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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 hope you enjoy reading our Spring 2024 edition of the Urban Mayors Press! This digital newsletter is created to highlight the impactful work of the 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!



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Photo by: Office of Mayor Adrian O. Mapp

Dear New Jersey Urban Mayor's Members And Community Partners,

It's my pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of the Urban Mayor's Press. I'm excited to share our progress and plans alongside insights from my fellow urban mayors across the state. As president of NJUMA, one of my top priorities is to collaborate with my fellow mayors to find solutions to the issues that uniquely affect our communities and highlight those that need intervention from our state and federal leaders.

Over the past year, we lost two of our stalwart advocates: Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver and Congressman Donald Payne Jr. Their dedication and service left an indelible mark on our communities and a legacy for us to follow as we strive to build a better future for all.

Affordable housing remains a pressing concern for urban mayors in New Jersey. High housing costs burden many families, undermining their economic stability and quality of life. As urban leaders, we are uniquely positioned to champion innovative solutions that address these challenges head-on. Our urban centers are the epicenters of growth and innovation, and with this comes the responsibility to address disparities in housing affordability and availability.

By uniting our voices, we can amplify the call for change and model successful affordable housing initiatives. Urban municipalities are exploring zoning reforms, tax incentives, and public-private partnerships to promote affordable housing development while ensuring sustainability and community integration. However, our efforts need the support of suburban and rural municipalities. Affordable housing is a statewide issue, and addressing it will improve economic stability and enhance the quality of life for all New Jersey residents.

Our recent trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the 2024 NJUMA Policy Exchange, highlighted the importance of federal support in our efforts. Engaging with key federal officials, we focused on securing resources for initiatives that directly impact our urban areas. These discussions covered leveraging the Inflation Reduction Act for zero-emission port equipment and infrastructure, enhancing water infrastructure, improving air quality standards, and securing funding for crucial housing and transportation projects. Our engagements also emphasized the significance of federal assistance in addressing critical urban issues like gun violence prevention and emerging technologies in cities.

The insights gained from our Washington, D.C. trip have invigorated our resolve to pursue positive changes for our cities. We must adopt proactive, innovative policies that encourage the development of affordable housing. This includes considering land use policies for higher densities and mixed-use developments, streamlining approval processes for affordable housing projects, and ensuring our local governments act as partners in progress. Together, as stewards of New Jersey's future, we must commit to making affordable housing a reality for all residents. The time for action is now, and as leaders, we have the responsibility to ensure every New Jerseyan has access to a safe, affordable home. Let's stand united in this cause and lead by example.

In this issue, we'll focus on some of the innovations taking place in our urban centers across New Jersey.

East Orange: Learn about the innovative free commercial drone training program that is among the first of its kind in the nation, providing residents with FAA certification and new career opportunities.

Passaic: Discover the significant zoning changes aimed at increasing affordable housing through the introduction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and mandatory affordable housing set-asides.

Atlantic City: Read about the tribute to the late Sheila Oliver with the new and improved City Hall Courtyard dedicated in her honor.

Newark: Hear from Mayor Ras J. Baraka, the immediate past president of NJUMA, about his continued efforts to drive progress and innovative solutions in Newark.

Pleasantville: Get insights on the construction of a new waterfront park at Lakes Bay, leveraging significant redevelopment to create a vibrant community space.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and inspiring. Together, we can make a difference in addressing the challenges facing our urban communities. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to making New Jersey a better place for all.

Sincerely,

Mayor Adrian O. Mapp
City of Plainfield
President, New Jersey Urban Mayors Association



New Jersey Urban Mayors Association Statement
On The Passing Of Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver

IN MEMORIAM OF LT. GOVERNOR SHEILA Y. OLIVER



The New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) mourns the passing of Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver.

The Lt. Governor's innovative approaches and vision have yielded transformative results in various sectors, be it education, healthcare or housing. Her unwavering dedication to public service has created a ripple effect that will continue to shape statewide policies and initiatives for years to come. As we reflect on her life of service, we are reminded of the importance of compassion, integrity and selflessness in leadership. We take solace in knowing that her legacy endures through the positive impacts she has made.

The NJUMA extends our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends and colleagues. May they find comfort in knowing that the Lt. Governor's legacy will forever live on in the positive changes she brought to the State of New Jersey, particularly in urban communities.

New Jersey Urban Mayors Association Statement
On The Passing Of Congressman Donald Payne Jr.

IN MEMORIAM OF CONGRESSMAN DONALD PAYNE JR.



APRIL 25, 2024 – UNION, N.J. – The New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) mourns the passing of Congressman Donald Payne Jr.

Congressman Payne Jr. demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to ensuring every community had a voice and access to resources needed for growth and prosperity through his tenure. He was a tireless advocate for social justice, economic empowerment, and equitable opportunities for all, embodying the values of compassion, integrity, and inclusivity.

Congressman Payne Jr. was a beacon of hope and progress, championing initiatives that revitalized neighborhoods, created jobs, and improved the quality of life for residents. Beyond his legislative accomplishments, Congressman Payne Jr. will be remembered for his empathy, integrity, collaborative spirit, and unwavering dedication to public service. His loss is deeply felt by his constituents and all who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside him.

The NJUMA extends our heartfelt condolences to Congressman Payne's family, friends, and colleagues. May his memory be a source of comfort and strength and may his soul rest in peace knowing the profound impact he had on the lives of so many.

A New Chapter in Affordable Housing: Introducing ADUs in Passaic

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



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

Photo by: Office of Mayor Hector C. Lora

The state of New Jersey is facing an unprecedented affordable housing crisis, which predates the COVID-19 pandemic but is magnified by the economic and social consequences of the virus. Renters are facing climbing housing costs, with studies indicating a surge of 30% in rent amounts in the year 2022 alone, surpassing the rate of inflation. However, this surge is unsurprising given New Jersey's rank as the fourth most expensive state for renters nationwide.

In the face of such an urgent crisis, the need for innovative strategies to address it becomes paramount. That is why I am proud to introduce significant zoning changes aimed at bolstering our affordable housing through the introduction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and mandatory set asides of affordable housing in the City of Passaic.

The newly adopted ADU ordinance permits the establishment of independent living spaces within or attached to single-family or two-family residences that must be rented as an affordable housing unit. One ADU per lot will be permitted and can exist within basements, garages, attics, and ground floors; cellars remain prohibited. The units can include facilities for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation, effectively creating self-contained living options on the same parcel as the principal dwelling. This initiative not only increases the number of available housing spaces in our City but also creates inclusive, multigenerational living spaces that support families in staying together—be it for accommodating aging parents, grown children, or family members with disabilities. The implementation of ADUs is expected to provide a significant financial advantage to homeowners by enabling them to earn rental income, which can help cover mortgage payments and is particularly important for our senior residents and those on fixed incomes who wish to grow old in their current community, near family and friends.

Another initiative in increasing affordable housing stock in Passaic is requiring the set aside rate of 20% of for sale units and 15% for rental units in all multifamily developments of five dwelling units or more. This will ensure that a portion of new developments in Passaic is dedicated to affordable housing making it accessible to low and moderate income residents who might struggle to afford housing in the city.

Despite modest population growth from 69,861 in 2010 to 70,537 in recent years, Passaic confronts a stark economic reality. Our median household income of \$57,832 lags far behind both the state and national averages (\$97,126 and \$74,580, respectively), with a substantial portion of our residents living below the poverty line. These economic challenges are compounded by a state-wide deficit of over 200,000 affordable housing units and the global phenomenon of an aging population, a situation exacerbated by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy and housing market. In light of these problems, these initiatives are not only timely but critical, and provides Passaic with a practical response to our community's immediate and long-term housing needs.

The benefits of affordable housing extend beyond considerations applicable to financial management. It is a vital determinant of health not only for individuals (affordable housing has been associated with improved quality of life and improved health outcomes), but for communities. Housing is an essential factor to reducing intergenerational poverty and increasing economic mobility, with studies demonstrating that affordable housing is associated with lower rates of childhood poverty, enhanced academic performance, and higher salaries in adulthood². Therefore, it is no wonder that promoting affordable housing also boosts economic growth, as each dollar invested in this sector leverages both public and private resources to generate income and support employment creation and maintenance. Significantly, affordable housing also plays a critical role in reducing homelessness in communities.

While there are concerns regarding potential issues such as increased parking needs, overcrowding, and waste management, these are challenges that we are prepared to manage. We are committed to ensuring that any developments adhere strictly to City and state regulations to mitigate such impacts effectively.

Passaic's ADU and mandatory set aside ordinances set a precedent for how urban centers can innovatively and compassionately respond to the housing crisis. We are not just reshaping our City's housing landscape, but investing in a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable community for all generations. I am excited to witness the advantageous consequences of my initiatives, and hope that it can contribute to making our great City more vibrant, equitable, and welcoming for all its residents.



Atlantic City Project Pays Tribute to the Late Sheila Oliver

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



Photo by: City Of Atlantic City Communications



Mayor Small Speaking at the Courtyard Project Groundbreaking Ceremony

Photo by: City Of Atlantic City Communications

Before her passing last Summer, Sheila Oliver was a strong advocate and champion for the great City of Atlantic City. Long before she was Lieutenant Governor of New Jersey, she was in the state legislature fighting the good fight for Atlantic City. And when she was put in the position as Lieutenant Governor and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, she made it clear the days of bigfooting Atlantic City are over. While Atlantic City is under a state takeover, it truly is a partnership between the city and DCA, and we owe that to the 'LG' as I affectionately called her.

Our Youth Services, Senior Services and Multicultural Services divisions would not even be in existence if it weren't for Sheila Oliver. The City of Atlantic City needed to find the right way to pay tribute for all she has done, and we could not think of a better way to show our respect and appreciation than by dedicating our new and improved City Hall Courtyard in her honor. Construction on the 'Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver Plaza' is underway now.

We have been working on this project in partnership with Atlantic County and the State of New Jersey for quite some time, and officially broke ground in March of this year. We were proud to welcome Sheila Oliver's family, representatives from the New Jersey DCA, as well as city and county leaders for a special groundbreaking ceremony, before we put the shovels to the dirt in the courtyard for the first time to formally kick off the beginning of this project. All of our speakers had nothing but amazing things to say about Sheila Oliver. It's evident how much she was truly loved.

The new courtyard will be beautiful when construction is complete this Fall. It will include benches, a rain garden, a marble fountain, a pergola, new trees, shrubs and grass, and freshly coated paint. Safety features will include improved lighting and a gated entrance. This project embodies the spirit of Sheila Oliver, and we know she was with all of us in spirit for the groundbreaking. The 'LG' and I often talked about her living in Atlantic City when she retires. Well, with her name about to be forever etched above the City Hall main entrance with an entire courtyard dedicated to her memory, we can proudly say that Sheila Oliver got that Atlantic City retirement she often dreamed of, and I'm happy to say it happened under the Small administration.

Photo by: City Of Atlantic City Communications



Atlantic City, Atlantic County and State of New Jersey Officials Join Mayor Small for the City Hall Courtyard Groundbreaking Ceremony

10 Years of Progress and Innovative Solutions

By Honorable Ras J. Baraka



Photo by: Office of Honorable Ras J. Baraka

As I delivered my 10th State of the City address last month, I spoke about the strides we have made in Newark but, equally, how our work is not done. More than ever, I feel an urgent pull and call to action, to find answers and forge solutions for the challenges that lie ahead.

This internal longing for transformation is so strong because the need across our state is so great and our collective future is at stake. We must work tirelessly to improve the conditions of our people and improve their quality of life. Change and reform is necessary but also the optimism that we can effectively tackle challenges and create innovative solutions is our true "David moment" for our Goliathan challenges.

When I ran for mayor, I enjoyed being City Councilman representing my home district of the South Ward, and I knew becoming mayor would take me away from my job at Central High, where we dedicated ourselves to transforming lives and empowering youth to reach their fullest potential and, ultimately, build a better Newark. What I learned from that role is that change must be systemic, so I decided to do the very things I taught my students: to take risks, to grow and to find your very best life, and in the process build a better world around you, not just for yourself but for your families and for your neighbors.

My strength and drive came from the influence of my parents, my love of Newark, and the firm belief that our ideas were big enough to influence and embrace other people, and in turn build better cities and states, and an even better tomorrow, through inclusive governance and community empowerment. This is the embodiment of how I wanted my administration to serve the people, and the promises we laid out through our "Newark Forward" values.

One thing I recognized is that we don't only have a shortage of resources, we also have a shortage of coordination, communication, cooperation, and community engagement.

These four pillars have served as the foundation for our achievements and have propelled us forward in our mission to build a stronger, more resilient city. While Newark was falsely once portrayed as a city "overrun" with crime, our coordinated efforts through the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery and police reforms have dropped our crime numbers to the lowest levels in 60 years, including homicides. We also have less complaints against our police and we have removed more guns off the street, without violating the Civil Rights of our residents. I maintain that we have the finest, most productive police forces in the entire state.

Ten years ago, the City had a \$93 million deficit. We reversed all of that.

Moody's, the investment analytics company, has consistently raised our bond ratings saying, "positive outlook on the city's issuer rating reflects the city's ongoing financial improvement, driven by better fiscal governance, strengthened tax collection procedures and organic growth in certain key tax revenues."

Billions of dollars of development have poured into the City, with more to come, and we have added 4,071 affordable housing units in the last few years with 1,627 on the drawing board, and reduced street homelessness by 50 percent. Space doesn't allow me to list the 1,000 new businesses that have come into Newark, or the dozens upon dozens of major development projects.

No Ward has been left behind, either. Through our \$1 lot program, we have encouraged home ownership for qualifying Newark residents, which we know is the backbone of family wealth and stronger neighborhoods. Additionally, we have plans to plant 4,000 trees to beautify the City and cut down on our heat index.

The definition of Progressive politics is about taking care of people. All people. We supported driver's licenses for undocumented residents so they can work. We supported voting rights for the formerly incarcerated to give them back their lost voice. We will allow 16-year-olds to vote in school board elections, giving them a say in decisions that impact them the most.

We empowered people through our guaranteed income program and gave funding to those that needed it most. Our City-wide literacy push will make us a better-educated City by helping our students find academic success. We're sending students exposed to violence to college for free in a program through St. Elizabeth's College.

We fought for environmental justice by replacing all 23,190 lead-service lines in our City and investing hundreds of millions of dollars to guarantee Newark residents the cleanest, safest and best tasting drinking water possible, and we have plans to bring clean industry to the port. Here in Newark, we define ourselves by the health and welfare of each of us. Our success is forged in that definition, as we continue to move the City, and all those in it, ever forward.

Photo by: Office of Honorable Ras J. Baraka



State of the City Address

ENHANCING WELLNESS THROUGH A CROSS-SECTOR, MULTIMODAL APPROACH

By Stacey Lea Flanagan,

MS, Director Jersey City Department of Health & Human Services Offer Cohen, MS, RDN, Director of Food & Nutrition Jersey City Department of Health & Human Services Brooke Hansson, MS, Chief of Administrative Services, Jersey City Department of Health & Human Services

The Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) utilizes a collaborative, interdepartmental food program approach to access a wide cross-section of populations in need within the city of Jersey City.

Through the Division of Food and Nutrition's (DFN) innovative vertical farm program called Health Greens JC, we built connectivity with Congregate Senior Nutrition and Meals on Wheels programs to deliver enhanced services to vulnerable communities under one umbrella.

By leveraging city-wide resources HHS and The Jersey City Housing Authority (JCPHA) retrofitted disused public housing structures to accommodate our vertical farming program in partnership with *Inspired Growing*. The farms are housed at two JCPHA sites where HHS staff manage and grow a variety of nutrient-rich microgreens. Microgreens provide a range of health benefits and pack more of vitamin and nutrient punch than mature greens, sometimes containing as much as 40% more nutrients (Mayo Clinic, 2023). Rich in potassium, iron, magnesium, zinc, copper and antioxidants, microgreens have been shown to positively promote health and thwart disease. In fact, regular consumption of microgreens has been correlated with type 2 diabetes management, improved cognitive function, reduced risk of heart disease and anemia, helps maintain vision, and could possibly play a role in Alzheimer's prevention (Cleveland Clinic, 2023).

Members enrolled in our program are offered a weekly Nutrition Education classes called *Wellness Wednesdays*. The evidence-based nutrition education material is approved by the HHS's Registered Dietitian. The program also offers a vertical engagement program for its members in a 4-step process.

- 1) Sign up as a member
- 2) Receive free diagnostic testing with our on-site health facilitator

3) In a follow up with a physician, diagnostics are reviewed and referrals are provided for those with comorbidities.

4) Members with comorbidities interested in learning more about their health, are offered a diagnostic wearable called an Oura Ring which accurately tracks performance metrics including quality of sleep, heart health, temperature, along with identification of menstrual cycle and stress triggers.

The members that successfully complete a series of benchmarks are celebrated as Super Green members which helps to incentivize healthy habits and build community.

In light of these benefits, the DFN aligned with the Division of Senior Affairs (DSA) and offered homebound seniors who were enrolled in the Meals on Wheels program the microgreens from our vertical farms, in addition to their weekly meals. Based on the positive response, our Department is planning to expand this component of senior nutrition in the near future. In addition, the DSA has partnered with DFN to bring fitness and yoga instructors to the Congregate sites during the hours that members are present.

Lastly, in a continued effort to expand access and education around our vertical farms, Congregate Nutrition sites are scheduled to open in 2024 at several public housing sites, creating a wellness hub where members will have access to multiple food programs at one location where need is concentrated. This hub will also include nutrition education, as well as fitness and yoga.

East Orange provides innovative free commercial drone training to residents; among first municipalities in nation to do so

By Consuelo B. Jackson, Public Information Officer
City of East Orange

East Orange, NJ: Under the leadership of Mayor Ted R. Green and the East Orange City Council, the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (MOET) launched a Free Commercial Drone Training Program, making it among the first of its kind to provide free training for residents to become FAA certified commercial drone pilots.

The program was borne through a partnership with Alpha Drones USA, owned and operated by United Airlines Commercial Pilot Kelvin King. Started in 2023, the first cohort of 25 students each earned their FAA Part 107 Certification License following a six-week hybrid course comprised of self-directed study, in-person and virtual instruction, and hands-on training.

The required field experience included the commercial cleaning of East Orange City Hall and East Orange Municipal Court, a project that yielded both practical experience and cost savings to the city. The interns also conducted crop fertilization, aerial footage and surveillance. Upon completion, each participant received their FAA Part 107 Certification License to operate commercial drones.

Fourteen students from STEM Academy also completed the free training in collaboration with the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) and the East Orange School District. Subsequently, King transitioned the certified pilots to work as independent contractors for Alpha Drones.

"In East Orange, we are always seeking opportunities to provide diverse and innovative workforce development opportunities for our residents," said Mayor Green.

To be eligible for the program, participant must:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Be able to read, speak, write and understand English
- Be in good physical condition and mental health to safely fly a drone
- Have unexpired government-issued ID
- Pass the initial aeronautical exam

For more information on this program, please contact the MOET office at 973.677.8914.



STEM Student

Photo by: City of East Orange Communications

"The commercial drone industry is forecasted to have tremendous job growth over the next 25 years, and we created this program in order to ensure that our residents had both access and experience in this emerging market."

During the pandemic, the commercial drone market experienced a surge in demand, prompting many industries to use drones to perform important operations such as surveillance, inspection, maintenance, mapping, surveying, and more. With the continuous advancements in AI technology, drone operations are primed for even more sophisticated uses that will improve productivity, reduce costs, increase safety, and expand access to hard-to-reach areas.

In January 2024, Mayor Green presented the innovative program during the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) Workforce Development Council Panel in Washington, D.C.

"A commercial drone license is incredibly marketable in today's workforce, and these newly-licensed aviators are now equipped with tools to build on or create their own businesses, forging a lucrative career path that is revolutionizing how industries operate," said Mayor Green.

Ladonna Johns, Manager of MOET, called the program a gateway and game changer for entrepreneurs, who can earn an annual salary of \$100,000 to start.

Not only are participants learning to fly drones, they are also learning a skill that can be a springboard for budding business owners," said Johns.

Photo by: City of East Orange Communications



Courthouse Drone Training

Pleasantville Creating Waterfront Park At Lakes Bay

Park Project Will Leverage \$45 M Redevelopment

By Honorable Mayor Judy Ward, Pleasantville

The construction of a \$3.37 million waterfront park in Pleasantville is underway. This park will overlook the Atlantic City skyline and is leveraging an additional \$45 million in new development.

The project creates new recreational opportunities and outdoor space while developing an area of the city that had long been vacant.

Mayor Judy Ward said the new project for the old Jokers' Field would provide a much needed outdoor gathering space for residents. She said residents in the past had often been forced to visit out-of-town parks when looking for a place to play with their children and families.

"It's nothing that Pleasantville has had before, all in one spot," Ward said. "The part I'm most excited about is that our residents will be able to stay in the city to enjoy these activities rather than go to another municipality."

The park will include a gazebo, a trail, a water splash pad, flowerbeds and a picnic area. The project also will include a lookout station where people could view Atlantic City and other parts of Absecon Island across the water.

"It's an outdoor event space," Ward said. "We're hoping that it's going to be a place considered as an attraction for others to come into our community, and it's a great outdoor space."

The park also leverages a \$45 million redevelopment project that officials hope will transform Lakes Bay area. Groundbreaking recently occurred for a three-part project intended to create one of the city's most desirable and affordable neighborhoods on the site of the former Pleasantville High School and a neighboring football field.

Bayview Avenue, Franklin Boulevard and Hampden Court bound the proposed development. When completed, it will have six residential buildings with a total of 180 one- and two-bedroom, market rate rental units, with amenities including a pool, clubhouse and gym. There also is a planned commercial component with restaurants along the nearby waterfront.

The land has been vacant since the former high school was demolished in 2006.

Mayor Judy Ward said fulfilling the task of getting the project off the ground is one of her most cherished accomplishments.

"I've seen developers come and go," Ward said. "And now to be at this point and I'm still here to share it, I'm very excited."

In a statement, the Governor's Office said: "The Lakes Bay redevelopment project embodies Governor Murphy's vision for a more sustainable and resilient New Jersey. The construction of 180 market rate rental units, and its additional amenities and the new Pleasantville Waterfront Park, will revitalize the area and promote equitable access to environmentally friendly spaces in our urban communities."



By Honorable Mayor Judy Ward, Pleasantville



Groundbreaking Ceremony

Photo by: Office of Mayor Judy Ward



New City Parks: Seizing The Moment To Bring Parks To Neighborhoods That Need Them

By LoriJeane Moody, Managing Director: Operations, Public Finance, & Development

It is a generational moment for parks and greenspace in our urban communities. In a changing climate and in the wake of the pandemic, there is clarity and urgency around the essential facts that humans need a daily connection with nature and that nature can bring resilience and vitality to our communities.

Social cohesion. Parks facilitate social interaction outside of the people you live or work with. They are places where you encounter regular visitors and establish new connections... where parents and kids, teens playing soccer, senior birders, and daily joggers share space.

Environmental health. Ponds and rain gardens soak up flooding during storms. Native plants and shrubs shelter wildlife. Trees remove air pollution and reduce climate-induced urban heat islands.

Sadly, research reveals too many of our city neighborhoods across the “Garden State” to be nature deficient and park deprived. According to a new comprehensive data set, NatureScore®, the areas surrounding most of our urban residential blocks and public schools qualify as completely lacking adequate “health-supporting natural elements.” Legacies of unjust planning and disinvestment have left many of our cities struggling to maximize the parkland they have. What should be an oasis of green lacks recreational facilities and shady trees that provide joy and respite.

There is, at long last, positive momentum and unprecedented government funding to expand access to trees and green spaces in disadvantaged urban communities. Galvanized mayors are prioritizing parks as essential infrastructure and anchors for community vitality.

But the structure of many of these programs can keep resources out of reach for stretched smaller cities – especially grants for the capital intensity of park rehabilitation that require significant upfront investments in master planning, site surveys, environmental investigations, and more.



NCP Westside Plan

Photo by: New City Parks Erin Wynne

Nonprofit New City Parks (NCP) was founded in 2020 specifically to ensure our cities can meet the moment. Founded by Rose Harvey, former NYS Parks Commissioner for eight years, NCP is helmed by a team with deep experience in urban parks and NJ’s communities. NCP helps cities create, revitalize, and steward parks in low-income neighborhoods – handling upfront conceptual design, outreach, and grant assistance at no municipal cost to catalyze projects. The most unique aspects of NCP’s model are its singular focus and intensely hands-on approach.

NCP has helped five cities across the Northeast – including Paterson, Passaic, and Jersey City in NJ – secure close to \$34 million in capital funding including a new \$4.9 million award from the federal Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program for Paterson’s long sought Westside Park rehabilitation. NCP enhances cities’ financial and operational capacity to prioritize parks for the long term.

This is the time for the municipalities to unlock capital funding and create vibrant parks.

For more information, visit www.newcityparks.org or contact LoriJeane Moody, at LoriJeane@NewCityParks.org.

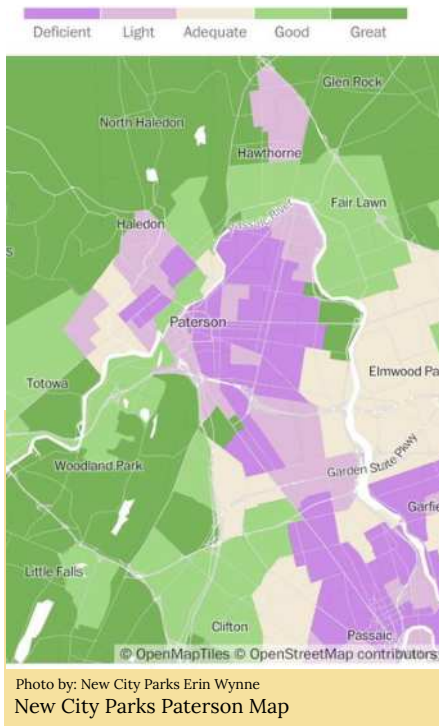


Photo by: New City Parks Erin Wynne
New City Parks Paterson Map

Well-designed, well-maintained parks contribute mightily to:

Health and wellbeing. Easy access to parks alleviates depression, lowers blood pressure, and reduces obesity, to name just a few of the many benefits. Studies have proven that children who have regular access to outdoor play are physically and mentally stronger, more confident, and socially better adjusted.



Photo by: New City Parks Erin Wynne

2024 NJUMA D.C. Policy Exchange: Reflecting On Collaborative Solutions

Written by Dyquan A. Waters and Delia Latini, Student Assistants at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University

The Urban Mayors Policy Center at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy & Research at Kean University led members of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) on a visit to the Capitol Hill and the White House for roundtable discussions for its 2024 Washington DC Policy Exchange.

The federal agency roundtable connected NJUMA members with representatives from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), providing an overview of diverse funding opportunities, empowering each municipality to pursue impactful improvements.

EDA provided valuable insight for NJUMA municipalities to create compelling applications by utilizing creative storytelling when seeking aid to support capacity-building programs and increase their chances of securing necessary funding.

Several NJUMA members expressed concerns regarding efforts to enhance air and water quality. EPA addressed these concerns and provided insights on maximizing impact through collaboration, including initiatives like the Climate and Air Quality Planning Competition, designed to fund climate and air quality planning activities at U.S. ports; including emissions inventories, strategy analysis, community engagement, and resiliency measure identification, all of which will build the capacity of port stakeholders to continue to reduce pollution and transition to zero-emissions operations over time.

With its dense population and proximity to major metropolitan areas like New York and Philadelphia, New Jersey stands as a critical nexus for transportation. The DOT shed light on substantial investments in transportation infrastructure, exemplified by projects like the Hudson Tunnel, underscoring the potential positive impact on NJUMA municipalities.

HUD reviewed innovative solutions to significant factors affecting housing security, including seasonal homelessness, and housing discrimination. While about \$85 million in funds have been allocated to affordable housing programs, there are also ways to revitalize sections of dilapidated housing and utilize modern prefabricated houses.

Following the roundtable discussions, NJUMA members convened at the White House with the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. There, ongoing policy discussions ensued, focusing on topics such as Emerging Tech in Cities, the Inflation Reduction Act, and Gun Violence Prevention.

In light of the rising cybersecurity threats in cities and schools, there is an imminent need to protect critical infrastructure from cyber-attacks. The US government has been addressing this and protecting critical infrastructure from cyber attacks by implementing minimum cybersecurity requirements for operators, disrupting actors through FBI operations, and outlining several cybersecurity resources for state and local governments offered through the Information Security Agency.

A notable highlight of the meeting was the revelation of how municipalities can access tax credits by instituting clean energy programs and infrastructure under the Inflation Reduction Act. Moreover, municipalities can reclaim a percentage of their expenditures through the Direct Pay program for specific projects, like acquiring electric vehicles.

Lastly, the Office of Gun Violence Protection, implemented by the Biden Administration, is working to address gun violence nationwide through a few initiatives: first, expanding community policing and violence intervention, targeting the illegal gun market and companies that produce the untraceable parts, and promoting cultural competency in approaching gun violence reduction.

The 2024 Washington DC Policy Exchange provided the NJUMA with an abundance of resources to enrich their municipalities, enabling ongoing growth and constituent support. The exchange underscored the federal government's commitment to supporting communities nationwide, right down to the municipal level. It strengthened the connections between the NJUMA and all federal agencies for the future.



NJUMA at the D.C. Policy Exchange

Photo by: NJUMA

Urban Issues Will Take Center Stage at Planning and Redevelopment Conference This June

By Michael Atkins, NJF Communication Director

New Jersey is a huge “small” state, brimming with over nine million New Jerseyans from all walks of life. While we all represent our own corners and communities, it can be hard at times to keep up with the many developments, policy innovations, and achievements throughout the Garden State. This June presents an opportunity for urban mayors, city staffers, planning professionals, developers, and advocates to come together with New Jersey Future and the NJ Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA New Jersey) to explore the best and brightest ideas to propel all of our communities forward.

New Jersey Future and APA New Jersey are proud to present our annual New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference. This three-day event will be held virtually on June 5–6 before concluding in person on June 7 at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick. For those who have never attended, this conference is a great opportunity to learn the latest trends, best practices, proven concepts, and bold ideas in planning and promoting smart growth. For our returning attendees, you know the value in renewing connections to the broad network of individuals and organizations pushing for sensible land-use policies and equitable growth in our state.

Last year, our keynote speaker honored the 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop, as hip hop architect Mike Ford drew direct connections between hip hop and the built environment, and shared his experiences working with professional architects and youth groups to examine the influence of placemaking on music. Ford is also involved in the highly anticipated Black Inventors Hall of Fame, coming to Newark to honor the history of their contributions to American history.

This year, our conference will include a highly anticipated NJ Votes 2025: Gubernatorial Candidates Roundtable midday at the Hyatt Regency on June 7. Leading candidates from both parties—including urban mayors Ras Baraka and Steve Fulop—will share their positions on housing affordability, transportation and transit, and climate change. Now is the time to elevate the land use and planning issues that will define the strength of our communities and our state. Candidates will discuss them in a lively dialogue, and audience members will be able to pose questions and share concerns.

The NJ Planning and Redevelopment Conference will feature 36 additional sessions with topics ranging from transit-oriented development and missing middle housing in NJ to cultivating urban forests, third places, and community-driven coalitions throughout our state. We'll explore the importance of promoting public health in the face of climate change, with a range of sessions on lead service line replacement, air quality improvements and environmental justice. We will elevate urban redevelopment as an effective method to accommodate growth and shape sustainable and resilient cities. Continuing Education credits will be available throughout the program for planners, attorneys, engineers, floodplain managers, and Green Business Certification.

We invite the Urban Mayors of New Jersey and their staff, colleagues, and partners to REGISTER TODAY and join the conversation at the 2024 NJ Planning and Redevelopment Conference.

**REGISTER
NOW**



Breaking Barriers: NJHMFA's First-Generation Homebuyer Program Paves the Way for Affordable Homeownership

By Melanie R. Walter, NJHMFA Executive Director

Buying a home used to be the straightforward next step after getting a job. Today, it's a decade down the road for most people; and that's if they have a job that can support a mortgage and if they've somehow avoided spending that money on student loans.

Indeed, too many New Jerseyans who would like to own their own home struggle to save for a down payment and closing costs. These costs are a major barrier for residents living paycheck to paycheck. The most recent Census data show that 52% of renter households pay more than 30% of income towards rent, classifying them as "cost burdened" by federal standards and threatening to put homeownership out of reach. Many low- and moderate-income tenants are paying more for rent than they would for monthly payments on a home mortgage.

Why is it so hard now? Because buying a home is such a quintessential part of the American Dream, pitfalls in our economy are often most visible to the average person in their impact on our housing market. Wages, inflation, and student debt burdens all tell part of the story.

But, they're not the whole story.

Access to homeownership today is, in many cases, directly affected by whether their family has owned a home in the past. The GI Bill, a roaring post-war economy, and the creation of single-family home supply at large-scale supported homeownership for many American families. Many families of color and immigrant families were unable to access these same opportunities. The echoes of this opportunity realized or denied in the past are felt today.

A house is more than just a shelter. It's a major investment. Home equity can be thought of as a giant piggy bank. It represents access to credit, to capital, and it serves as protected, growing savings that can be transferred to children or grandchildren. One third of first-time homebuyers rely on this family capital to help them purchase their home. When you don't have a house, you're not accruing that access to capital or that savings, so the next generation doesn't have your homeownership foundation upon which to build their own future.

That's why first-generation homebuyers represent the next step in expanding the promise of the American Dream.

Last year, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) implemented the First-Generation Homebuyer Program to assist these housing pioneers achieve their homeownership dreams.

The First-Generation Homebuyer Program provides eligible buyers up to \$22,000 to cover down payment and closing costs for their primary residence. The Agency gives the buyer a no-interest loan that is forgiven if the buyer lives in their home for five years from the closing date and does not refinance the mortgage or sell the house.

To qualify for this assistance, the applicant must qualify as a first-time homebuyer and their parents cannot have ownership interest in any residential property, unless the buyers has spent time in the New Jersey foster care system. In order to benefit, the First Generation Down Payment Assistance Program must be paired with an NJHMFA first mortgage loan, a competitive, 30-year, fixed-rate loan originated through an NJHMFA participating lender. Minimum credit score and debt-to-income requirements apply.

NJHMFA's efforts to support first-generation homebuyers build on the success of the existing Down Payment Assistance Program for all first-time homebuyers. Since its establishment in 2017, the DPA Program has awarded more than 10,000 forgivable loans to homebuyers. Nine out of every ten of these beneficiaries have incomes at or below the statewide median household income, demonstrating the program's effective targeting of low- and moderate-income residents relative to the average homebuyer as a whole.

Beyond the individual, the First-Generation Homebuyer Program also supports New Jersey communities. Homeownership promotes community stability and revitalization. People invest in the community they live in.

By coupling the First Generation Homebuyer Program with other initiatives from NJHMFA, including the Foreclosure Intervention Program, which enables qualified nonprofits to purchase and rehabilitate buildings which are abandoned or foreclosed and sell them to local residents instead of letting these properties lay vacant or become institutional investor-owned rentals, NJHMFA is deploying its programmatic resources to empower individuals to attain homeownership in their communities of choice. Already, New Jersey's cities, which continue to have lower homeownership rates than the state as a whole, are realizing direct benefits from this program.

By giving low- and moderate-income families a foundation on which to build wealth, the First-Generation Homebuyer Program advances the goals of Governor Murphy's Wealth Disparity Task Force. This program is poised to make New Jersey stronger and fairer by leveling the housing market playing field across our state, and creating the opportunity to build intergenerational wealth in all of New Jersey's communities.

Prospective homebuyers interested in exploring the First-Generation Homebuyer Program, Down Payment Assistance Program, or NJHMFA's other programs can visit njhousing.gov to learn more. Homebuyers can submit a request form to be paired with up to three lenders in their area to get started.

- Melanie R. Walter is the Executive Director of NJHMFA. She earned a Juris Doctor and a Master of Public Policy from the College of William and Mary and a Bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Mary Washington. She is a member of the NJ and VA bars.

Photo by: NJHMFA



Melanie R. Walter,
NJHMFA Executive Director

BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH TEAM LAUNCHES JET INITIATIVE

By Alex Rivera, Director, Kean US EDA University Center

On April 11, 2024, Kean University's College of Business and Public Management and John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy & Research launched the Jointforce Empower Thrive (JET) initiative, a paid, membership-based group designed and led by Black entrepreneurs in New Jersey and New York that provides direct financial resources, information, and space for race-aware business conversations. In front of a crowd of 45 people, Dr. Saran Nurse, an entrepreneur turned researcher at Kean, and Taneice Lewis, Owner of Pray for Rain, LLC, shared the story leading to the creation of JET.

"Our research found that Black entrepreneurs face unique challenges because of their race and experiences of racism," said Dr. Nurse. "Black people and other minority groups use navigational capital - a collection of knowledge, skills, and abilities unique to their culture - to make their businesses work in embedded systems not designed to meet their needs. The research team pays homage to the historic African American news, culture, and entertainment magazine JET. In this initiative, it stands for Jointforce Empower Thrive. The name honors the history of Black people creating for their community."

"We respect and support what other Black entrepreneurship groups do. However, there are unmet needs in our community," said Lewis. "JET members can receive forgivable loans from the Union County Economic Development Corporation. We will provide \$3,000 in forgivable loans each month for a year. We will intentionally cultivate important conversations about Black entrepreneurship, in-person and online. Our members have committed to supporting each other by sharing with the community and giving their time. We will measure our success by the dollars awarded to our members through loans and grants and by the business support members receive from each other. We want to join other people's tables, but we want to create our own, too."

Alex Rivera, Director of the Kean US EDA University Center, stated that this research and the JET initiative have important public policy implications. "Black women form businesses at the highest rate of all demographic groups but make the least income from business activities. Black-owned businesses closed at a higher rate during COVID and continue to close at elevated rates. New Jersey offers fantastic business resources, from financial capital to operational technical assistance, but fundamental, systemic relationship gaps exist. One of the takeaways of the research is that public institutions and financial institutions do not have the relationships with some communities of people that are needed to get resources to them effectively. JET brings the research to life. We hope a community of entrepreneurs develops to trust each other and cultivate relationships with other institutions."

The team supporting JET actively seeks partners to launch in other communities. Funding opportunities are available. If you want to bring JET to your community, please contact the team at info@jetbecommunity.org.

[INFO@JETBECOMMUNITY.ORG](mailto:info@jetbecommunity.org)



Photo by: Kean US EDA University Center



Photo by: Kean US EDA University Center



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Photo by: Kean US EDA University Center

NJBAC's Business Enhancement Services: Helping Managed Districts and Municipalities Pursue Revitalization Assistance

By Jef R. Buehler, Assistant Director NJ Business Action Center

As part of its overall mission to enhance business success and prosperity for all businesses in New Jersey, NJBAC offers brief workshops to help municipalities, managed districts and business organizations get up to speed with all of the Business Action Center's available resources and how they can be accessed at no cost. These presentations cover NJBAC's Office of Small Business Advocacy, Office of Business Advocacy, Office of Export Promotion, Office of State Planning, Cannabis Training Academy, and the newly formalized Business Enhancement Services.

How do Business Enhancement Services (BES) help communities?

Business Enhancement Services support place-based revitalization and business prosperity for local governments and district management entities and share technical assistance and guidance for creating and sustaining effective and resilient local economies. We provide support for local business enhancement goals to local governments and district management entities. We share technical assistance and guidance for creating and sustaining effective and resilient local economies having successful businesses.

Would your municipality, district, or organization benefit from:

One-Off Technical Assistance Support: Best practices, model ordinances, real-time problem-solving?

District Management Support and Assistance: Creating, managing, & enhancing district management in municipalities?

Business Enhancement Special Assessments: On-site and virtual assessments of both managed and unmanaged districts?

State-level advocacy and education regarding NJ's array of funding and technical assistance programs?

Other projects that foster business enhancement in a municipality or district?

Our growing district and municipal advocacy efforts have two levels of focus: strategic and tactical. From a tactical perspective, BES provides technical support to foster real visible change, which improves the quality of commerce for businesses and the quality of life for community members. This assistance includes solving one-off questions and concerns about obstacles and opportunities, providing relevant best practices and models that can be replicated quickly, as well as comprehensive Business Enhancement Special Assessments.

NJBAC's Business Enhancement Services deliver results: In June and July of 2023, NJBAC implemented two Business Enhancement (BE) Special Assessments for Fair Lawn Main Street, Inc., a district management entity. One of these (with an additional NJBAC addendum regarding corridor redevelopment) was used as the basis of their successful application for the USEDAs Economic Recovery Corps (ERC.) From over 500 applications, only 65 host organizations were selected. The ERC Program matched Fair Lawn with a dedicated Fellow, fully funded at nearly \$300,000, for 2.5 years, to work towards advancing a project critical to the economic recovery of the local host community, in this case preparing the Broadway District there for revitalization and implementing those plans.



Blowin' Smoque & Juicy Crab Alley

This narrow and deep alley could be converted into more of an active "place" with wall and ground murals (after creating a smooth surface) on three sides. The rendering shown includes examples of business branding murals that have artistic purpose while marketing the adjacent businesses without being billboards.

Adding canopy lighting fosters a sense of enclosure and safety. Putting a living (green) wall in the back does the same and adds privacy for the neighbors and can hide the proposed storage area.

Programming the space with tables and activation (such as acoustic music performance or busking) during key times is a key part of public-private place management that the adjacent businesses could partner with PBCIP to foster.



Photos by: NJBAC

On the strategic level, ongoing initiatives will result in the creation of comprehensive "business-friendly" Business Enhancement Toolkit, a census of NJ's municipalities and district management entities, municipal advocacy to further local revitalization and business prosperity goals within the state government's array of agencies and departments, as well as training and educational presentations that build local or regional capacity for effective place-based revitalization.

For more information and to set up an initial online consultation, please contact Jef Buehler, Assistant Director, NJBAC at jeffrey.buehler@sos.nj.gov.

MAKING STRIDES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, UNLOCKING SUCCESS FOR COMMUNITIES



Dr. Monica Lallo, Senior Vice President
Prevention, Youth and Education Services

Acenda Integrated Health is advancing the work and taking steps in building the next workforce of Community Health Workers for the Garden State of New Jersey. To date, the Community Health Worker HUB (CHW HUB) has joined forces with the Department of Health, community-based organizations and numerous stakeholders to open up more job and training opportunities for individuals at least 18 years and have a high school diploma or GED equivalent. At the core, Community Health Workers' efforts are essential to addressing the health disparities, determinants of health, social drivers and reduce the inequities that are often seen in marginalized communities.

This is an exciting new resource to bridge the gap between health care providers and underserved communities. The CHW HUB is designed to promote the following goals: 1. Train a CHW Emergency Preparedness Workforce; Deploy the CHW Workforce; Engage CHWs with the Community; and Develop Sustainable Pathways for CHWs.

While salaries vary, New Jersey ranks 13 out of 50 states nationwide for Community Health Worker salaries (the average in New Jersey is \$21 per hour). The Community Health Worker HUB Initiative is expanding its statewide outreach engagement strategies, aiming to increase the number of employers in all sectors highlighting the importance of hiring this workforce to support the well-being of the residents of New Jersey beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the four established CHW HUB Committees: 1. Infrastructure and Systems Capacity; 2. Sustainability, Legislative and Employment; 3. Certification, Education and Curriculum; and Engagement, Retention and Recruitment, great progress are being made to develop tangible strategic and sustainable frameworks, while identifying the barriers, offering solutions in an effort to build a robust system that will become a significant pillar for public health. The CHW HUB recognizes that accessing healthcare and resources is a right to all, and so the model is designed to ensure that CHWs become an essential part of the workforce and service delivery in multiple sectors.

The Collette Lamothe-Galette Community Health Worker Institute offers free training for aspiring CHWs. CHW Hub is your access point for key information related to CHWs: 1. how to access the best training to become a CHW; 2. how to find a job as a CHW; 3. how to find CHWs to support the work of your organization; and 4. how to connect with and learn from other CHWs.



**To reach out to the CHW HUB, your can email us at chwnjinfo@acendahealth.org or
call us at 856-347-1040.**

Visit our website at <https://www.njchw.org/>

Construction Industry Career Day 2024

By Jill Schiff (Chief Operating Officer – ACCNJ)
Jennifer Corona (Education Manager – ACCNJ)

Do you know individuals that are curious about exciting career opportunities in the ever-evolving construction industry? Enjoy working with their hands and building things that make a lasting impact? Interested in learning more about our Construction Industry Career Day on May 28, 2024?

REGISTER ONLINE WWW.CICDNJ.ORG

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CAREER DAY

MAY 28, 2024

**NJ CONVENTION & EXPO CENTER
EDISON, NEW JERSEY NJ TURNPIKE EXIT 10**

LEARN about the many professions that make up the construction industry. Find out about the salaries, benefits and educational opportunities.

EXPLORE the dozens of construction-related exhibits and demonstrations designed especially for those interested in a challenging and rewarding career.

ENJOY a fun-filled day in which everything is **FREE**. Take advantage of the many hands-on demonstrations and exhibits.

TUESDAY NIGHT SHOWCASE
May 28th 3:00 - 7:00 pm
This evening program is open to the public. We invite underemployed, unemployed, veterans and those looking for new career options to join us!

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Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers ADC of NJ Construction Roundtable of New Jersey Heat & Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Union Locals #32 and #69 National Electrical Contractors Association, NNU

[Click Here To Register](#)

Construction Industry Career Day started in 2001. This free event is a fantastic opportunity to:

Learn about diverse careers: Discover a wide range of construction professions.

Meet industry professionals: Experienced professionals will share their insights and answer questions about the construction industry.

Experience interactive activities: Participate in hands-on activities that showcase the creativity, problem solving skills, and teamwork required in construction.

In addition, we have state and federal agencies on hand to share information on their role in the community, as well as New Jersey colleges.

Transportation assistance is available for groups of 10 or more.



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KEAN TUITION PROMISE



Kean University President
Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.

“The Kean Tuition Promise program promotes equity and expands access to Kean University and a world-class education for students across New Jersey. It makes it possible for deserving students to experience the life-changing effect of a college degree.”



The Kean Tuition Promise program covers up to **full tuition and fees** for eligible students to attend Kean University and fulfill their dream of earning a college

degree. The scholarship and grant package is awarded for **four years of study** for those who qualify. Unlike loans, the program provides money for your college education that **does not need to be repaid**. Limited packages are available.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the Kean Tuition Promise program, you must meet the following criteria:

• Income	Family adjusted gross income of up to \$65K annually (For dependent students, this includes your parents' income.)
• Citizenship	U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
• Residency	New Jersey resident for at least one year before the first day of class
• Class level	College freshman starting full time in the Fall 2024 semester

NEXT STEPS

Let Kean review your eligibility today. **APPLY NOW** for admission and financial aid.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
Apply to Kean as a freshman student	File the FAFSA form and NJ TAG applications to receive an estimated award letter	Enroll at Kean for the upcoming Fall semester

To learn more about the Kean Tuition Promise program, visit: kean.edu/tuition-promise



Photo by: KUBS Program



Kean Enhances Community Engagement Through KUBS Program Visit

Kean University Relations – Margaret McCorry,
Associate Vice President for University Relations

Kean University Building Stronger (KUBS) Urban Communities program addresses the underrepresentation of minority and low-income youths in higher education, athletics, the arts and STEM. As New Jersey's first urban research university, Kean is an urban anchor institution with a focus on academic excellence, equity and student success. Through the KUBS program, Kean Division of Transformational Learning and External Affairs and Kean Athletics are connecting to communities and bringing awareness to Kean University's academic and pipeline programs, sports, student engagement and service-learning opportunities.

Since Fall of 2021, the KUBS Program has expanded to three different sports at Kean (Basketball, Lacrosse, Volleyball), hosted organized Lacrosse and Volleyball clinics, Basketball Invationals, and has partnered with thirteen school districts. In partnership, Kean Division of Transformational Learning and External Affairs and Kean Athletics continues to bridge cultural and resource gaps, expand access to niche sports, connect with communities, and increase exposure to Kean University and college opportunities.

The KUBS Program fosters community engagement and broadens opportunities for students.

Create opportunities to learn and participate in sports not readily accessible to underrepresented students from urban and low-resource communities.

Increase participation in athletics by integrating niche sports into overall academic achievement and success.

Accessibility and awareness to college and career discovery through KUBS sport clinics and events, pipeline programs, campus tours, events, and academic enrichment programs..

Exposure to student-athletes as mentors and role models.

**For more information, contact
Michael Shapiro
K.U.B.S. Coordinator
908-737-4286 - shmichae@kean.edu**

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Submissions for our Fall 2024 issue are due September 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

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