



The Official Publication of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association

URBAN MAYORS PRESS

FALL, 2024 | VOL. 12





ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY URBAN MAYORS ASSOCIATION

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.

Editors' Note

We're excited to present another edition of the Urban Mayors Press, designed to showcase the vital contributions of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) members and share valuable resources for municipalities across New Jersey. As we gear up for the 109th Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities (NJLM), we encourage everyone to engage in the sessions. This event is an excellent chance to connect and address the challenges our urban centers face. This year, our spotlight will be on Innovative Affordable Housing Solutions—an essential topic for our communities. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to your participation! 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!



Members of the NJ Urban Mayors Association

NJUMA Executive Committee

- **Hon. Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor**, City of Plainfield, President & Chair
- **Hon. Hector C. Lora**, Mayor City of Passaic, Vice President
- **Hon. Marty Small Sr., Mayor**, The City of Atlantic City, Vice President, (Southern)
- **Hon. W. Reed Gusciora**, Mayor, City of Trenton, Vice President (Central)
- **Hon. Dwayne Warren**, Mayor, City of Orange, Vice President (Northern)
- **Hon. Ras. J. Baraka**, Mayor, City of Newark, President Emeritus
- **Hon. Albert R. Kelly**, Mayor, City of Bridgeton, President Emeritus

NJUMA Members

- 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

Table of contents

04.		President's Corner
		City of Plainfield: Combating Human Trafficking Enhancing Health and Welfare in African American Communities
05.		More Than a Crisis: Why Affordable Housing Demands Greater Support and Strategic Leadership
06.		HCDNNJ : Thinking Outside the Box to Help HouseNJ
07.		City of Atlantic City: Helping Atlantic City Residents Realize Their Dream
08.		Willingboro Township: Willingboro's 2024 Road Program
10.		New Jersey Clean Communities Council
12.		City of Newark: An Oasis in the City
13.		City of Asbury Park: Asbury Park Mayor's Wellness Committee Living Well Initiative
14.		City of Perth Amboy: Commercial Projects Driving Transformation in Perth Amboy
15.		Township of Irvington: Using Innovation to Increase Access to Health and Prevention
16.		City of Trenton: End of Summer Newsletter
17.		Borough of Roselle: Economic Development Enhancing Our Quality of Life
19.		KUBS Program On the move
21.		NFBPA NJ Chapter: Mission and Upcoming Networking Opportunities
22.		The John S. Watson of Public Policy and Research at Kean University partners with the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)
23.		EPA: How is New Jersey getting the Lead out?
24.		UNITE US
25.		NJUMA Annual Reception Sponsors
26.		

President's Corner

Embracing Change and Shaping Our Communities for the Future.

As the fall season unfolds, we are reminded of the inevitable changes that come with time. The vibrant hues of autumn are symbolic of the transformations our communities experience—some anticipated, others unforeseen. As Urban Mayors, we are no strangers to change. Our cities and towns are constantly evolving, and our role as leaders is to guide these changes in ways that benefit our residents and build a brighter future. This season, as we reflect on the challenges and opportunities ahead, I am reminded of the words of John F. Kennedy: "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

The upcoming New Jersey League of Municipalities annual conference is an excellent opportunity for us to lean into this season of change and equip ourselves with the knowledge and tools to better serve our communities. This conference is not just an event—it's a forum for collaboration, learning, and growth. The sessions will cover topics ranging from sustainability to economic development, from public safety to technology infrastructure. These are areas that, as urban leaders, we must stay informed about in order to effectively respond to the shifting needs of our cities.

As we gather for the conference, it's important to remember the unique perspective we bring as leaders of urban communities. We face challenges that are distinct from those of suburban or rural municipalities—higher population densities, aging infrastructure, economic disparities, and diverse populations with varying needs. That is why our involvement in the conference is crucial. The sessions offered will undoubtedly provide valuable insights, but we must also ensure that the content presented addresses the specific concerns of our communities. By actively participating in panels, discussions, and networking opportunities, we can influence the narrative to reflect the priorities that matter most to our residents.

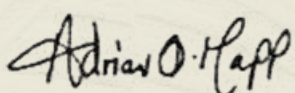
The pandemic taught us all the importance of being prepared for the unexpected and demonstrated the resilience of our urban centers. Now, as we move forward, we must focus on sustainability—not just in an environmental sense but in how we create long-term solutions for housing, transportation, education, and economic growth. This is our moment to ensure that our cities are not just reactive to change but proactive in shaping the future.

I encourage my fellow Urban Mayors to use this conference as a platform to advocate for our communities. Our cities are the engines that drive the state's economy, culture, and innovation. By amplifying our voices, we can push for policies and programs that address the unique needs of urban areas—whether that's affordable housing, equitable health care, or accessible public transportation.

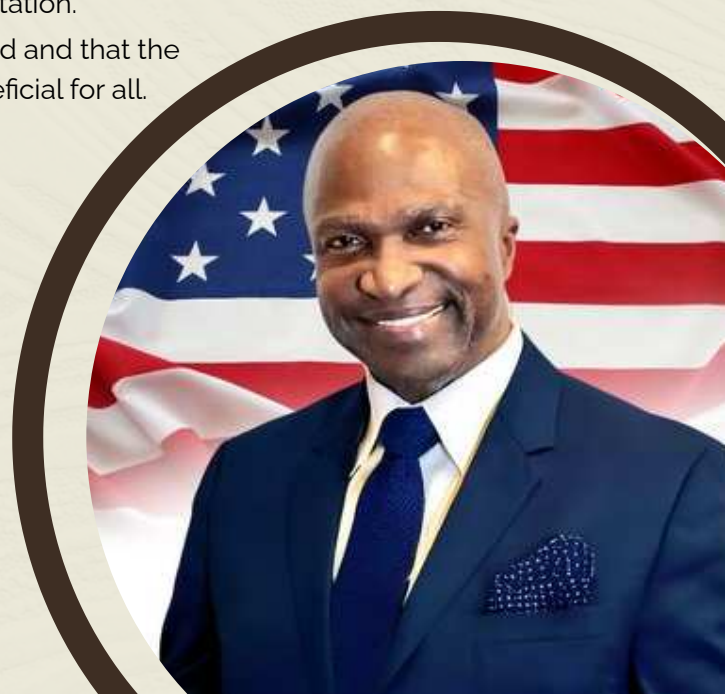
Our role is to ensure that the voices of our residents are heard and that the solutions developed at the state level are inclusive and beneficial for all.

As the leaves change this fall, so too do the challenges and opportunities before us. Let us approach this season with a sense of purpose and a commitment to making our cities stronger, more equitable, and more vibrant. Together, we can shape the future of New Jersey's urban communities for generations to come. I look forward to seeing you all at the conference and continuing this important work.

In solidarity,



Mayor Adrian O. Mapp
President, NJUMA





COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING: ENHANCING HEALTH AND WELFARE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

By Shep Brown, Director of the Department of Health & Social Services, City of Plainfield

Human trafficking persists as a critical global issue, disproportionately impacting vulnerable groups, particularly within African American communities. This heinous crime manifests in various forms—including sexual exploitation, forced labor, and organ trafficking—leaving deep-seated scars on individuals and undermining community well-being.

Recent data underscores the urgency of addressing this crisis. According to the Polaris Project's 2021 report, African American women and girls are significantly overrepresented among trafficking victims in the United States. Furthermore, studies have shown that Black children are at heightened risk of exploitation, emphasizing systemic vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. These alarming trends highlight the necessity for targeted interventions tailored to the unique challenges faced by these communities.

Global patterns of human trafficking have direct local repercussions. Economic hardships, often exacerbated by downturns and disparities, increase susceptibility to labor trafficking in African American neighborhoods. The psychological aftermath for survivors—including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression—calls for culturally sensitive mental health services to facilitate recovery and reintegration.

While legislative measures like the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) provide a foundational framework for combating trafficking, they often fall short of addressing the specific needs of African American communities. Enhancements to such policies should incorporate preventive strategies and survivor support programs that are culturally relevant and community-specific.

Municipalities are essential in this effort, even when resources are limited. By utilizing community networks like schools, faith-based organizations, and social services, they can effectively enhance education and raise awareness. Additionally, forming collaborative partnerships with local nonprofits, law enforcement, and healthcare providers—such as Plainfield Health Center, the town's trusted Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)—further strengthens these initiatives.

The City of Plainfield, under the leadership of Mayor Adrian O. Mapp, hosted a SOAR training session—Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond—a nationally recognized program that empowers participants to identify and address human trafficking. Offered by the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the session brought together 20 local agencies, including members of the Plainfield Police Department and the Plainfield Board of Education. The training covered various forms of trafficking, risk factors, and key indicators. Participants were equipped with trauma-informed strategies to effectively support at-risk individuals and make a meaningful impact in combating human trafficking.

Our Health and Social Services staff have completed specialized training and are committed to ongoing education. We are also partnering with local schools to train educators in recognizing potential trafficking victims. Plans include in-person training sessions for agencies, emergency food providers, libraries, houses of worship, and childcare organizations. These efforts are designed to enhance our community's ability to prevent and respond to human trafficking. While we acknowledge the challenges and frustrations of this work, the city remains fully committed to this critical cause.

If you or someone you know needs support or wishes to report trafficking, please get in touch with the **National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888** or visit their website. In New Jersey, agencies like the New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force are actively engaged in combating this issue and supporting victims.

New Jersey Human
Trafficking Task Force Website



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

Photos by: Office of Mayor Ras J. Baraka

More Than a Crisis: Why Affordable Housing Demands Greater Support and Strategic Leadership

BY HONORABLE MAYOR RAS J. BARAKA

New Jersey needs to build at least 200,000 affordable housing units, and this shortage impacts every municipality in the state from our largest cities to our smallest towns, and our quality of life in unexpected ways.

When our children can't afford to live in the towns in which they grew up it creates stress on family bonds. When our parents are forced to move out of state because of exorbitant property taxes on their single-family homes, it lessens generational civic participation. When people are forced to move to Pennsylvania or Delaware to afford a house, and slog through 90-minute, stressful commutes each way, it cuts deeply into time spent with their families and leaves them exhausted.

The New Jersey State Legislature was aware of this when it created a series of bills, signed by Gov. Phil Murphy in March to determine, then enforce, affordable housing obligations for every municipality in the state.

The new set of bills (A-4/S-50) was to create a compliance period starting in 2025, with the Department of Community Affairs setting affordable housing numbers for every municipality based on current and future needs for affordable housing, guided by fair-share guidelines based on prior Mount Laurel Doctrine court decisions. It also promises to reduce litigation delays that have stalled affordable housing construction for half a century.

These new affordable housing bills give incentives for these towns to build affordable units for some of our most vulnerable residents, the elderly and people with special needs.

This is a good start, but what the state also needs is an administrative office that gives towns the resources needed to identify buildable space, help with building plans, subsidize starter home ownership, and allow for accessory dwelling unit (ADU) so these municipalities can meet their affordable housing needs.

Notice I wrote "needs" not requirements. Many of my colleagues understand the need for affordable housing, and these mayors are limited to urban centers. Mayors in smaller, wealthier towns are also ready to build. I've been all over the state talking to these mayors and they are not averse to building. They just don't know where to start, and some are even frustrated that the state imposes requirements, but without direction.

What they need and want is more guidance and resources from the state and having an administrator who can work with them and execute comprehensive plans with input from housing advocates, trade unions, and private contractors. Such an administrator can work with towns to develop regional plans or collaborate to build affordable housing along transit corridors or on swaths of available land that might straddle two or more towns.



Urban Mayors Affordable Housing



A recent lawsuit by nine municipalities that challenged these new state laws gives the impression that suburban towns don't want affordable housing. There is a long, painful history that feeds that narrative, beginning with the first affordable housing lawsuit, filed by the Southern Burlington N.A.A.C.P. against Mount Laurel Township.

Three of the nine towns suing the state are among the 50 wealthiest in the state and six towns have average home prices over \$750,000. Their lawsuit follows an outdated playbook used by many towns over the years to maintain their exclusivity by artificially propping up real estate prices and rent costs through restrictive zoning ordinances.

Instead of fighting the inevitability of the need for affordable housing, all towns should put their efforts behind ways to create fair and equitable regional or statewide master plans. Our laws should not favor only those who can afford "exclusive" communities, because the rest of us want to reduce costs, prevent homelessness and raise our standard of living. Equity in housing should be a guiding principle to benefit all our residents.

Because after 50 years of lawsuits, non-compliance, and spotty enforcement over the Mount Laurel Doctrine, we've come to learn the problem of affordable housing is in all our backyards. **It's time to move forward with a serious, statewide vision of how we can have all people living comfortably and with dignity here, in our wealthy, densely populated state.**

Thinking Outside the Box to Help *HouseNJ*

BY STACI BERGER
PRESIDENT AND CEO, HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF NJ

NJ families are dealing with extremely tight budgets that leave little for bare necessities. Many are teetering on the brink of housing insecurity and homelessness. Our elected leaders must understand that **Housing Is a Human Right and act accordingly.**

The Network and the National Low Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) 2024 Out of Reach Report found that the Fair Market Rent for a modest two-bedroom home in NJ rose 12% last year, the largest increase of the last decade. To afford this home, full-time workers need to earn \$38.08 per hour, yet the average NJ worker earns \$23.70 per hour. We can do better. Here are four policies NJ can implement to make housing more affordable right now:

1. Expand The Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)

NJ's dedicated source of funding for affordable home creation. The AHTF is increasingly utilized to fund housing support programs in addition to housing production. We must preserve the AHTF's intended use and ensure that resources remain available to build more affordable homes.

To support the growing need for investment in first-time/first-generation homeownership programs, NJ should follow the lead of other states and expand the Realty Transfer Fee to cover a higher range of luxury home sales. NJ can use the additional revenue to support innovative programs to help address the racial wealth gap.

2. Cut Evictions And Increase Resources For Tenants By Raising The Fees Landlords Pay To Evict.

NJ charges landlords a mere \$50 to evict tenants. This is lower than the national average and significantly below other states. Raising the filing fee creates a disincentive to evict and encourages landlords to work with their tenants to reach better outcomes.

Higher fees can support eviction diversion, counseling, and legal support programs which are extremely successful but underfunded. Research shows that raising filing fees is a good policy for renters and helps address the racial disparities experienced by tenants.

3. Reduce The Rent By Enacting A Luxury Landlord Corporate Fee.

This surcharge on for-profit, larger developments could be forgiven or refunded if the landlord provides additional affordable units through inclusionary zoning and/or keeps rent increases at or below three percent annually. Rent caps are extremely popular with voters, who are looking to our current and future elected officials to make housing more affordable at every level. NJ leaders should use tax policy to incentivize rent stabilization now.



Photos by: HCDNNJ

Staci Berger

President and CEO, Housing and Community Development Network of NJ

4. Expand The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC)

This wildly successful, but significantly underfunded program leverages up to \$7 for every \$1 invested. The long-standing \$15 million program cap restricts its potential: we need to increase the cap to at least \$30 million. Our communities can't wait any longer for the resources they need and deserve.

Housing is the largest driver of inflation. It's time NJ implemented innovative solutions to address these costs so our residents and our economy can thrive. Public investment is the foundation on which we HouseNJ. NJ's leaders need to think outside the box and create housing affordability from the ground up so that everyone has a place to call home.

MEMORIAL "HANK" TYNER
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

HELPING ATLANTIC CITY RESIDENTS REALIZE THEIR DREAM

By Honorable Marty Small, Sr., Mayor,
City of Atlantic City

As the mayor of the Great City of Atlantic City, it's my job to set the tone and set the vision. To do that, sometimes you have to think outside the box. Nothing is ever off limits when it comes to our taxpayers, which is why for the first time in Atlantic City's history, we held a First-Time Homebuyer Lottery for our residents.

Four lucky winners were selected by random draw to become homeowners for the first time in their lives, in newly constructed homes in Atlantic City's beautiful Venice Park neighborhood. There will be six additional properties that will also become available via lottery in the not-so-distant future.



MAYOR SMALL WITH THE WINNERS

Photos by: Office of The City of Atlantic City

When this concept was first introduced in my State of the City address at the start of the year, we talked about giving parcels away for free, but that idea evolved into a First-Time Homebuyer Lottery thanks to many strong partnerships, in particular, one with New Jersey Community Capital, who ran our lottery drawing.

These are homes that cost \$400,000 to construct. New Jersey Community Capital gave a \$100,000 subsidy. The City of Atlantic City is investing one million dollars (\$100,000 per home) to bring the price down even further. Add to that money these residents can receive through first-time home-buyer programs through our Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) office and the Atlantic County Improvement Authority, these \$400,000 homes are being purchased for \$175,000 or less.



Photos by: Office of The City of Atlantic City

3 OF THE FIRST 4 WINNERS



Photos by: Office of The City of Atlantic City

MAYOR SMALL AT PODIUM ANNOUNCING FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER LOTTERY



Photos by: Office of The City of Atlantic City

SOME OF THE INITIAL HOMES AVAILABLE



Photos by: Office of The City of Atlantic City

(Continuation) I will never forget the reactions of the residents after they found out they were going to own a home for the first time, one they could actually afford. Tears of joy flowed throughout our City Council Chambers, where the random drawing took place. We had a vetting process for this lottery. Criteria included being an Atlantic City resident for at least five years and having a job and credit to qualify. We are also making sure the winners are living in their new homes as a primary residence for at least 15 years and don't use it as a short-term rental.

We are investing in the fabric of our community, which is one of the greatest investments you can make as a leader. If we say we want developers to come and build in Atlantic City, and to create new homeownership, then let's do that for our residents. We'll get this money back, because we just created brand new taxpayers in the process. I've done a lot of things I'm proud of as Atlantic City mayor, but this is without question one of my most important initiatives.

We just helped Atlantic City residents get the one thing they needed most to live the American Dream. No, I'm not talking about money, but opportunity.

Willingboro's 2024 Road Program: Enhancing Willingboro Without Raising Taxes

By Samantha E. Whitfield, Councilwoman | Willingboro Township, NJ

Road improvements are a persistent challenge across the country. The roads in Willingboro Township were constructed in the late 1950's and like much of America have developed potholes and other deficiencies over the years. In 2022 the Township Council decided to take a proactive approach to addressing the aging road infrastructure rather than to continue being reactive to appearing failures. The project began with a full assessment of the town's 110 miles of roadway using the Roadbotics system. The assessment captures all potholes and other road failures as well as rates the condition of each street on a scale from 1-5. As a result, 14 streets were rated in category 4 as having significant damage or emerging critical failures, and 83 streets as category with the Appearance of pervasive minor distress or early signs of fatigue.

In January of 2024 Willingboro Township began the construction phase of the transformative road improvement program without placing an added tax burden on residents. This comprehensive plan includes the rehabilitation of 26 streets. Through strategic funding, partnerships, and transparent communication with the community, we have ensured that the program serves our residents efficiently and affordably.

Expanding the Scope of the Program

The first phase of the 2024 Road Program aimed to resurface the 14 worst roads, with one street funded separately through a New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) grant. However, with favorable bid numbers and careful financial planning, we were able to expand the program, adding 12 more streets to a total of 26 streets.

Township Manager Dwayne Harris identified a key partnership that has enabled this expansion, collaboration with PSE&G. In 12 of the streets included in the program, PSE&G has undertaken gas line replacements. After completing their part of the work, we coordinated street resurfacing to minimize disruption to residents. PSE&G also absorbed the cost of repaving two roads following their utility upgrades. This type of collaboration has provided substantial cost savings by reducing our responsibility to only repave half of the street that was not impacted by their work.

This partnership has not only allowed us to stretch our budget further but also demonstrated how local government can work with utility providers to maximize resources for the community's benefit.

Funding the Program Without Raising Taxes

One of the most remarkable aspects of the 2024 Road Program is that it's being completed without raising municipal taxes. This is possible thanks to a blend of creative funding sources. The Township secured a \$3.5 million low-interest loan through the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (Ibank), which is helping us to complete the project affordably. In addition to this loan, we've received funding from the NJDOT and continue to seek further grants and financing options.

The overall cost of the project, including the two streets covered by PSE&G, is nearing \$4 million. By leveraging these funding sources, we have not only avoided additional tax burdens but have also been able to deliver tangible savings to our residents. The 2024 municipal tax rate saw a decrease of 2 cents, reflecting a \$42.29 reduction for the average household assessed at \$158,350.



Buckingham Culvert Repair



Hot Patcher

Photos by: Office of The City of Willingboro Township

Communicating With the Community

Maintaining open communication with residents throughout the process has been a priority. We've worked closely with PSE&G's Communication Department to send letters to homes directly affected by upcoming construction. Additionally, we're keeping the community informed through regular updates on the Township's website, mobile app, newsletters and social media ensuring that residents can plan around the work with minimal inconvenience.

Looking Ahead

Phase I of the 2024 Road Program is nearing completion, with Phase II expected to be bid in October 2024. Depending on weather conditions, we aim to finish by November. PSE&G's work, which is closely tied to ours, will continue through the next year or two as they progress with their gas line replacements across the township.

Through strategic partnerships, innovative funding, and diligent communication, Willingboro is making significant strides in improving our roads while ensuring that residents feel the benefits without added costs. The 2024 Road Program is a testament to the power of collaboration and thoughtful governance.

Finding New Ways To Spread The Anti-Litter Message In NJ

By JoAnn Gemenden
Executive Director
New Jersey Clean Communities Council



A key component of the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC) is community engagement.

As the state's litter-abatement organization, with a mission to fight litter in all 564 municipalities and 21 counties, involving millions of New Jerseyans each year, we are committed to finding new and better ways to spread important messages.

Over the summer, through the work of our talented team housed at Kean University, we created four "reels" for wide distribution on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. These are "next-generation" public service announcements, in which we are urging everyone to download them and spread their important messages.

The informational videos address key topics: Fighting general litter in New Jersey, donating reusable bags, addressing cigarette litter and combating balloon litter. Please feel free to share and repost these videos, with your own logos and branding, to further spread litter awareness in your communities. The more people who see them and learn the harmful effects of litter, the better!

In addition, please continue to utilize all of our free downloadable resources that were created as part of our LitterFreeNJ campaign. There are specially designed items for social media as well as videos, web banners, flyers, posters, radio public service announcements, logos and important "litter free" information that has been translated into many languages.

NJ Clean Communities also urges you to visit our reusable bag resource center, to learn where to donate extra, gently-used bags to those in need or easily host a reusable bag program in your community.

Lastly, please mark your calendars for Tuesday, Nov. 19 for the annual NJCCC session at the New Jersey League of Municipalities. The 2 p.m. program, titled "Trash Talk: Strategies for Effective Litter Campaigns," will take place in the Atlantic City Convention Center in Room 401.

Our esteemed panel includes: Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh, Camden Mayor Vic Carstarphen, Perth Amboy Mayor Helmin J. Caba, Belleville Mayor Michael Melham and Rebecca Turygan, Atlantic County Utilities Authority, Clean Communities Coordinator and NJCCC Board of Trustee Member.

NJCCC is pleased to collaborate with the NJ Urban Mayors Association to fight litter in all our communities. We look forward to many ways in which we can work together to spread our positive messages across New Jersey.

Thank you for all you do!



Say "Hi" to NJCCC at the League of Municipalities Conference - Nov. 19-21

Stop By Booth 115 (Next to the DEP)

Come to our seminar on Nov. 19 at 2 p.m., the Atlantic City Convention Center, Room 401

Speakers include:

- Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh
- Camden Mayor Vic Carstarphen
- Perth Amboy Mayor Helmin J. Caba
- Belleville Mayor Michael Melham
- Rebecca Turygan, Atlantic County Utilities Authority




An Oasis in the City

by Jacob Bailey, NRCS

NEWARK, N.J. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Jersey has been partnering with STEAM URBAN, a Newark-based non-profit organization, to help instill a love for natural spaces and the environment in students who might not have had such opportunities otherwise.

Though the NRCS has a proud history of supporting America's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners through conservation-based programs, it also continues to prioritize urban agriculture, which provides critical access to healthy food for local communities, as well as jobs, increased green spaces, and closer community ties.

Part of that effort is realizing the importance of engaging with urban communities to provide hands-on educational opportunities for students who may not have had access to similar educational resources, making partnerships with organizations such as STEAM URBAN crucial. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, STEAM URBAN integrates the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (S.T.E.A.M.) with expressive arts, creating a unique and impactful educational experience for urban youth ages 16-25 in Black and Brown communities while fostering interest in STEM-related careers and environmental issues.

"Growing up, I never saw Black folks in outdoor spaces, nor was I exposed to many opportunities to be in nature, so it brings me immense joy to be a face and voice for others in urban communities to find interest in the environment, one green space at a time," said Fallon Davis, founder, and CEO of STEAM URBAN. "I am a proud Nonbinary, Queer, Urban Farmer who is dedicated to exposing as many community members as I can back to our Indigenous practices of growing our own food and tending to the land."

STEAM URBAN's garden, known as "A Healing Sanctuary," is located in northern Newark near the Passaic River. The garden features compost bins, educational materials, and various vegetables, making it an oasis in the city. It serves as an urban farm where students participate and learn through various hands-on activities with both indoor classroom activities and outdoor garden work. STEAM URBAN's eight-week course, the Radical Educator Apprenticeship Program, is a community-based education pipeline that prioritizes the inclusion of urban youth who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQAI, and/or are residents of the Greater Newark area in partnership with The Gem Project Fellows.

As part of the course, NRCS staff members helped introduce concepts of soil health, forestry, and pollination to help drive home the importance of natural systems and their impact on the environment and agriculture.

During the pollinator breakout session, the students found three different species of rare pollinator bees within the urban garden.



Students engage with Kass Urban-Mead (center), a pollinator conservation specialist with the Xerces Society and partner biologist for the NRCS, at STEAM URBAN's garden in Newark.

"That was really surprising to them," Strehse said. "It demonstrated there are natural resource concerns that you may not think exist in a city--but they do--and the students can foster and directly impact these natural systems in gardens like STEAM URBAN's. It's a valuable platform for educational outreach that can positively impact urban communities and our next generation of natural resource specialists."

For more information about STEAM URBAN

For more information about the NRCS

Asbury Park Mayor's Wellness Committee Living Well Initiative

BY HONORABLE MAYOR JOHN MOOR, CITY OF ASBURY PARK



Photos by: Office of Asbury Park

Inspired by Netflix's August 2023 series "Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zone," leaders of the Asbury Park Mayor's Wellness Committee launched the Blue Bishops Living Well Initiative with the goal of transforming Asbury Park into a Blue Zone city, where residents lead long, vibrant lives. Our mission is to promote healthier living while ensuring it remains enjoyable.

Currently, in its first year, the initiative focuses on raising awareness and providing practical advice for a healthier lifestyle.

Key principles include:

- Move Naturally: Incorporate more physical activity into your daily routine (e.g., take the stairs)
- Eat Fresh Foods: Enhance your well-being with fresh vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains.
 - Find Your Tribe: Connect with others committed to improving their lives to stay motivated.
 - Join a Faith-Based Community: Engage with organizations that enrich your spiritual life.

Asbury Park is vibrant with year-round activities, beautiful food, and friendly people. Our goal is to make these resources accessible to everyone. Recent initiatives include collaborations with Home Drug Store, the Asbury Park Public Library, and Interfaith Neighbors' Kula Farm. We organized a "Grow Your Own" container garden event and set up a free seed catalog at the Library. We've hosted chef talks on plant-based cuisines, community panels on the link between food and mood, and a vegan cooking session with the Boys and Girls Club. Our upcoming event, AP ALIVE 2024, will feature bicycle rodeos, healthy snack demos, and more.

Additionally, the Mayor's Wellness Committee partnered with Interfaith Neighbors for an autism-friendly event at their Farm without Borders. Participants explored produce, discussed dietary needs for autism, and enjoyed food games. One mother expressed gratitude, noting it was the first autism-friendly event she had seen advertised, making her feel included and safe.

Why is this important? Asbury Park faces significant health challenges, including being the 16th most severe food desert in New Jersey, limiting access to fresh, nutritious food. Heart disease, the leading cause of death here and across the State, can often be mitigated through lifestyle changes. Supporting local farmers, given Monmouth County's rich agricultural heritage, is crucial for both preserving this heritage and providing access to fresh produce for preventative health.

To address these challenges, several solutions have been implemented. The Community Food Connection, organized by Interfaith Neighbors, connects thousands to free, fresh, local produce from Fernbrook and Hideaway Farms, making it a leading farm-to-family program. The Plate to Pantry Initiative repurposes restaurant food for delivery to senior centers, shelters, and pantries. Asbury Fresh, one of two farmers' markets in Monmouth County that accepts SNAP, doubles the benefits through the N.J. Good Food Bucks Program. And in collaboration with Rutgers University's sustainability program, a community food assessment was conducted, and a countywide food policy coalition is being formed to create systemic changes for a healthier food system.

The City is grateful for all the local partners who help Asbury Park become a better place to live, especially Karyn Moskowitz of Interfaith Neighbors, whose efforts drive the Asbury Park Mayor's Wellness Committee Living Well Initiative.



[Click here for more information](#)



COMMERCIAL PROJECTS DRIVING TRANSFORMATION IN PERTH AMBOY

By Honorable Mayor Helmin J. Caba and Lisett Lebron, Chief of Staff

Over the last three years, the City of Perth Amboy has launched a series of impactful projects aimed at revitalizing its downtown, investing over \$2.6 million in safety enhancements, beautification, accessibility, and community engagement. These projects are the result of strategic collaborations with the Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) Program, Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Perth Amboy Business Improvement Corporation (PABIC). The city's commitment to creating a vibrant, accessible, and welcoming space for residents, businesses, and visitors alike is clearly evident through these efforts.

Enhancing Safety: Security Cameras and the Seasonal Clean Team

Public safety has been a key priority. In 2024, the city directed approximately \$500,000 in UEZ funding to purchase and install advanced security cameras throughout all commercial areas. These cameras, monitored by the Perth Amboy Police Department, are designed to enhance security and ensure swift responses to any incidents.

The city also launched the Seasonal Clean Team initiative, which collaborates with other departments to maintain cleanliness, particularly during peak seasons. This team works to ensure that Perth Amboy remains a welcoming destination year-round.

Beautification Initiatives and Fountain Transformation

The city has spearheaded several beautification projects to elevate the downtown's aesthetic. In 2023, Perth Amboy invested \$190,000, fully funded by the UEZ, to acquire new litter sweepers. These one-armed vacuums, operated by the Department of Public Works, ensure that high-traffic areas like sidewalks and parks remain clean and inviting.

One major transformation was the removal of the non-functioning fountain at the 5 Corners in 2023, turning this prominent location into a vibrant space for community events and pop-up art installations, funded through a combination of CDBG, NPP, and UEZ resources.

To further address cleanliness, the city replaced outdated litter containers with 120 new units featuring the Perth Amboy and UEZ logos. This \$120,000 investment was paired with the installation of 50 self-watering "EarthPlanters," bringing both practicality and visual appeal to the district.

Community Pride: Hometown Hero Banners and Trolley Service

The city continues to foster community pride through projects like the Hometown Heroes Banner program. Launched between 2022 and 2023, this \$43,000 initiative honors local service members and veterans by displaying their photos and ranks on banners throughout downtown Perth Amboy.

In 2024, the city introduced a new Trolley Service, funded by \$300,000 from the UEZ and support from local businesses. This service will highlight key historical and cultural locations within Perth Amboy, improving accessibility and encouraging economic growth by drawing attention to the city's rich heritage.

The city has also introduced a Free Bikeshare Program, allowing residents and visitors to explore downtown and waterfront areas more easily while promoting sustainable transportation.

Looking Ahead: Rosengarten Park and Future Developments

Rosengarten Park is set to become a cornerstone of Perth Amboy's downtown revitalization. Scheduled to break ground in 2025, this \$1.4 million pocket park will be funded by a \$688,000 NPP-ARP grant, \$700,000 from the UEZ, and contributions from the PABIC. The park will feature an outdoor stage, picnic tables, and vibrant landscaping, serving as a central gathering space for community events and leisure activities.



Photos by: Office of Mayor Helmin J. Caba

Check out some of our latest partnered projects & upcoming* improvements!

¡Chequea a algunas de nuestros últimos proyectos asociados y próximas* mejoras!



Office of Economic & Community Development

Urban Enterprise Zone Program

(732) 826-0290 ext. 4051
uez@perthamboynj.org
www.perthamboynj.org

Scan the QR Code to visit our website and learn more about our initiatives.





Community Baby Shower

Photos by: Office of Mayor Tony Vauss

Community Baby Shower-
Acting Health Director Baffour Asare,
Health & Wellness Outreach Cord Kimberly
Pierre, Senator Renee C Burgess, and Staff

Photos by: Office of Mayor Tony Vauss



Opioid Awareness Event- Acting Director Baffour Asare & HD staff Alison Bryant

Photos by: Office of Mayor Tony Vauss



Opioid Awareness Event

Using Innovation To Increase Access To Health And Prevention

By Kimberly Pierre MPH,
CHES © Special Projects/ Health & Wellness Outreach Coordinator Office of the Mayor

In recent years, the Township of Irvington has taken intentional steps to make health and prevention not only accessible but also appealing to the public. This year, Irvington kicked off with its 3rd Annual Community Baby Shower during Black Maternal Health Week, providing essential baby items and resources such as WIC sign-ups, capillary lead testing, lead abatement programs, and more. However, this was just the beginning. What started as a once-a-year event has evolved into a year-round effort, with the township transforming into a hub for continuous access to resources for our residents. We're cultivating an environment where families can regularly access baby items, health services, and other critical support. This intentional shift allows us to better serve uninsured and underinsured residents, ensuring that resources are available whenever they are needed most.

To engage residents in important health conversations, we've focused on creating innovative and appealing events. One example is the annual Opioid Awareness Event, where community members come together for an enjoyable gathering that provides accessible prevention resources, support services, Narcan, literature, and more. This event merges these critical resources with performances by renowned musical artists, refreshments, and engaging speakers who address the impact of opioid addiction.

The township's innovative and intentional focus on making health and prevention accessible is transforming how we serve our community. From annual events like the Community Baby Shower to our ongoing efforts to provide year-round resources, we are building a support system that fosters health, wellness, and resilience for all residents. Together, we are creating a healthier and stronger community.

City of Trenton: End of Summer Newsletter



by City of Trenton

As the summer winds down and we prepare for the upcoming fall season, we are excited to share the highlights from an incredibly successful and vibrant summer here in the Capital City. Our youth programs have been filled with enthusiasm, learning, and community spirit. Here's a recap of the outstanding activities and achievements that made this summer truly remarkable.

Junior Public Safety Academy (JSPA) Graduation

We are thrilled to announce that 24 young individuals have successfully graduated from the Junior Public Safety Academy (JSPA)! This dynamic program, which ran from July 8 to August 21, was designed for youth ages 12-16 and offered a comprehensive introduction to public safety. Our cadets participated in a variety of educational and hands-on activities, from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm daily.

Certifications and Training was completed in the following areas:

Boating Safety, CPR, AED, and First Aid, Bloodborn Pathogens, Fire Extinguishers, Intro to Scuba Diving, Stop the Bleed, Introduction to Drones, and Rope Safety.

These young cadets now have valuable skills and certifications that will benefit them and their communities for years to come.



Junior Public Safety Academy (JSPA) Graduation

Photos by: Office of The City of Trenton

Trenton Police Department Youth Summer Camp

The Youth Summer Camp, held by the Trenton Police Department, was another highlight of the summer. Running for five weeks from July 8 through August 23, this program provided a safe and engaging environment for over 30 different children each week, ages 10-15 from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. During the course of the summer, over 150 city youth were offered a variety of fun and educational activities but also received a sense of accomplishment, new experiences and a certificate for completion of the camp.



Trenton Police Department Youth Summer Camp

Photos by: Office of The City of Trenton

Trenton's Department of Recreation Summer Activities

Our Department of Recreation has been busy this summer with a diverse range of activities designed to keep the community active and engaged.

Fun Fitness:

Duration: 8 weeks

Location: Cadwalader Park (near the Ranger's station)

Activities: Zumba, Strength & Flex, Soca Phit

These outdoor fitness sessions offered free, invigorating workouts promoting a healthy lifestyle to our city residents.

Movie Under the Stars:

Locations: 8 outdoor venues across Trenton

Features: Free movies and popcorn for families

This popular series brought friends and families together for enjoyable evenings under the night sky, creating memorable experiences for all ages.

2024 Summer Youth Program:

Duration: 6 weeks

Activities: Swimming lessons, literacy enrichment, tennis and golf lessons, field trips, and more.

This program offered a fantastic mix of educational and recreational activities, providing a fun and enriching summer experience for our youth.

We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all the dedicated City Employees, youth, and families, who made this summer so memorable. Your enthusiasm and participation have been instrumental in the success and completion of these programs.

We look forward to continuing our commitment to engaging and enriching our community throughout the year. Stay tuned for more exciting events and opportunities in the coming months!



Photos by: Office of The City of Trenton

**For more information about
upcoming programs and events,
please visit our website
<https://www.trentonnj.org/>**

Roselle On The Move: Economic Development Enhancing Our Quality Of Life

By Honorable Mayor Donald Shaw

I'm proud of the work we are doing as a Borough. We've defined a vision for the Borough & we are taking major, tangible steps towards bringing that vision to life.

- Mayor Donald Shaw

Empowering Local Businesses

A cornerstone of our recent efforts is the expansion of the Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ). This initiative has significantly boosted opportunities for local business owners, offering access to crucial loans and state resources such as a \$25k forgivable state loan for facade improvements. Another UEZ benefit allows Jazz Thursday attendees to receive free food vouchers at participating UEZ restaurants. This initiative allows 100 people weekly to experience the diverse culinary offerings in Roselle while helping our local eateries attract new customers and thrive.

Revitalizing Downtown

The heart of our downtown, Chestnut Street, is undergoing a remarkable transformation thanks to a \$2 million federal grant. This project involves repaving streets and creating inviting public spaces with modern overhead lighting. Our mission is to make Roselle a walkable, enjoyable community where residents can relish a vibrant local atmosphere without the need to venture beyond the borough. "This initiative is a transformative project that will revive our downtown. It is also evidence of the great partnership we have built with our federal legislators, the late Congressman Donald Payne Jr. & Senator Corey Booker," said Councilwoman Denise Wilkerson.

Attracting New Businesses and Enhancing Amenities

Our surveys highlighted the demand for sit-down family restaurants, which has guided our revitalization strategy. By attracting more dining options and new businesses to our downtown area, we are not only meeting this demand but also boosting the overall appeal of our community.



Honorable Mayor Donald Shaw
Borough of Roselle

The grant-funded facade improvements will further beautify our business district, enhancing the experience for both residents and visitors.

Improvements are also underway on St. Georges Street, a prominent thoroughfare long in need of attention. Upcoming projects include a 195-unit apartment building offering both luxury and affordable living spaces. This development is poised to transform the area, drawing in new businesses and residents. An IHOP is set to open, with additional businesses expressing interest in this revitalized real estate.

Enhancing Community Facilities

This summer, Roselle families enjoyed two, newly refurbished parks. Thanks to state grants, we're building the new Warren Street Park that will cater to our special needs community. We will also start work on a revitalized Home Terrace Park. Additionally, we are weeks away from the opening of our new \$17 million library, with \$11.5 million funded by grants. This state-of-the-art facility will not only elevate the academic and intellectual levels within the Borough but also provide ample space for valuable community programming.

A Growing Community

Roselle is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for new businesses and residents alike. Our diverse and vibrant community of 22,000 people, with a median household income of \$75,000, continues to grow and flourish. The enhancements to our infrastructure and amenities are making Roselle a dynamic community where people want to live, work, and enjoy an exceptional quality of life.

KUBS PROGRAM ON THE MOVE

Peggy Thompson (KUBS On The Move)



KUBS On The Move Team

(Left to Right): Trinity Thompson, Delia Latini, Michael Shapiro, Peggy Thompson

Kean University Building Stronger (K.U.B.S) Urban Communities program, under the Division of Transformational Learning & External Affairs, understands the importance of community engagement, the impact it has on urban communities, and the experiential benefits to Kean University student volunteers.

Leaders from the KUBS program, along with Student Assistants from the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research, visited New Jersey School districts to present "most valuable player" trophies to students who participated in the KUBS Basketball Invitational held on January 13, 2024.

Surrounded by a community of support, selected students from Hillside, Newark Westside, Newark Science Park, Trenton, and Ewing boys' and girls' basketball teams who scored the highest in points, rebounds, assists, blocks, and steals, were all presented with personalized inscribed KUBS program trophies.

Each visit included an informative Q&A session where students had the opportunity to learn more about the Kean University campus community, academic and athletic programs, and engage with student assistants expounding on their experiences and opportunities. It was a life-changing experience for all who participated.

"Central to the core value of community engagement is fostering essential life skills, understanding and appreciating diverse perspectives, compassion, leadership, teamwork, responsibility, problem-solving, and empathy," said **Student Assistant Trinity Thompson**.

"It was truly inspiring to witness the enthusiasm and passion of these young athletes. During my visit, I also had the chance to share my college experience and emphasize the tremendous value of education," said **Student Assistant Delia Latini**.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" said Martin Luther King Jr. **The KUBS program leadership team is committed to the core value of action in community, making a difference, nurturing student growth, and creating pathways to success beyond the classroom.**



NFBPA NJ Chapter: Mission and Upcoming Networking Opportunities

By David G. Brown II, MPA, NFBPA
NJ Chapter President and National Board Member



Photos by: NFBPA

The New Jersey Chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) is dedicated to advancing the careers of Black public administrators through leadership development, mentorship, and fostering diversity in public service. The chapter's mission is rooted in promoting excellence in governance and ensuring equitable representation for communities of color in public administration.

NFBPA NJ provides several opportunities for professionals to connect, collaborate, and build relationships across sectors.

The annual golf outing was held on Monday, October 14th, at Shady Rest Golf Course in Scotch Plains. It offered a relaxed atmosphere for networking, fun, and for building camaraderie. The historic Shady Rest Golf Course, once the first African American-owned golf club in the United States, provided the perfect setting for public administrators, elected officials, and private-sector partners to connect over a round of golf and discuss pressing issues facing New Jersey communities.

On Tuesday, November 19th, during the New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference. In partnership with the New Jersey Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), this reception will bring together public administration and law enforcement leaders.

Both events reflect NFBPA NJ's commitment to fostering professional growth and creating spaces for Black public administrators to excel in their careers. Contact David G. Brown II, MPA, NFBPA NJ Chapter President, at david.g.brown.ii@gmail.com to stay connected for updates and more engagement opportunities!



Stay Connected!
visit www.nfbpa.org



David G. Brown II,
MPA NFBPA NJ Chapter, NFBPA, Co-Chair, Finance,
Budget, and Investment Committee NFBPA Board Member

Dr. Joseph Youngblood II,
S.V.P. of Transformational President Learning
& External Affairs at Kean University

Photos by: John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research

The John S. Watson of Public Policy and Research at Kean University partners with the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)

By John S. Watson Institute For Urban Policy And Research

The recent EMERGE conference, hosted by the New Jersey Chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) from July 25-28, was a remarkable gathering for professionals committed to public service and community development. Held for the first time at Kean University, the event showcased a range of informative sessions focused on the latest trends and best practices in public administration.

In 2023, Kean University's John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research and NFBPA-NJ established a formal partnership to provide NFBPA members with discounted tuition for undergraduate and graduate programs, including Public Administration. The agreement also includes waived application fees, tailored support services, and professional development programs. Kean University will support NFBPA-NJ with conference planning and policy analysis, reinforcing a shared commitment to inclusive leadership and advancing public administration in New Jersey.

Dr. Joseph Youngblood, II, Senior Vice President for Transformational Learning and External Affairs, welcomed the attendees, emphasizing the university's dedication to urban research and innovation, and the critical importance of upskilling and reskilling for public administrators and public service professionals. He expressed pride in hosting such a distinguished group and highlighted the significance of the historic academic partnership between Kean University and the NFBPA, the first of its kind for the organization. This groundbreaking collaboration aims to equip public service leaders with the skills to navigate today's complex public sector and municipal challenges.

In his remarks, Dr. Youngblood reflected on the challenges and rewards of leadership, urging attendees to fully embrace the learning and exploration opportunities offered throughout the conference. His words set an inspiring tone for the event, which focused on enhancing the knowledge and experiences of Black public administrators.

How is New Jersey getting the Lead out?

EPA's LCRI Features New Jersey's Blueprint for Success: A Nationwide Model for Lead Service Line Replacement

By: Deandrah Cameron
Policy Manager, New Jersey Future



Smart Infrastructure. Lead-Free Communities.

PRIMER for Mayors

"Let's Get the Lead Out of Our Drinking Water"

What New Jersey Local Officials Need to Know

Lead Service Line Efficiency Measures

Lead exposure can lead to irreversible health issues affecting the cardiovascular, kidney, and reproductive systems in adults and the neurological system in children. As local officials, thank you for ensuring the safety and well-being of the people in your community by getting the lead out and making New Jersey a blueprint for nationwide success.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) incorporated many of the best practices from New Jersey's landmark **2021 Lead Service Line Replacement Law** into its **Lead and Copper Rule Improvements**, including the requirement that all lead service lines (LSLs) be replaced within ten years. **New Jersey Future (NJF)** and many partners in the **Jersey Water Works (JWW) Collaborative** have been engaged in lead issues for half a decade, convening partners and analyzing the financial and public health burdens in impacted communities and the extent of lead in our drinking water systems. For municipalities and water systems needing support in lead removal, we are ready to assist in eliminating lead from our environment:

- The **JWW LSL Implementation Work Group** identifies best practices and potential solutions to technical issues in collaboration with drinking water systems and technical experts.
- The **Lead-Free NJ Water Advocacy Committee** is exploring filter-first policies to address lead in schools.
- NJF's **Funding Navigator** program supports water systems serving overburdened communities in accessing federal funding.

Promoting public health and keeping your community safe are priorities for all mayors in New Jersey. That's why Jersey Water Works is sending your office the latest edition of our Lead Primer for Mayors, which includes ten efficiency measures for cost-effective and equitable lead service line replacements. The Primer for Mayors is designed to help municipalities and agencies meet the mandate that all water systems replace lead service lines by 2031.

For more information and to receive regular updates on lead in drinking water from Jersey Water Works, please contact Deandrah Cameron, NJF Policy Manager, at dcameron@njfuture.org or (609) 262-3545 ext. 1022

VISIT jerseywaterworks.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION



DMAVA Takes Bold Steps to Proactively Connect Veterans and Their Families with Vital Services Through Unite Us Technology

By Shaina Foster, MS, CHES –Unite Us

Through the Unite New Jersey Veterans Initiative, DMAVA is spearheading the creation of an integrated support system that simplifies access to benefits, transportation, and social services, ensuring no veteran or family member is overlooked. Community-based organizations can join this network at no cost, contributing to a stronger, more connected support system for those who have served.

Together, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA) has taken a critical step forward by partnering with Unite Us, the nation's trusted partner for social care transformation, to develop an Assistance Request Form (ARF) for Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families (SMVF). Through this partnership, SMVF can fill out auto self-refer for services they need such as veterans benefits, transportation, peer support, and other social service programs. Leveraging Unite Us' closed-loop referral system, DMAVA will ensure that SMVFs are seamlessly connected to the support they need.

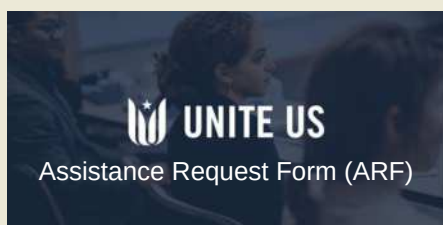
Through the **Unite New Jersey Veterans Initiative**, DMAVA and Unite Us will build a seamless, efficient support system for veteran service organizations, healthcare providers, government agencies, and community-based organizations to create an integrated network of care. Our goal is to ensure that every SMVF receives the support they need when they need it.

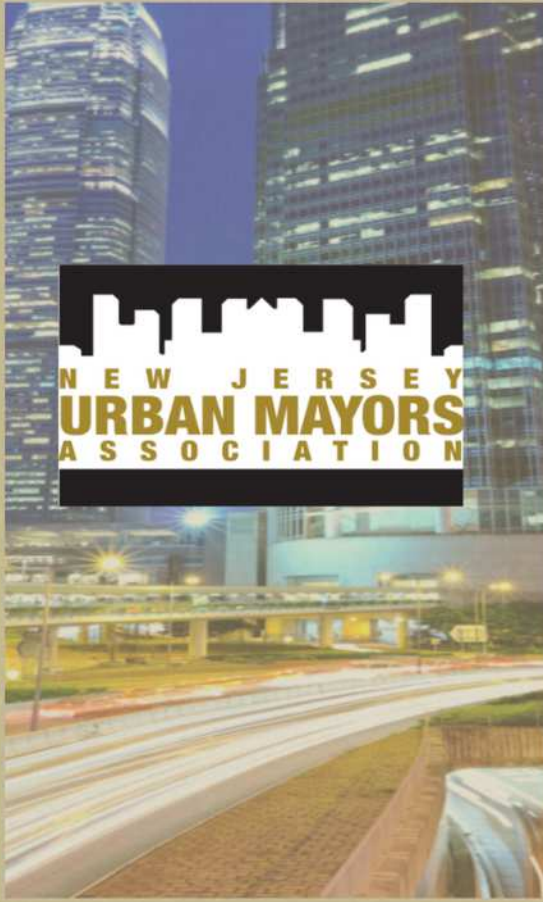
At the heart of this effort is Unite Us' innovative technology. It creates a secure and streamlined infrastructure that empowers community organizations to deliver exceptional care. The platform enables fast, accurate connections between veterans and the services they need, ensuring their unique challenges are addressed with precision and compassion.

Since launching this partnership, we have already seen the profound impact of our efforts. The Unite New Jersey network has connected thousands of individuals to nearly 1,000 programs, providing critical services and support. These early successes highlight the effectiveness of our coordinated approach and fuel our commitment to expanding this network.

Together, we are transforming how community health needs are met, setting a new standard for coordinated care that will benefit SMVF now and in the future. We invite all community-based organizations to join us in this mission. By becoming part of the Unite New Jersey network—**at no cost**—organizations will gain access to powerful tools and resources to better serve our military population and their families.

Let's make a lasting impact on the lives of those who have served our country. Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families (SMVF) can now self-refer for the support they need by using the new Assistance Request Form. Additionally, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) can join the Unite New Jersey network **at no cost**. If you're interested in joining or learning more about the ARF, please reach out to Shaina Foster, Senior Customer Success Manager at Unite Us, at shaina.foster@uniteus.com





THE HONORABLE ADRIAN O. MAPP
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF PLAINFIELD
PRESIDENT OF THE
NEW JERSEY URBAN MAYORS ASSOCIATION
cordially invites you to attend the NJUMA events at

THE 109th ANNUAL NEW JERSEY
LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES CONFERENCE

Wednesday, November 20th, 2024

League Session

**"Using Stranded Assets for Innovative,
Affordable Housing Solutions"**

CEUs Available for Eligible Attendees

Atlantic City Convention Center, Room 419
10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Annual Reception

The Event Center at Borgata
1 Borgata Way, Atlantic City, NJ 08401
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

SCAN TO RSVP



A Very Special

THANK
YOU

to our *Visionary Sponsor*
for your generous support.

UNITED
AIRLINES



THANK YOU

to our *Champion Sponsors*



and



for your generous support





Submissions for our Winter 2025 issue are due Dec. 15

To contribute to the next edition click here to fill out the submission form.

Any questions? Please contact watson@kean.edu

To learn more about NJUMA, visit us at

www.kean.edu/new-jersey-urban-mayors-policy-center

Follow the Watson Institute on social media



KEAN
John S. Watson Institute for
URBAN POLICY & RESEARCH