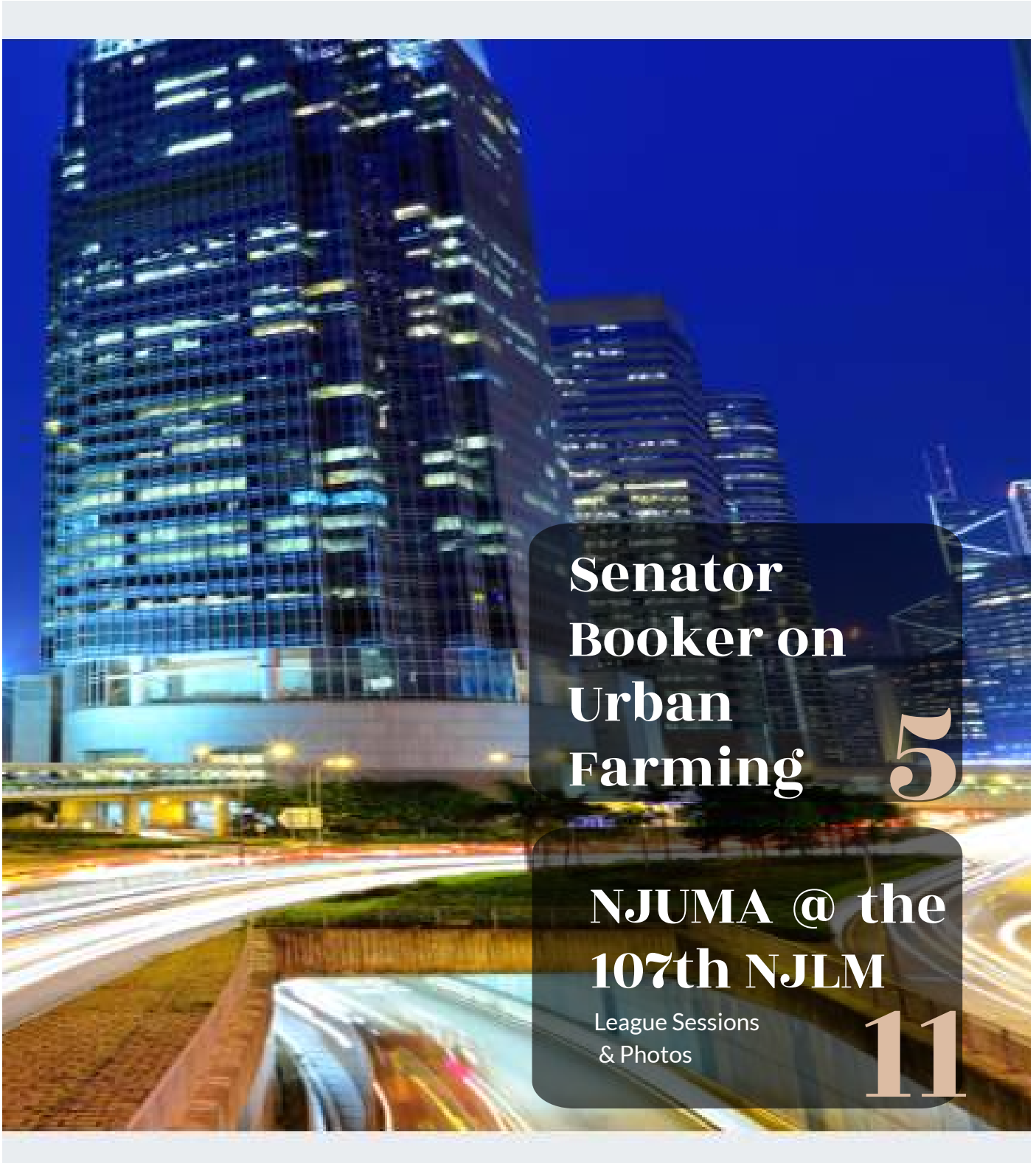




The Official Publication of the Urban Mayors Association

# URBAN MAYORS PRESS

WINTER 2023 | VOL. 7



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# President's Corner

## Dear New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) Members

**W**e have a lot to be thankful for this year! I would like to thank all of the NJUMA Mayors and their incredible staff for their dedicated service to collectively working together to strengthen our communities, and for working tirelessly to address the myriad of issues and challenges we face every day that impact our cities.

As we continue to grow, build, and thrive through these many obstacles that affect our communities, which included natural disasters and a global pandemic, let us reflect on our collective efforts with appreciation and gratitude to have such strong and committed colleagues and partners to work alongside to advance our state's urban centers.

In turn, I would like to thank every NJUMA member, our State legislative leaders, and all of our event attendees for making the NJUMA events at the NJ League of Municipalities Conference a success! I am grateful for the planning and attention to detail of Tenisha Malcolm, Barbara George Johnson, and all of the staff and students at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University for coordinating all elements of the NJUMA activities.

This year's Policy Breakfast offered our members a wealth of information, strategic direction, and resources from representatives from the Governor's Office and U.S. Department of Transportation. At the NJUMA League Session on homelessness, we had a robust discussion on the challenges communities face.

I especially want to thank Mayor Hector Lora from the City of Passaic; Michael Callahan, Director, Office of Homelessness Prevention, Department of Community Affairs;



### **We were honored to have Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver join our session to support the discussion ...**

Tashilee Vazquez, Economic & Community Development Director, City of Perth Amboy; and Joy Moses, Director, Homelessness Research Institute, National Alliance to End Homelessness, for their participation in this vital dialogue. We were honored to have Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver join our session to support the discussion and thank her for supporting all of our communities through some of our toughest times.

Many thanks to NJUMA Vice-Chair and Mayor of Plainfield Adrian O. Mapp and NJUMA Member and Mayor of Hillside Dahlia O. Vertreese, for participation on the Legislative Black Caucus panel, which focused on the value of fostering multi-level, community-oriented partnerships among elected officials.

This issue of the Urban Mayors Press features articles that provide a wealth of information and resources for your municipalities. Many thanks to Senator Cory Booker and my colleagues Mayor Gusciora of Trenton and Mayor Small of Atlantic City for their contributions to this issue.

I wish all NJUMA members and our community stakeholders, a very happy and healthy New Year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ras J. Baraka'.

Mayor Ras J. Baraka  
City of Newark  
President, New Jersey Urban Mayors Association



# about

The New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) is housed in the New Jersey Urban Mayors Policy Center at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University. The New Jersey Urban Mayors Policy Center coordinates all activities of the NJUMA and provides policy and legislative analysis. Established in 1991, the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association is dedicated to working with state and federal lawmakers and officials to develop appropriate and effective public policy measures that benefit the state's urban centers and to help lawmakers understand how public policy affects New Jersey's municipalities.

As an organization, NJUMA is comprised of 32 New Jersey urban and rural municipalities. NJUMA serves its members through meetings, policy retreats, and annual conferences which keep them informed on issues affecting their ability to provide adequate services to their residents. NJUMA also assists its members in interpreting legislation and state policy and works with the Governor's Office to assist in defining an urban policy agenda.

It uses a 7-Point Plan for Strengthening Cities, Families, and Communities as a guide for addressing the critical issues of its member cities. This plan is designed to aggressively address the areas of crime and public safety; education and positive youth development; environment and public health; family and community welfare; housing and economic development; tax reform and intergovernmental relations, and unfunded mandates.

NJUMA is a proactive organization that pursues opportunities from the government and the private sector to advance the interests of members. We are consistently exploring opportunities that will strengthen our communities and ultimately the state of New Jersey.




## Membership

- Asbury Park
- Atlantic City
- Bayonne
- Bloomfield
- Bridgeton
- Camden
- East Orange
- Elizabeth
- Hillside
- Hoboken
- Irvington
- Jersey City
- Kearny
- Lakewood
- Linden
- Millville
- Neptune
- New Brunswick
- Newark
- North Bergen
- Orange
- Passaic
- Paterson
- Perth Amboy
- Plainfield
- Pleasantville
- Roselle
- Trenton
- Vineland
- Wildwood
- Willingboro
- Woodbridge

## Message from the Editors

We hope you enjoy reading our Winter 2022 edition of the Urban Mayors Press! This digital newsletter is created to highlight the impactful work of New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) members and to provide resourceful information to municipalities throughout New Jersey from federal, state, and local agencies. Submissions to the Urban Mayors Press are edited and distributed by the **John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University**.

A Big Thank you to all our Contributors!







# Senator Cory Booker

## on Urban Farming

**M**y journey to the Senate Agriculture Committee - where I work with colleagues on expanding access to nutritious, healthy foods for all Americans—began in a place most people don't associate with agriculture: Newark, New Jersey.

As Newark's mayor from 2006 to 2013, I saw up-close how our food system harms people in communities like mine. At the start of my administration, Newark had few places to purchase healthy food. Fresh fruits and vegetables were often a bus ride away to neighboring towns, while cheap, processed foods that make us sick—subsidized by the American taxpayer—were abundant.

My administration set out to improve the landscape by attracting supermarkets to communities that hadn't had any in decades, including ShopRite and Newark's first Whole Foods. We grew more food in the city through community gardens and urban farms and brought it directly to residents through farm stands and farmers' markets. Mayor Ras J. Baraka and his administration have built on this progress and taken it to new heights as they've worked to keep healthy, nutritious food on tables, even amid the unprecedented hardships and disruptions caused by the pandemic.

During my time as mayor, one of my most fruitful collaborations was with the Greater Newark Conservancy to create urban gardens. When we worked together to open the Hawthorne Avenue Farm in the South Ward in 2012, I couldn't imagine the holistic impact this three-acre space would continue to have 10 years later.

Fresh produce from the farm is made available to local residents at farm stand locations, farmers' markets, and special events throughout Newark. People can also harvest their own fruits and vegetables directly from the farm's production rows. At a time of rising costs, the farm helps offset the grocery bills of Newark residents through direct product sales, food donations, and affordable growing space.

The Hawthorne Avenue Farm has also provided an opportunity to experience the power of "food as medicine" in treating diet-related diseases. On a recent visit, I spoke with a woman whose health improved dramatically after she incorporated the fresh vegetables she grew at the farm into her diet. Her doctor eventually took her off her several medications, thus saving her hundreds of dollars a year. Stories like hers are not uncommon. At a recent Senate subcommittee hearing, we heard from experts about how "food as medicine" programs that integrate nutrition and healthy eating for the prevention and treatment of diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure can lead to dramatic health benefits and greater economic opportunities for local communities.

I believe that the Hawthorne Avenue Farm, nurtured by the Greater Newark Conservancy, local residents, and volunteers, can be a model for other cities that have food deserts—areas where there is a dearth of affordable, nutritious food. For a decade now, this space has nourished people and added beauty to the neighborhood, a reminder that when a city invests wholeheartedly in the health and well-being of its people, the results can be enduring and transformative.

# Mayor Baraka's Editorial on Civilian Complaint Review Board

By Honorable Ras J. Baraka, Mayor, City of Newark

**"It is now time for New Jersey to take responsibility and make Civilian Complaint Review Boards available to communities that need it most."**



At the beginning of December, St. James AME Church in Newark held a town hall meeting with U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger, who had been invited by Pastor Ronald Slaughter, to hear the concerns of our community.

The subject that dominated the night was police brutality. Larry Hamm, the founder of the People's Organization for Progress, began the public session with this succinct comment. "I'm here tonight to express one concern and that is the issue of police brutality," Mr. Hamm said to U.S. Attorney Sellinger. "We want police brutality to end in our communities, in Newark, and across the state. And we feel that enough is not being done."

Mr. Hamm then proceeded to list the names of a dozen people killed, critically wounded, or beaten by police, with some cases dating back 32 years to the death of Bernard Placide, 22, who was shot in September by an Englewood police officer while convulsing in his bedroom, according to his family.

My administration has confronted police brutality in our community on many fronts, including constant training, accountability through on-person and in-car cameras, and transparency of our police internal affairs procedures.

In 2016, we passed a city ordinance to create a Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) with subpoena power and the ability to conduct investigations concurrent with police internal affairs probes to ensure even greater transparency of police brutality cases.



But it was met with opposition by our police union and wound its way through the courts until August of 2020, when the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled against us, saying state law prohibited giving our CCRB the powers we wanted. The court said only the Legislature could change the law.

That ruling came down less than three months after the brutal and inhumane murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, which ignited a passionate and exuberant national conversation about police reform and social justice. While cities across the nation were reimagining public safety in bold and creative ways, much more is needed at both the federal and state levels.

Here in New Jersey, five members of our Legislature did more than talk. They acted. The "Civilian Complaint Review Board" bill (A1515/S2295) was introduced earlier this year. This landmark bill was sponsored by Assemblywoman Angela V. McKnight, Assemblyman Benjie E. Wimberly, and Assemblywoman Shavonda E. Sumter in the Assembly, and Senators Ronald L. Rice and Shirley K. Turner in the Senate after the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled only the legislature or state attorney general could authorize municipalities to form CCRBs.

Their bill would allow New Jersey towns and cities to create vigorous, muscular Civilian Complaint Review Boards (CCRBs) with subpoena power to review police operations and conduct, as well as appropriate \$800,000 for this purpose.

## The critical components of this bill give CCRBs:

- Subpoena power to independently call witnesses and retrieve documentary evidence to carry out meaningful oversight of police.
- Concurrent investigatory powers to probe police misconduct cases parallel to internal affairs investigations.
- Guaranteed citizen representation of qualified community representatives to serve on CCRBs, chosen by the community and civic organizations.
- Disciplinary power to recommend appropriate action, including suspension or termination, for offending officers. Two years ago, after the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled an effort to create more police accountability in the city went too far. I stated, "The Supreme Court's action is out of step with national sentiment ... in a time where our nation demands justice and fairness, today's ruling was a shocking blow to basic humanity."

This bill has not had any action since being introduced in this Legislative session but has languished in Trenton for years. Since then, the bill's champion sponsor Newark's own Senator Rice who kept this fight alive retired in August and we will work tirelessly in his honor to ensure its passage.

The words I spoke two years ago now apply to our Legislature, whom I am calling on to swiftly pass a bill that, simply put, protects our people from police abuse.

As U.S. Attorney Sellinger's town hall proved, police actions are still a major concern in our communities.

In Paterson, strained relations between the public and police have risen to a point that Public Safety Director Jerry Speziale told NJ Spotlight News he would support a CCRB to calm tensions. We need to pressure our legislators to get this CCRB passed and put it in front of Gov. Phil Murphy.

I have written this before, but it is worth repeating: **The essence and the first responsibility of government is to protect residents against predatory forces from which they cannot protect themselves. It is now time for New Jersey to take responsibility and make Civilian Complaint Review Boards available to communities that need them most.**



# Youth Take Center Stage in Atlantic City

By Honorable Marty Small, Mayor, Atlantic City

Looking back on everything that was accomplished in 2022 in the great City of Atlantic City, and it was a lot, you can't help but reflect on everything the Small Administration was able to do for the community, especially Atlantic City's youth.

Mayor Small has always said our youth and senior citizens are our two most precious resources. It wasn't long ago, under a previous administration, the City of Atlantic City Recreation department was completely decimated. Most of the department was laid off. But Mayor Small rebuilt Atlantic City Recreation this year, then watched it take off from the ground running.

The city partnered with the NFL to bring a coed flag football league for the kids. To start, this was a summer program, but plans are already in place for NFL Flag leagues all throughout the year. This is in addition to the All-Sports camps AC Rec organized, that gives kids the chance to participate in their favorite athletic activities in the summer and after school, from basketball to dodgeball, to track, and so much more. AC Rec also found various ways to bring the entire community together, like with the first ever "Under the Lights" Homerun Derby and another first, the Three-Point Shootout competition. These community-driven events will become annual traditions.

But not all kids have an interest in sports, that's understood, so on top of reestablishing AC Rec, Mayor Small created an entire Youth Services division to give Atlantic City children the chance to experience the performing arts, nature and wellness, STEM and mentoring through summer camps and ACYS University this past fall, which consisted of afterschool programs designed to mimic the college experience.

Both AC Rec and the Youth Services division have been organizing trips regularly for the kids, that include Philadelphia 76ers games, a Temple Owls football game, Adventure Aquarium and the Battleship New Jersey, just to name a few. Never again under the Small Administration will you hear a parent say "there's nothing for my child to do."

The Small Administration has also been focused on work development for Atlantic City's older youth. It's not just about finding them jobs, it's about finding them careers. The second cohort of the Small Business Academy ended in the Fall. This free, ten-week course offered business training for Atlantic City residents with an interest in becoming entrepreneurs. The City also partnered with the Michaels Organization to give youth the opportunity to gain knowledge and train in the real estate construction field. Every student in that program has found employment. And the City worked with Atlantic City Electric to launch the Atlantic City Infrastructure Academy, a workforce development initiative that gives Atlantic City residents hands on experience in the energy field. The first class graduates early next year. Similar programs in other cities have a strong success rate for job placement following the completion of this program. We expect the same in Atlantic City.



Honorable Marty Small  
Mayor, Atlantic City







# Avoiding a Government Shutdown in Trenton

By Honorable W. Reed Gusciora, Mayor of Trenton

As 2022 ends, I'd like to reflect on the uniquely challenging environment for municipal governance that our administration faced in the City of Trenton this year. Governing without a city clerk, a council-approved budget, or a full council brought new and, at times, unprecedented challenges.

As the seat of state and county government, we already face an annual budgetary challenge due to the large number of tax-exempt properties that call Trenton home. Harvard Kennedy School researchers found that municipal services for the county and state properties coupled with the revenues lost on these properties impact the City of Trenton's annual budget by \$43 to 86 million.

First, Trenton went several months without a city clerk; a position appointed by the Trenton City Council. Without a city clerk, liquor licenses and business licenses were not being accepted. With businesses left in limbo, our administration requested that the Trenton City Council intervene in the renewal of more than 100 ABC liquor licenses; the Council did not act. So, our administration did. We worked with state agencies and issued executive orders to protect our small businesses.

Second, without a city budget, I issued executive orders to make emergency appropriations with the goal of avoiding a Government Shutdown.

In March 2022, the soon-to-be former Council President refused to hold budget meetings and was perfectly willing to shut the city down; in December 2022, the Trenton City Council continued to ignore their obligations. Despite consistent urging from the Department of Community Affairs to discuss the budget, the standstill continues.

Third, while the Trenton City Council normally consists of seven elected council members, the resignation of two council members, and the Council's appointment of only one replacement made passing legislation more difficult. Seven months, most of the calendar year has passed without a full Trenton City Council. Many New Jersey residents are familiar with the gridlock in Trenton; with one fewer councilmember, gridlock became a deadlock.

This year, we launched the city's Neighborhood Health Clinic, hired more than 260 city youth for summer jobs, and reduced the number of homicides by 47.5% through social interventions.

We demolished 300 blighted properties, revamped 60 city parks, and administered 180,000 COVID-19 vaccination doses. We reopened Hetzel Pool, unfroze millions in federal funding, and balanced the budget with no local property tax increases during the last three budget cycles. So much more could have been accomplished with a cooperative Council.

All politics is local: Constituents care most about issues that affect their lives. Trentonians care about the roads being paved. Trentonians care about receiving licenses on a timely basis to operate their new small businesses. Trentonians care about remediating brownfield sites and replacing them with parks. But what happens when key players in municipal government fail to perform their duties? Our administration acted, fulfilled the duties of others, and kept the city operating. A government shutdown was not an option: We had to keep the city moving forward.







**Honorable Helmin J. Caba**  
Mayor, City of Perth  
Amboy

# THE CITY OF PERTH AMBOY TO BUILD MENTAL HEALTH INTO EMERGENCY RESPONSES WITH A CO-RESPONDER PROGRAM

## The Office of the Mayor, City of Perth Amboy

The City of Perth Amboy is honored to be a grant recipient of the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance for \$550,000 through the Connect and Protect Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program.

Mental illness is considered an acute or chronic and diagnosable condition affecting an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being and behavior. These conditions include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and mood or personality disorders. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health conditions have been exacerbated. From September 29 to October 11, 2021, 28.6% of adults in New Jersey reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder. Over the past year, the Perth Amboy Police Department (PAPD) has received hundreds of EDP (Emotionally Disturbed Persons) calls. From May 24, 2021, to May 24, 2022, there were 609 EDP calls, averaging 51 calls per month.

The city is dedicated to providing services that will strengthen mental health awareness and community-related response calls while promoting treatment and recovery. As such, the city will implement a co-responder model as a collaborative effort between the City Administration, Perth Amboy Police Department (PAPD), and the Mental Health Association (MHA). The program aims to implement effective local law enforcement strategies to identify and reduce the risk of harm to individuals with mental health disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions, with evidence-based interventions to reduce recidivism.

A co-responder model is a critical tool for law enforcement when responding to people in a mental health crisis. With the combined knowledge and experience of police officers and mental health professionals, it links individuals with mental illnesses to appropriate services or provides other effective and efficient responses. This model provides officers with the resources necessary to respond to calls effectively and safely involving people in a mental health crisis. They can immediately meet the need of that person by providing on-scene crisis de-escalation, screening and assessments, and referrals to ongoing treatment by a mental health professional. This method has proven effective in various jurisdictions throughout the country, with reduced use of force, decreased arrests, decreased hospitalization/ER visits, and reduced officer time on scene. Communities with these models are also more likely to transport people to mental health treatment programs and resolve incidents informally and without arrest than officers in communities without. The PAPD and the mental health agency will effectively co-respond to calls. At the same time, it will also provide training, conduct after-action reviews, implement a full-time, on-site mental health professional program, and, most importantly, enhance PAPD efforts with experimental knowledge beyond the project period.



# Passaic Embraces Vertical Indoor Farming to Battle Climate Change

By Honorable Hector C. Lora, Mayor, City of Passaic

In November, I introduced the idea of Indoor Vertical Farming in the City of Passaic as an approach to tackle the effects of climate change. This ordinance was officially passed in December's Passaic Council Meeting. Indoor Vertical Farming is the practice and process of growing crops and produce in vertically stacked layers. It is the hope of my administration to repurpose old and unused industrial buildings in Passaic's urban community for indoor farming and being a part of a wholesome and nutritious food supply around the globe.

Climate change is a global issue that alarmingly affects urban areas because dense populations' utilize more power and therefore are the biggest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions. As the temperatures continues to rise, there are disruptions in the usual balance of nature and the outcome is very costly on the cities basic services, infrastructure, human health and livelihood.

Despite the limited open space available in urban cities, vertical farming is able to produce larger quantity of plants with less square feet space. Using local abandoned industrial buildings will reduce deforestation, transportation emissions, and food waste as well as making beneficial use from underutilized properties. During the pandemic, especially when we were doing food distributions, it has become evident that so many of the produce ended up spoiling because of transportation issues. Indoor vertical farming allows farmers to optimize their growing process since it eliminates disastrous weather, insect infestations and other types of hazards. Farmers are able to control their growth of crops using the farming techniques of Hydroponics, Aquaponics, and Aeroponics. This Controlled Environment Agriculture will increase crop diversity, supply chain collaboration, reduce costs, eliminate disease from the soil, and solve the increasing food demand and water scarcity through water recycling.



To address climate change and the food crisis, the city will take action by using the power of technology and getting in touch with crop science companies to grow quality produce. I think these innovative approaches are going to provide opportunities for business development as well as access to healthy foods for our children. The city will continue to seek collaborated research, investments and partnerships for the growth of this project. A small change can contribute to bigger changes in Earth's global climate.





# NJUMA POLICY BREAKFAST



The Policy Breakfast offered members of NJUMA a wealth of information, strategic direction, and resources from representatives from the Governor's Office and U.S. Department of Transportation.





# Policy Breakfast Slideshow







# League Session



Urban centers across New Jersey have established homelessness response systems, yet still face challenges ensuring homelessness is non-recurring, shortened, or rare. This year's New Jersey Urban Mayors Association League Session, *The Full Spectrum: Combating Homelessness Through Thoughtful Action* shared bold ideas and meaningful ways to combat homelessness. A number of replicable solutions, policies, resources and strategies were shared with session attendees.







## LBC Session

Members of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus (LBC) and New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) served as panelists to highlight the importance of developing and acting upon such partnerships, with topical focus on critical issues in municipal governing resources.





# Annual Reception

The Annual Reception was a culmination of the weekend's event where members of NJUMA gathered together with community stakeholders and partners to share common agenda and collaborative measures on sustaining and moving forward the work of municipalities.







# Annual Reception







## **KEAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION AT THE LEAGUE**

Led by Kean Faculty members, Gina Gili, Suzanne Schwab and Courtney Aikens, 16 students from Kean Ocean attended the NJLM conference to record interviews via audio and video with Members of the Legislative Black Caucus and NJUMA. The students representing multiple majors, completed the project as part of Fall 2022 courses at Kean Ocean focused on digital video, podcasting, mass media and political commentary.







# Changing How We Treat Sickle Cell in New Jersey

By Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson,  
NJ Legislature

Imagine you suffer from a rare disease that subjects you to horrific chronic pain, high rates of stroke and infection, vision problems, and a life expectancy cut short by two to three decades. On top of these devastating physical affects you also face significant barriers to quality care. Unfortunately, this is the reality for far too many of the 100,000 Americans diagnosed with sickle cell disease, including over 4,000 people living here in New Jersey. In fact, New Jersey is in the top 10 states in the nation with the highest prevalence of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). These patients are primarily in the African American community. One in 13 African Americans carry the Sickle Cell trait and 1 in 365 are born with the disease—more than any other ethnic group in the U.S.

For the 100 years since Sickle Cell's discovery, treatment options for patients have been extremely limited. There are only a handful of FDA-approved treatments available and no known cure. Sickle Cell receives substantially less research funding, data collection, and pharmaceutical investment than diseases like ALS or Cystic Fibrosis. Cystic Fibrosis, which affects primarily white patients, has a population less than half the size of sickle cell, yet it gets nearly 400 times the private sector support and more than three times the federal funding. Sickle cell patients deserve just as much care and attention as anyone else battling a chronic disease like ALS or Cystic Fibrosis.

There is also a severe shortage of physicians adequately trained to treat these patients, so many face prejudice at the hospital. Some physicians even doubt the severity of their pain or don't believe they even need pain medication. The CDC Foundation reports that, on average, sickle cell patients experience longer wait times to see a doctor or get medication when visiting the emergency department, even though they have the highest rate of returning to the hospital within a month of being discharged.

In an effort to better support residents who are living with SCD and position New Jersey to participate in scientific advances and new therapies for patients, I proudly sponsor legislation (A4052) that would establish a sickle-cell center pilot program housed at federally-qualified healthcare centers (FQHCs) in Trenton, Newark, Plainfield, Camden, Jersey City, and Paterson.

This Sickle Cell center pilot program would create a robust and well-sourced regional system of specialty care units at which patients would have access to comprehensive and coordinated team-based medical, behavioral health, mental health, social support, and monitoring services. The purpose is to link outpatient care to inpatient Sickle Cell care, foster outreach, promote Sickle Cell education, and develop a way to monitor Sickle Cell care in the State.

Significant progress has been made in recent years with the approval of disease-modifying therapies as well as the development of a promising pipeline of therapies, including one-time cell and gene therapies that could potentially cure SCD and free patients from their suffering. Now is the time to double down on our efforts to eliminate barriers to care. Many of these new therapies are in the final stages of clinical trials and will be hitting the market in just a few years. We need to do our work now to ensure that every patient can access these new treatments on day one of their FDA approval.

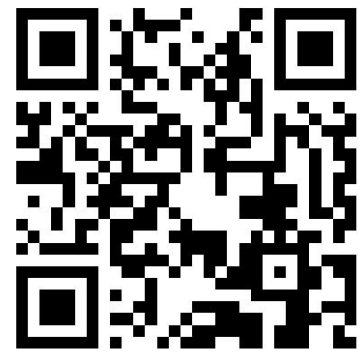
Considering more than 40% of Americans with Sickle Cell rely on Medicaid for treatment coverage, we should start with reevaluating our state's Medicaid approach to SCD to ensure adequate coverage.

Most states are falling short of adequately treating sickle cell through Medicaid, whether they're not updating treatment plans enough, not collecting data, or not making financial investments in treatment. Updating and examining our coverage Medicaid policies before these ground-breaking therapies are available will ensure New Jersey is leading the nation in removing barriers to care for SCD patients and finally giving them the attention, they deserve.



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**OPEN DATA ACCESS LAB  
JANUARY 31 @ 10 AM**



**ALEX RIVERA**

Director, Kean Center for  
Economic and Workforce  
Development, Social  
Entrepreneurship, and  
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**MUHAMMAD HASAN**

Director, Kean University  
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# Smart and Resilient Campus Lighting Helps Newark Students to a Brighter Future

By **Latoya Wilson, MPA, Founder of WCRC**

The Newark Board of Education has always invested in its campus infrastructure, using cutting-edge technologies where appropriate, to provide its students and staff with the best facilities and educational experiences possible. Over the past few years, the school district has sought to further decarbonize its operations, increase its resiliency, improve security, and when possible, leverage that effort to also provide its students with “STEM learning experiences” that will broaden their understanding and appreciation of today’s evolving energy situation.

Consistent with this, Newark Schools has installed several solar/wind-powered off-grid campus lights that provide resilient, zero carbon emission lighting and “auxiliary power” for purposes such as USB charging stations. Newark School partnered with Aris Wind to provide its “Smart Pole” to address these needs, AND also provide a valuable STEM teaching tool to introduce students to the world of energy efficiency and conservation, solar energy, wind power, energy storage and the IT technology that enables this information to be broadcast to the classroom environment.



The three Newark School campus sites, Science Park High School, Technology High School, and the Newark School Stadium, are shown below. Further, Newark Schools is now planning with Aris Wind’s STEM Coordinator, Latoya Wilson, of Wilson Career Readiness Consultancy to launch a STEM/Renewable Energy teaching tool that will incorporate these Smart Poles into science education programs. Newark’s students will be able to understand how the operation, components, and data of Smart Poles play a role in addressing climate change by providing a cleaner alternative to generate streetlighting. The goal is to enable students to learn more about clean energy and resiliency solutions to climate change that they can see and touch in their schools and communities, hopefully motivating their interest in a career path that is directly involved with sustainability.

Fortuitously, the key aspects of Newark Schools’ “Smart Pole” work, namely sustainability, resiliency, education and career development, are also objectives of recent major legislation at both the federal level and state level. The Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill and climate change provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act paved the way to expand these resources on the national level. Meanwhile, New Jersey became the first state to include climate change curriculum in K-12 by launching New Jersey Climate Change Education Hub. As such, if your municipality wishes to follow Newark’s example in this type of project, recent changes in federal/state energy policy are likely to help achieve those objectives

**For more information:**  
**Latoya Wilson, MPA, Founder of WCRC**  
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# Borough Approves Plans for Carteret Stages, a Movie Studio Component of \$1 Billion Waterfront Redevelopment

**15-story project by Shrewsbury-based Bezzone Inc. includes hotel, restaurants, retail, rooftop amenities & parking garage workshop**

**Contact: Bob Makin, Office of Public Information/Economic Development, 732-541-3835, makinb@carteret.net**



**CARTERET, NJ** – The borough planning board recently approved a preliminary site plan for Shrewsbury-based J. Bezzone Inc. to develop a 1.2 million square foot, 15-story multi-use project on a portion of the former DuPont site in the Chrome Waterfront Redevelopment Zone north of Veterans Pier and Carteret Waterfront Park.

Part of the borough's \$1 billion waterfront redevelopment, the project calls for a film and television studio with 12 20,000-square-foot soundstages, 120 suites for hotel service and social media production, 240,000 square feet of support and office space, a 25,000-square-foot retail and restaurant pavilion, rooftop amenities, and a parking lot and parking garage with 1,100 spots. The rooftop will include a pool, lounge and catering, according to the Mayor and Bezzone.

"It's absolutely spectacular what's proposed here," Mayor Daniel J. Reiman said. "This is a great opportunity to continue to grow our industrial and commercial base, to really highlight the \$2 billion in development that has happened in Carteret, and it ties in nicely with the performing arts center on Washington Avenue. This has the potential to create thousands of local jobs and pump a \$1 billion in union construction into the waterfront area, as well as permanent long-term jobs like stagehands and the support staff that would be necessary. It's a great project and a great opportunity for Carteret."

Mayor Reiman said the project, which will partner Bezzone with The Birch Group, a New York-based property manager, has been in the works for about a year. He said the industrial site already has undergone a 10-year cleanup and could start construction as soon as all approvals, financing and studios are in place.

The project is planned for about 10 acres of the 35-acre former DuPont site. The height of the hotel is about 220 feet and each studio is about 40 or 50 feet high with space in between, the mayor said.

Other plans on the 35-acre property – the balance of which the borough is in the process of purchasing from DuPont – will include an outdoor amphitheater, additional retail, commercial, and restaurant space, another hotel attached to the forthcoming ferry building, and an expansion of the waterfront's river walk, the mayor said. The ferry terminal is scheduled to break ground by year's end, the mayor said.

Other studio projects proposed for Fort Monmouth, Bayonne, Harrison and Newark, but the stacked design of Carteret's project is more like the film studio in Long Island City back by Oscar-winning actor Robert DeNiro. But this project will be unique because of its multi-use, Bezzone said.

"We are mashing up production with hospitality," he said. "We have created a self-sustained business ecosystem designed for New Jersey weather and transportation infrastructure. Streamers can now operate in one environment with resort-like amenities."

Multiple outlets for retail and hospitality will range from corporate dining to full-service food and beverage options. Having developed properties from Boston to Atlantic City, Bezzone said he chose Carteret as a location mainly because of the transportation infrastructure of the New Jersey Turnpike, Newark Airport, and Carteret's forthcoming ferry.

"Carteret's investment in its waterfront under the bold leadership of Mayor Dan Reiman has created an engine of opportunity that we hope to share in," the developer said. "For this project, we have partnered with Mark Meisner and The Birch Group who will take the ownership lead and provide the necessary resources required for a project of this magnitude and importance. This momentous achievement could not have been realized without the passion, entrepreneurship and support of Dan Reiman and Mark Meisner."





# FIRSTNET®

## Built with AT&T

### FirstNet, Built with AT&T is Connecting More First Responders Across New Jersey By Arvind Swamy, Regional Director, External Affairs, AT&T-New Jersey

AT&T® is America's public safety communications partner. In the 5 years since we were selected by the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) to build and operate FirstNet®, we have moved quickly to bring more coverage, boost capacity and drive new capabilities for New Jersey's first responders and the communities they serve.

First responders in more than 240 communities across New Jersey are using FirstNet, Built with AT&T to stay mission ready. Since launching FirstNet, we've grown our coverage across New Jersey, helping us to cover the entire state. And with Band 14 deployed on more than 1,000 sites statewide, first responders in every county are benefitting from the dedicated coverage and capacity it provides when they need it.

What is FirstNet? FirstNet is the only nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform dedicated to and purpose-built for America's first responders and the extended public safety community. Shaped by the vision of Congress and the first responder community following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it is built with AT&T in public-private partnership with the FirstNet Authority – an independent agency within the federal government.

With more than 23,000 agencies and organizations – accounting for more than 4 million connections nationwide – the FirstNet network is providing public safety with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it, unique benefits like always-on priority and preemption, and high-quality Band 14 spectrum. These advanced capabilities enable FirstNet to help fire, EMS, law enforcement and more save lives and protect their communities.

Why is this important? No connection is more important than one that could help save a life. Today, FirstNet is solving for common and long-standing communications challenges that first responders face – things like interoperability, network congestion and commercial network providers slowing public safety's data connection. FirstNet continues to grow because it offers unique features, functionality and dedicated spectrum when needed for the public safety community. That's why public safety fought for their own, separate, dedicated platform, championing the vision that led to the creation of FirstNet.

And with FirstNet, it's about where first responders need connectivity. That's why the build is being done with direct feedback from public safety and local stakeholders, which has been instrumental in deploying Band 14 spectrum across New Jersey. And it's helped to launch new purpose-built FirstNet sites in areas where emergency responses have been previously challenged.

Finally, as public safety's partner, FirstNet®, Built with AT&T feels that it is our duty to give first responders the tools that ensure they are able to do their jobs.

Nearly two years ago, leadership at FirstNet came together to commit to supporting our first responders both on and off the frontlines by establishing the FirstNet Health and Wellness Coalition (FNHWC). Since then, we have been able to work alongside therapists, nonprofits, first responders, public safety organizations and other experts to create wellness goals and establish resources for the community that keeps us safe.

For more about the value FirstNet is bringing to public safety, check out [FirstNet.com](http://FirstNet.com). Contact Rick Koehler at [rkg17u@att.com](mailto:rkg17u@att.com) or (732) 216-4972 to learn more about how FirstNet can benefit first responders in your community.





# NJBAC | New Jersey Business Action Center



## NJ Business Action Center Offers Free Technical Assistance to Cannabis Business License Applicants

By **Melanie Willoughby, Executive Director, NJ Business Action Center**

Did you know that the New Jersey Business Action Center (NJBAC) has been designated by the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (NJCRC) to provide no-cost technical assistance, training, and mentorship to recreational cannabis license applicants in certain categories. Support is specifically for those interested in applying for a license as a social equity, legacy, Impact Zone, diverse-owned or microbusiness.

During the election of 2020, New Jersey citizens voted to legalize the consumption, production, and distribution of cannabis products. An entirely new business sector was born.

The initial training will be a combination of pre-recorded webinars followed by live, virtual question-and-answer sessions twice a month where applicants can ask mentors specific questions and receive non-legal guidance and direction. All classes in the Academy will be taught by faculty who are in or have supported or consulted to the cannabis industry.

The goal of the technical assistance and training program is to ensure equitable representation and

support qualified applicants impacted most by enforcement of cannabis prohibition, people of color, people deeply impacted by high poverty and in disproportionately affected areas.

This is just the latest initiative in the 40-year existence of the NJBAC. Since its impetus, the NJBAC has provided real-time assistance and support to businesses to help them navigate state government and connect with helpful resources.

Starting a business in any industry is extremely expensive and stressful. It is immensely more difficult in a new, highly regulated industry. The academy is meant to guide these new cannabis entrepreneurs in the eligible categories with no-cost advice and training.

Over the last several months, the NJBAC has met with cannabis groups, founders, community leaders and educators, nonprofits, advocates and individuals throughout New Jersey and across the country to learn what needs to be included in the NJBAC Cannabis Training Academy. With their input, we are ready to roll the academy out in the first half of 2023.

### Before submitting your application to the academy, do some research and prepare the following.

1. Know the current law and regulations.
2. Develop a business plan. Do market research; develop a budget and a pricing model; develop a financing plan. A formal business plan is required.
3. Choose a legal business structure (Partnership, Limited Liability Company (LLC), Corporation or an S Corporation.)
4. Get federal and State Tax ID Numbers.
5. Choose and register your business and business name.
6. Open a business bank account.
7. Develop a plan for obtaining business insurance (Develop a plan for obtaining business Insurance Plan to obtain liability insurance for conditional and annual.)
8. Research potential sites for business.
9. If applicable, prepare documents to prove qualification as diversely owned business, social equity business, impact zone business, conditional license applicant or microbusiness.



# STREETLIGHT REPORTING

## Streetlight Outages

### How do I report a streetlight outage?

You can log into [PSEG.com](http://PSEG.com) and register for PSE&G MyAccount. Once logged in, click on **Outages & Leaks**. Next, click on **Report Streetlight Outage**. You can also call **1-800-436-7734**.

It is important to provide information regarding the location and status of the streetlight. One of the most important pieces of information is the pole number. If there is no pole number on the pole, give the full address of the home or business in front of which the pole is located, or provide the pole numbers of the poles on either side of the malfunctioning light. If the pole is at an intersection, provide the names of the two streets.

Landmarks such as schools, libraries, train stations, etc., are other good identifying pieces of information for pole locations. If the pole is in a parking lot, provide the name of the business where the parking lot is located.

It is helpful to tell us the current condition of the streetlight. Is it out? Is it going on and off? Is it on during the day? Is it making unusual sounds? Are the light, and/or the pole missing? This information should be provided when you report a streetlight outage to help us identify the problem.

### Streetlight Outages

To report a problem with a streetlight, please call

**1-800-436-PSEG**  
(7734)

or login to My Account

[www.pseg.com/myaccount](http://www.pseg.com/myaccount)

Click on **Outages & Leaks**, then click on **Report Streetlight Outage**.

The following information will assist us in expediting repairs:

- Is the light off at night or on during the day?
- Is the fixture or pole damaged or missing?
- Street and nearest cross street
- Nearest house number
- Pole number
- Your name and phone number



PSE&G has more than 475,000 streetlights, decorative lights, and area lights on its system.

We can use your assistance by letting us know when they are not operating properly.



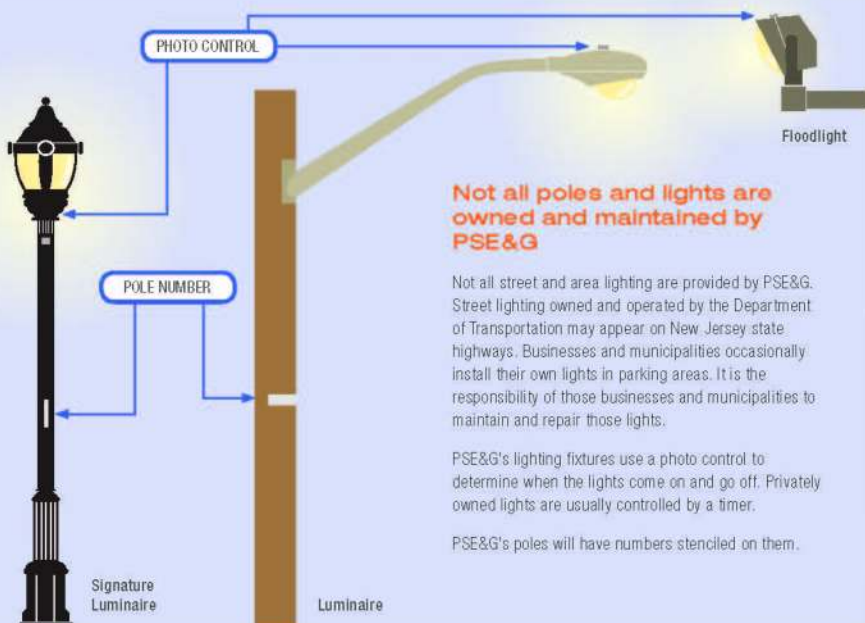
### How does the streetlight get repaired or replaced?

After a report is received by PSE&G, a lamp inspector will investigate the problem. The majority of streetlight malfunctions are related to a light bulb or photo cell. The lamp inspector will replace the complete streetlight head if the repair is more complicated. Once reported, repairs are usually completed within a few days.

If there is no power to the light, the streetlight outage report is referred to the engineering department to investigate. Repairs typically consist of replacement of the pole, or repair/replacement of the supply wiring, and take additional time to complete.

The customer will be provided with the name and phone number of the engineering technician doing the investigation.

Once the source of the problem is determined, the engineering technician will create work orders for the underground or overhead construction department to complete repairs. The customer can call the engineering technician directly for updates on the repair of the light.



### Examples of pole numbers



# FACING HOUSING ISSUES?



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## CONTACT

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Housing and Community Development Network of NJ  
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# BLACK BUSINESS EXPO

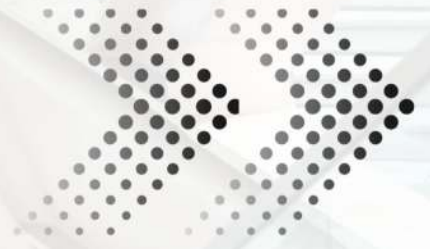
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June 15, 2023

9:00 A.M. – 6:30 P.M.

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Montclair, NJ 07043

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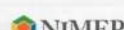
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# Kean Chosen to Pilot New College Admissions Tool



## By Kean Enrollment Services

Kean University is one of 14 colleges and universities across the country taking part in a pilot program for college admissions that helps level the playing field for prospective students, especially minority and first-generation students.

Through the 2022-2023 Direct Admissions pilot conducted by the Common App, the University will proactively offer admission to prospective students who create a Common App account and meet Kean's selected criteria, even if they have not completed an application to Kean. Students who accept the offer will then have to apply.

**The goal is for students, especially those from underrepresented communities or the first in their families to apply to college, to gain a sense of security in the college application process.**

At the same time, Kean will be able to select students who meet the qualifications for admission to the University and reach out to them earlier in the application cycle. "Kean University has a deep commitment to supporting students from minority and first-generation backgrounds, and this new admissions tool allows us to offer more students an opportunity to receive a college education at Kean," said Kean President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. "Through this pilot program, we will put college within reach for so many deserving students."

This year represents the third round of the pilot offered by the Common App. Through Direct Admissions, colleges and universities are able to contact prospective students who have created a Common App account, regardless of whether they completed all of their open applications. In the pilot's second phase, six participating schools offered admission to 18,000 students, and more than 800 students were accepted. The impact was strongest for Black, African-American, Latinx, and first-generation students. Kean and other participating institutions will now begin outreach to nearly 30,000 students.

Kean Senior Vice President for Administration Michael Salvatore, Ph.D., said the direct admissions program gives the University an additional tool to "advance our mission of fostering equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education.

"At Kean, we are committed to supporting the academic hopes and dreams of all students, particularly minority and first-generation students, and through the Direct Admissions program, we expect even more students to discover how they can climb higher at Kean," Salvatore said.

Kean University Vice President of Enrollment Services Marsha McCarthy said the Common App's Direct Admissions program dovetails with the Kean Tuition Promise program, which provides free college tuition for qualifying students.

"The Common App's Direct Admissions Program coupled with the Kean Tuition Promise creates a powerful combination for New Jersey's most needy prospective students to help them envision a future with a college degree, and that Kean may be a debt-free option for them," McCarthy said.

Melissa Maiorino, director of the Office of Enrollment Services at Kean, said about 1,200 students are expected to receive an offer of direct admission. Once those students complete an application to Kean, they will have the same accepted experience as all incoming Kean students.

"The aim of the program is to offer underrepresented students increased college choice and a sense of security in their application process," Maiorino said. Jenny Rickard, the president and CEO of Common App, said the Direct Admissions pilot has the potential to help many students. "Direct Admissions is about changing the narrative of a college education from one of scarcity to one of opportunity, by ensuring students know that college opportunity is an abundant resource — and one that's available to them," she said.



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### Next Edition!

Submissions for our Spring 2023 are  
due April 15, 2023

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