ)
- **October 15** – [Crossroads NJ Conversations: The Future of Housing and Education in New Jersey](#) (Fund for NJ)
- **October 24** - [Under One Roof: The HCDNNJ Annual Conference](#) (HCDNNJ)

Job Announcements

- AAPI-NJ - [Multilingual Community Organizer](#) and [Development Director](#).
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation - [multiple positions](#).
- League of Women Voters NJ - [Director of Democracy](#), [Development Manager](#) and [Communications Associate](#).
- NJISJ - [Associate Counsel for Democracy & Justice](#) and [Associate Counsel for Economic Justice](#).
- WHYY - [Planned Giving Manager](#).

We welcome your policy updates, job announcements, and staff news. Please send submissions to Naeema Campbell, ncampbell@fundfornj.org or Alana Vega, avega@fundfornj.org for inclusion in our newsletter.

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