CREATIVE NEW JERSEY'S STATEWIDE CONVERSATIONS COVID-19 RESPONSE

SUMMARY REPORTS
FROM WEEKLY BRIEFINGS HIGHLIGHTING COVID-19 NEEDS AND RESPONSE ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT NEW JERSEY

ALSO AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE
WWW.CREATIVENJ.ORG

APRIL 1 - JUNE 10, 2020

Convening communities at the intersection of creativity, collaboration and inclusion.
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Our Mission
Creative New Jersey fosters collaboration, community inclusion and creative thinking by convening highly-diverse groups of people with varied cross-sector skills, viewpoints, backgrounds, and lived-experiences, in order to advance a community dialogue around critical issues, build and strengthen diverse community networks, encourage cross-sector and multi-cultural partnerships, and foster equitable community-based solutions.

Creative New Jersey’s Staff:
Elizabeth A. Murphy, Founding Director
Kacy O’Brien, Director of Programming
Jeanette Mitchell, Program Associate

Creative New Jersey’s Leadership Team:
Larry Capo (Chair), Executive Director – Young Audiences, Arts for Learning / New Jersey (Ret.)
Joe Barris, Director of Planning – Monmouth County Division of Planning
Natasha Dyer, Deputy Director – Newark Trust for Education
Katherine Kish, Executive Director – Einstein’s Alley
Wendy Liscow, Program Director, Education – Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Evan Sanchez, Co-Founder – Authentic City Partners; President – Atlantic City Community Fund

Leadership Team members serve as ambassadors, network-builders and advisors in support of advancing the mission and vision of Creative New Jersey.

Creative New Jersey’s programming is made possible because of leadership support from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.
A Message from Our Director

Dear Friends --

We know that every generation faces big societal challenges. During the past two decades, we have certainly lived under the strain of several large-scale natural disasters and man-made crises.

And now we grapple with how to navigate a pandemic.

COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated our societal problems and inequities. It has spotlighted the many, large cracks in our systems. Systems that are supposed to care and protect all members of society but especially our most vulnerable: seniors, low-income and hard-working families, people of color with higher rates of comorbidities due to institutional racism, people with physical and mental disabilities, and nonprofit and small business employees that operate on razor-thin margins but who provide critical services to communities in every corner of New Jersey and nationwide.

While the pandemic has certainly pushed all of us beyond capacity, it has also illuminated the ingenuity, resolve, pure grit and power of the human spirit to persevere, to care for each other, and to overcome adversity.

In early March 2020, it became apparent that we were headed for a regional and national shutdown. As a community-building movement, Creative New Jersey’s work has always been about bringing highly-diverse groups of people together—in-person—to advance a dialogue around critical issues, build and strengthen networks, and promote creative-thinking and cross-sector collaboration in order to foster equitable community-based solutions.

Like so many of our colleagues, we reimagined how we continue to advance our mission in this new virtual, physically-distanced world.

We launched into designing a series of weekly Statewide Conversations and activated our expansive statewide network of colleagues with expertise in health, nonprofit advocacy, racial and social justice, food security, journalism, accessibility, education, emergency management and government services, and philanthropy, among other fields. These leaders shared timely and critical updates related to the COVID-19 Needs and Response Activities in New Jersey. Our live weekly briefings began on April 1st and continued through June 10, 2020, and welcomed twenty-two guest expert speakers.
In true Creative New Jersey style, these sessions were not typical webinars but rather interactive, collaborative conversations between our speakers and our multi-ethnic, cross-sector statewide membership.

Each week we learned about the innovative and heroic efforts of people working at all levels of society to quickly and effectively respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

We strengthened connections between community changemakers, educators, environmentalists, healthcare staff, emergency management personnel, artists, journalists, activists and philanthropists.

We learned how all of us can amplify the good and powerful work that is underway, and we were inspired to do more and do better.

This compendium of summary reports from our statewide conversations highlights the tremendous and varied efforts that were launched in New Jersey in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are hundreds of links to information and resources contained within this report. We are deeply grateful to all of our guest speakers who graciously shared their time and expert knowledge with us.

We hope that this compendium will prove to be of maximum use to everyone who has been and continues to work tirelessly for the good of all who live in our Garden State. Together, we are closing the cracks in our systems. Our state and its people need all of us doing everything we can to improve conditions for all New Jerseyans; please don’t give up—we won’t either.

Elizabeth A. Murphy
Founding Director
Statewide Conversations Guest Speakers

#1 – Nonprofit update and resources during COVID-19  (April 1)
   Linda Czipo, Executive Director – Center for Non-Profits

#2 – Relief Funds and NJ’s Philanthropic Response  (April 8)
   Joe Palazzolo, Program Director, Education & Early Care – New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC)
   Craig Weinrich, Director of Member Services – Council of New Jersey Grantmakers

#3 – Journalism: Informing communities and fostering equity during COVID-19  (April 15)
   Stefanie Murray, Director – Center for Cooperative Media
   Brit Harley, News Voices Fellow – WBGO
   Miriam Axel-Lute, Associate Director/Editor – Shelterforce

#4 – The State of Education during COVID-19  (April 22)
   John Mooney, CEO and Education Reporter – NJ Spotlight
   Angela Garretson, Chief External Affairs Officer – New Jersey Institute of Technology
   Patrick Wall, Senior Reporter – Chalkbeat Newark

#5 – Protecting Our Mental Health During the Pandemic  (April 29)
   Jaime Angelini, Director of Consumer Services – Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ)
   Megan Sullivan, Deputy Director, Disaster and Terrorism Branch – Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ Dept. of Human Services
   Dr. Diana Salvador, Psy.D., Clinical Director – Dept. of Children and Families, Children’s System of Care

#6 – Accessibility for All Abilities: How people with disabilities are navigating the COVID-19 reality  (May 6)
   Joseph Geleta, Director, Office of Emergency Management – NJ Department of Human Services
   Scott Elliott, Executive Director – Progressive Center for Independent Living
   Dr. Bernice Davis, Psy.D., Director – New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

#7 – Resilient Senior Living During COVID-19  (May 13)
   Michael Oakes, Senior Vice President – Springpoint Senior Living Foundation
   Janet Sharma, Coordinator – Age-Friendly Englewood
#8 – Food Security and Access during the Pandemic  (May 20)
   Dwayne A. Curry, Program Officer – Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
   Mary Celis, Director, Health Initiatives – Passaic County Food Policy Council, United Way of Passaic County
   Alex Wills, Community Relations Director – Cathedral Kitchen

#9 – Building Urban Resiliency During the Pandemic (Local Response)  (June 3)
   Chris T. Pernell, MD, MPH, FACPM, Chief Strategic Integration & Health Equity Officer – University Hospital
   Tanya Veltz, Founder & Director – Tree House Cares

#10 – Racial Justice: What’s Happening in NJ and What You Can Do  (June 10)
   Andrea McChristian, Esq., Law and Policy Director, NJ Institute for Social Justice
   Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams, Chair and Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies, New Jersey City University
   Sheila D. Hull-Freeman, President, Bungalow Park Civic Association & Member, Atlantic City Citizens Advisory Board
   Derek Minno-Bloom, Social and Food Justice Director, Trinity Episcopal Church, Asbury Park
   Caloua Zhané, Alumni & Board Member, Hopeworks ’n Camden & Creator, Designer, Entrepreneur
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #1 – April 1, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the first call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our statewide network to help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://forms.gle/jkW4waMXoeZUcXeA. Calls take place every Wednesday in April 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29) at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Nonprofit Update and Resources During COVID-19

Guest speaker: Linda Czipo, Executive Director – Center for Non-Profits https://www.njnonprofits.org/

Czipo shared the results from the Center for Non-Profits first rapid response survey, completed by 700 nonprofits in NJ, which showed immediate and widespread disruption and impacts in programming and operations.

- Two thirds of respondents said that they have staff who are unable to work remotely.
- Over 90% of respondents said they have had to cancel or postpone programming.
- Concerns over lay-offs or furloughs are high.
- Immediate needs include additional funding, flexibility from funders with grant requirements, and professional assistance (legal, technology, finance, etc.).

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/U3RShsfbhQI

Czipo also shared what was known about the recently passed CARES Act:

- Advocacy is still needed with state and federal representatives as there are more phases of the CARES Act to be approved and implemented.
- Rules and regulations are still in development at this stage, so information is often changing hourly.
- Advice included ensuring you understand eligibility requirements for each funding source coming out of the CARES Act as applying for and receiving funds from one source may make you ineligible for another fund.
• Email the Center for Non-Profits with questions, ideas, what future phases of the CARES Act should include. The Center also has webinar briefings to delve deeper into the details as they emerge – visit their website for more information.

• includes funding sources, workplace operational resources, Individual assistance, webinars and general health recommendations to mitigate spread
• CFNP Email Sign-up Form: http://www.njnonprofits.org/EmailSignup.html

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:
• State & National Resources
• Funding Sources
• Communications and Staying Connected (phone tree model for serving people with limited or no access to technology)
• Mental and Emotional Health (counseling services, emotional wellbeing webinars)
• Technology (tech discounts, and free subscription up to 3 months)

RESOURCES

State & National Resources:
• covid19.nj.gov - Connect with the State of NJ at the COVID-19 Hub Page for the latest updates, links to resources for nonprofits, small businesses, individuals
• http://njnonprofits.org/ - Resources and relief funds at the state and federal level.
• New Jersey Organizing Project resource page: https://covidnj.com

Funding sources:
• Small Business Administration (SBA) Coronavirus Relief Options: https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options
  o Includes info on Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance program (EIDL), SBA Express Bridge Loans & SBA Debt Relief
  o EIDL -- organizations can get up to $10,000 in three days with no repayment
• NJCC Garden State Relief Fund (will be discussed on April 8th call in greater detail): https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/garden-state-relief-fund
• See the Center for Non-Profit website for a comprehensive list of relief funds: https://www.njnonprofits.org/COVID-19.html
Communications & Staying Connected resources:

- 'Rona Call: Free Press is advocating a phone tree model on how to communicate with people who don’t have the technology available – Spanish & English webpages available: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ML7LBwgbyNwetUv7bswpHqP-MrnxrVt/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ML7LBwgbyNwetUv7bswpHqP-MrnxrVt/view?usp=sharing)
- Virtual Story Circle - Bringing people together to talk about resilient times in their lives to activate resiliency, activate how community is part of the solution here: [bit.ly/acstorycircle](bit.ly/acstorycircle)
- NJ.com is creating a webpage of all businesses that are open in NJ - You can add yourself into the database to get the word out that you are open. [nj.com/open](nj.com/open)
  - NJ.com also has #TogetherNJ - inspiring stories of New Jersey coming together in the face of the crisis. [https://www.nj.com/togethernj](https://www.nj.com/togethernj)
- Rahway taxi service is offering their services to go and pick up groceries or run errands.

Mental and Emotional Health Resources:

- NJ Mental Health Cares, the state’s behavioral health information and referral service, will now also offer help to people dealing with anxiety and worry related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. New Jerseyans can call 1-866-202-HELP (4357) for free, confidential support. NJ Mental Health Cares will be answered from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week by live trained specialists.
- Highlander Center for Education and Research is providing Mutual Aid calls: [https://www.facebook.com/highlandercenter/](https://www.facebook.com/highlandercenter/)
- Nonprofit POC Collective from the Institute for Ethical Leadership, Rutgers University: Virtual session with Licensed Clinical Social Worker Joi Britt.
  - [https://covidnj.com/stress-mental-health-resources](https://covidnj.com/stress-mental-health-resources)
  - [https://collective.healingsolidarity.org/](https://collective.healingsolidarity.org/)
- Community Chat: Normal Feelings for Abnormal Times Thu, April 2, 2020 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM EDT Online For more info and to register, go to: [https://nppoccollective-normalfeelings.eventbrite.com](https://nppoccollective-normalfeelings.eventbrite.com)

Technology resources:

- GO TO Meeting is offering 3-month free subscription for nonprofits (contact Center for Non-Profits for more details)
- Center for Non-Profits will give center members a 20% discount for ZOOM
- [www.TechSoup.org](http://www.TechSoup.org) - tech resources and subscriptions available
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #2 – April 8, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the second call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://forms.gle/jkW4waMXoeZUZcXeA. Calls take place every Wednesday in April 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29) at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: COVID-19 Relief Funds and Philanthropic Response

Guest Joe Palazzolo, Program Director of Education and Early Learning – New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC)
https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/

Guest Craig Weinrich, Director of Member Services – Council of New Jersey Grantmakers
https://www.cnjg.org/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- NJ Technical Assistance & Pro bono (free)
  Support in applying for funding & managing remote work
- Funding Sources
- Resources for Nonprofits Serving Individuals with Disabilities
- Helping Frontline Workers
- State & National Resources

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/EEfqpgQUWRw
Joe Palazzolo (New Jersey Community Capital) on NJCC’s Garden State Relief Fund

https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/garden-state-relief-fund

Joe Palazzolo, Program Director of Education and Early Care shared information on NJCC’s Garden State Relief Fund, which offers working capital loans to small businesses and nonprofits negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and provides financial support for those that often lack access to conventional capital and have been disproportionally affected by this evolving public health crisis.

- Loan amounts: $10,000 - $75,000
- Loan terms: up to 36 months
- Interest rate: 0%-3% depending on geographic location
- Eligibility:
  - Businesses and nonprofits with 3 to 50 full-time employees.
  - NJCC will aim to process Garden State Relief Fund applications within 10-14 business days. Learn more here: https://bit.ly/3c8OqMF
  - **Special opportunity for businesses located in the THRIVE South Jersey footprint** (Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem, and Western Atlantic Counties), thanks to the generous support of the Pascale Sykes Foundation. Learn more here: https://bit.ly/2UX0ZF3

Palazzolo also shared NJCC's learning from superstorm Sandy with regard to financial institutions as they respond to a crisis or disaster:

- NJCC deployed 50 loans to businesses within a 3-5 month period in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy
- Financial Institutions need to be flexible during these times, willing to make loans they would not otherwise make, and need recognize that they can’t ask the typical questions of borrowers – the situation is evolving and different than the status quo
- Small business owners are going to be fatigued/exhausted after this process, so it’s important to make accessing these funds as easy as possible

NJCC is trying to become a Small Business Association (SBA) lender on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans (which are forgivable). In the meantime, Palazzolo urges that you go to YOUR bank; many banks are only talking to their current customers.

- Important update: PPP is opening up to independent contractors this Friday (4/10)!
Questions for NJCC included:

Q: If the nonprofit is only volunteers are you still eligible?
A: Yes, depending on what the money is used for. Reach out and apply to start a conversation. Program was made to be flexible.

Q: Can you apply for the PPP loan and a loan from Garden state relief fund?
A: Yes, you can apply for both.

Q: Is there going to be another PPP cycle?
A: Congress is working on a 4th stimulus bill and a second round of PPP.

Craig Weinrich (Council of New Jersey Grantmakers) on New Jersey’s Philanthropic Response
https://www.cnjg.org/

Craig Weinrich, Director of Member Services at the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG), shared a high-level view of what funders (including private, corporate, family and other grantmakers) are doing in response to the COVID-19 conference, reminding us all that response and recovery will be a marathon, not a sprint. Weinrich also provided some global context and recommendations for those who currently receive or are seeking grants moving forward.

CNJG is the center for philanthropy in New Jersey, serving the over 130 leading independent, corporate, family, community foundations and other philanthropic organizations of our state. CNJG supports their members by strengthening their capacity to address their philanthropic activity, and provides leadership on statewide issues. [NOTE: CNJG does not give out grants or match-make between their members and nonprofits.]

CNJG’s list of NJ’s Relief Funds: https://www.cnjg.org/nj-focused-response-funds

CNJG is collaborating with local organizations like the Center for Non-Profits on their Rapid Response Survey to understand the current needs of nonprofits, and with national organizations to advocate for an equitable, swift, adaptive, flexible response in partnership with grantmakers across our country:

• Center for Non-Profits Rapid Response survey:

Philanthropic response - National:
• Worldwide over 4.3 billion in philanthropic funds committed (not distributed) by organized philanthropy (number does not include crowdfunding)
• Many foundations are:
  o Moving to remote operations so as to not interrupt their grant making
  o Partnering with other recovery funds
  o Matching donations to a recovery fund
  o Considering using or similar applications/reporting as other funders.
  o Changing or reshaping the scope of the terms of their grantees
  o Changing their restricted grants to General Operating Support (GOS)
  o Considering spending more than their legally 5% payout (short term hit for long term gain)
    ▪ Grant-maker’s Dilemma Chronicle of Philanthropy article:
      https://www.philanthropy.com/article/Grant-Maker-Dilemma-Spend/248399

If you are receiving grants/donations/contributions:
• Talk to your funders and individual donors; let them know what is happening at your organization.
• Work with your funders to figure out how to get funds to you quicker. If you normally received checks, talk to your funders to give them different options like credit card payments (allowing them to pay an additional fee to cover your fees), or ACH or EFT payments. Talk to your finance person about how best to do that.
• Read through articles that CNJG has on their website to better understand your funders and the challenges they face to be able to have a quality conversation to find a mutually beneficial solution: https://www.cnjg.org/state-and-national-covid-19-news-articles

Questions for CNJG included:

Q: Has anyone heard when the NJ Pandemic Relief Fund will issue its grant guidelines for non-profits?
A: Yes, applications are now open:
  • https://njprf.org/grants/
  • FB: https://www.facebook.com/NJPRF/
  • Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/njprf/

Q: What advice do you have for nonprofits whose funders may be looking to shift their focus more explicitly to COVID-19 related efforts? What strategies can you share on how to demonstrate value-add of your organization’s work even if it’s not directly related to COVID-19 relief?
A: Talk to your funders first! It is the most important thing. There is a movement on trust-based philanthropy. Open and honest communication with your funders on your plans, efforts, focus, struggles. This is a way for philanthropy and nonprofits to move to work better together. Be clear and honest about your budget, costs, needs.

Q: Can you please talk about equity in funding and how CNJG can influence its grantmakers to begin new conversations with current and prospective grantees? Especially in light of the new upcoming research that black-led organizations have 24% smaller revenues and 76% less unrestricted net assets. How can organizations who have already suffered from structural racism stay afloat and continue serving its critical audience?
A: This is going to be a long-term issue for a lot of funders. Foundations are on a spectrum in terms of understanding and integrating diversity, inclusion, equitable grantmaking (just like all organizations). CNJG is encouraging their funders to be equitable in their funding, and signed onto an equity commitment letter addressing COVID-19 response: https://www.cnjg.org/news/cnjg-joins-philanthropy-groups-calling-funders-keep-equity-forefront-philanthropy-s-response

Q: For those nonprofits that are volunteer only and whose income is through fee-based services what financial support is available to them?
A: Take advantage of the Garden State Relief Fund, SBA’s programs, and also look at the NJ Economic Development Authority website. Things are changing every day, every hour, so continue to check websites from these funding sources on a daily basis. Speak to your accountant and auditor – they will have additional perspective and may be able to guide you toward which sources make the most sense for your organization.

- NJCC Garden State Relief Fund: https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/garden-state-relief-fund
- Small Business Association: www.sba.gov
- NJ Economic Development Authority: https://www.njeda.com/
- Center for Nonprofits COVID page is updated daily: http://www.njnonprofits.org/COVID-19.html

RESOURCES

NJ Technical Assistance & Pro bono (free) Support in applying for funding & managing remote work:
- NJEDA announces partner agencies to offer technical assistance/services to COVID-19 impacted small businesses applying for SBA Funding Programs. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, preparing financial information, packaging application documentation, and completing and submitting the on-line or paper-based application: https://www.roi-nj.com/2020/03/30/finance/njeda-announces-partner-agencies-to-offer-services-to-covid-19-impacted-small-businesses/
  - African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ): https://www.aaccnj.com/
  - New Jersey State Veterans Chamber of Commerce: https://njchamber.com/
  - Rising Tide Capital: https://www.risingtidecapital.org/
• Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (SHCCNJ): [https://shccnj.org/](https://shccnj.org/)

• Pro bono (free) support from Capacity Experts, LLC on managing the new remote worker setting. [https://capacityexperts.com/subscribe/](https://capacityexperts.com/subscribe/). Email: pgoldman@capacityexperts.com
  o Weekly articles, tools, and resources for managing crises and working in remote settings. Issues that are being addressed include:
    ▪ classifying employees
    ▪ logistics of transitioning
    ▪ remote management, supervision, and culture building.

Funding sources:

• NJCC’s Garden State Relief Fund: [https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/garden-state-relief-fund](https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/garden-state-relief-fund)

• CNJG’s list of NJ’s Relief Funds: [https://www.cnjg.org/nj-focused-response-funds](https://www.cnjg.org/nj-focused-response-funds)

• Small Business Administration (SBA) Coronavirus Relief Options: [https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options](https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options)
  o Includes info on Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance program (EIDL), SBA Express Bridge Loans & SBA Debt Relief
  o EIDL -- organizations can get **up to $10,000 in three days with no repayment**

• NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA): [https://www.njeda.com/](https://www.njeda.com/)

• See the Center for Non-Profit website for a comprehensive list of relief funds: [https://www.njnonprofits.org/COVID-19.html](https://www.njnonprofits.org/COVID-19.html)

Resources for Nonprofits Serving Individuals with Disabilities:

• Talk to your individual funders and/or financial institution to see if they can help. Candid (previously Foundation Center) has a great online database that you can search to find specific funding: [http://www.candid.org](http://www.candid.org)

• Check this out for support for individuals with disabilities [https://njcdd.org/emergency-funding-for-covid-19-pandemic/#1585161569958-94fb120e-3bbe](https://njcdd.org/emergency-funding-for-covid-19-pandemic/#1585161569958-94fb120e-3bbe)

Helping Frontline Workers:

• NJ Civil Engineering and GIS Firm, ARH Associates, website supports locally-owned restaurants and helps to provide meals to frontline Medical personnel
  o The site highlights participating locally-owned restaurants using Esri ArcGIS Hub (a component of the Esri Geospatial Cloud) and links donations to these businesses through a centralized GoFundMe page managed by ARH. ARH staff will lead the effort in coordinating the promotion of the site, food ordering, and the delivery to the hospitals, medical centers and first responders.
  o [www.arhinthecommunity.com](http://www.arhinthecommunity.com)
State & National Resources:

- [covid19.nj.gov](https://covid19.nj.gov) - Connect with the State of NJ at the COVID-19 Hub Page for the latest updates, links to resources for nonprofits, small businesses, individuals
- [http://njnonprofits.org/](http://njnonprofits.org/) - Resources and relief funds at the state and federal level.
- New Jersey Organizing Project resource page: [https://covidnj.com](https://covidnj.com)
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #3 – April 15, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the third call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://forms.gle/jkW4waMXoeZUZcXeA. Calls take place every Wednesday in April 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29) at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Journalism – informing communities and fostering equity during COVID-19

Guest Stefanie Murray, Director – Center for Cooperative Media
https://centerforcooperativemedia.org/

Guest Brit Harley, News Voices Fellow, WBGO
https://www.wbgo.org/#stream/0

Guest Miriam Axel-Lute, Associate Director/Editor-Shelterforce
https://shelterforce.org/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:
- Demographic data sources on who is being affected by COVID-19, though these are still limited
- Community-centered journalism programming (digital town halls, phone tree info sharing,
- Mental Health hotlines and virtual offerings
- Hubs & Collaboratives looking for partnerships or providing information
- Artist resources

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/Jtah08vU-GE
Stefanie Murray (Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University)
https://centerforcooperativemedia.org/

The Center for Cooperative Media’s (CCM) flagship program - New Jersey News Commons – helps to grow, strengthen and improve the news ecosystem in the state of NJ. The Center provides coaching, training, collaborative reporting, and research into news ecosystems.

Stefanie minded us that Journalists are essential workers: having accurate information is imperative in times of crisis.

Many journalists have been struggling due to the change in the news landscape over the last several years. Now in a time of crisis, news is more important than ever and it is happening during a time journalists are struggling. CCM is helping journalists and focusing on communities that are underserved, have large immigrant populations, or don’t have technological access.

CCM asked journalists what they need and how CCM could help them. Here’s what they learned and how CCM is adapting to help support journalists:

• Journalists need financial support – many are freelance reporters, and the need for local reporting is even greater.
• Journalists need assistance applying for relief funds focused on journalism.
• Some need coaching with how to be on the front line of a crisis situation.
• CCM is providing small grants to freelancers and hosting tele-briefings on underserved communities and how to report on this.
• CCM is fostering a story sharing program to help the journalists be able to provide statewide information along with community info.
• CCM also collates a daily newsletter Covering COVID-19, which includes resources and articles that local journalists can reprint: https://mailchi.mp/centerforcooperativemedia/april-15-covering-covid
• CCM is working with a team of newspapers to chronicle the death of everyone who died in NJ.

Stories resilience or hope are so important. One anecdotal piece of evidence - on our daily newsletter, our “Everything isn’t terrible” section is often lately the most clicked on: https://us5.campaign-archive.com/?u=7f46611cb324e9e193acda7cc&id=bc2588ce16

Questions for CCM included:

Q: Since a lot of the folks on the call are not in the journalist space, but work closely with efforts in the community, what are some ways they can connect with the media?
A: Through the Center. We maintain a database of news organizations across the state. CCM can help you find a local news organization and connect you with journalists to tell your story. Some larger organizations have Tip Lines but seek out local journalists who cover your community. There is a growing number of independent news organizations that will be helpful too.
Q: How can we donate to support local journalists?
A: NJ has a handful of news nonprofits that can take tax deductible donations. WNYC, WHYY, and other public news sources also take donations and cover our areas. There is not a general fund to support local news as of now, but there is a new tool for the local media association - they have developed a tool to accept tax deductible donations and it runs thru the local media association. If you want to donate to local nonprofit news sources, here are some that were mentioned on the call:

- WBGO: https://pledge.wbgo.org/epledgenow
- NJ Spotlight: https://www.njspotlight.com/member-benefits/
- Shelter Force: www.patreon.com/Shelterforce
- Civic Story: https://www.newsmatch.org/organizations/civicstory
- Food Bank News: https://foodbanknews.com/donate/

Q: What is the role of photography in telling the story of what is happening?
A: Photography is massively important. Unfortunately, photography is not being allowed in a lot of the places where the story needs to be told. A few healthcare systems have let photographers in, which is great. Newsrooms have been using freelancers a lot, and those freelancers are also putting themselves at risk because they have to be on the frontline. There is a small handful of photographic journalists in our state that have the financial backing and PPE (personal protective equipment, i.e. face masks) to actually do this. Tom Franklin from Montclair University is doing it. I’m concerned we are not visually capturing the pandemic as much as we could be right now.

Q: It’s concerning that there has not been any demographic information released about those who have been tested and those who tested positive. Is anyone in the media covering this issue?
A: Yes, nationally this issue is finally starting to get more scrutiny. NJ has started to give demographic data but there is not a lot of data period. Some NJ state reporters are starting to dig into this. There is not enough being done to prevent a lack of data collection and not enough information being released. Here are some sources for data shared by Stefanie and other participants on the call:

- Worldometer (also has a lot of interesting statistics): https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/
- A Gates Foundation sponsored research group at the University of Washington has forecasts through early August by country and US state. This model is projecting no deaths past June 27 (though this forecast changes frequently)
- Ryan Haygood at the Institute for Social Justice is also advocating for more data: https://www.njisj.org/institute_and_partners_request_racial_data_on_covid_19_impact
Q: Do you know anything about the Epoch Times? We got a paper inserted into the Star Ledger and it seems highly inflammatory: the lead story was "Lies Kill, Truth Saves, the Chinese communist party has been endangering the world."

A: That is not familiar to me (Stefanie). Was it an advertising insert masquerading as news? Mis and disinformation is a massive issue currently, globally. CMM works with the First Draft News – an organization that works with journalists around the world to combat this information. That particular insert could have been an advertorial insert. We are also seeing a lot more disinformation through social media, though NJ is not considered a “hot spot” for disinformation.

- Fact checking on misinformation and disinformation: https://firstdraftnews.org/
- Another fact checking resource is the International Fact Checking Network at Poynter: https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/
- Mike Rispoli of Free Press added that, “Epoch Times is typically perceived as being a propaganda paper and should be ignored or read with caution. Epoch Times isn’t allowed to advertise on Facebook, for example, because of its misinformation.”

Brit Harley (WBGO)
https://www.wbgo.org/#stream/0

Brit Harley is a Newark native, who values community, family, love. Brit joined the news department at WBGO through the News Voices program. WBGO’s Newsroom has been covering what has been happening in Newark, NJ, and nationally. You can reach Brit Harley for resources and collaboration opportunities at: bharley@wbgo.org

As a Newark resident, Brit’s work focuses on how to include Newarkers in the news process, and as a News Voices Fellow Brit also tries to figure out where the gaps are. For example, Brit has been speaking to a resident that has been in a high-risk housing location who received an eviction notice last week. There are residents who are struggling to get clean water, and people are scared of over-policing, among many other stories. WBGO has been including these people’s voices in their on-air newscast.

WBGO also has programming to help widely share news with community members and include their voices, including:

- Monthly “Newark Today” call-in show with Newark’s Mayor Baraka to talk about concerns within the community.
- “‘Rona Call’ Community-Info Phone tree: In partnership with Free Press, WBGO is thinking about how to get information out to residents with limited technology access: They are setting up a community info tree, and are actively seeking people to be “Phone Captains.” This strategy gives people a connection to
other people, and growing resources from within communities, provide mutual aid efforts and then share with local officials. The Phone tree is also being used in Atlantic City:

- Download the Phone Tree (English): [https://freepress.actionkit.com/mailings/view/14357](https://freepress.actionkit.com/mailings/view/14357)

- **“Story Fund”**: WBGO will be announcing a “story fund” soon - if you are covering COVID-19, collecting stories and serving communities of color - WBGO wants to be a hub! Opportunities will be available to apply for funding to work in partnership with WBGO.
- **Digital Town Hall**: Next week, Tuesday, April 21st @ 3pm, WBGO and Free Press will be hosting a digital town hall, giving community members a chance to connect with each other and have questions answered.

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**Miriam Axel-Lute (SHELTERFORCE)**
[https://shelterforce.org/Shelterforce](https://shelterforce.org/Shelterforce)

Shelterforce is a non-profit publication born in Orange, NJ in the 1970s and has grown to cover national issues for the community development world, affordable housing and those who work in revitalization, regional equity, and tenant rights, among other topics.

Shelterforce’s coverage include long form articles and trends in the field. With COVID-19, they have pivoted to focus more on breaking news, freelancers, more timely information. While that is a big shift for them Shelterforce underscored the need to stay flexible.

An example of their COVI-19 work includes a current article examining all the phases of eviction - filing, surviving, enforcing, etc. They are telling the complex stories about how nonprofit housing organizations are leading the way and won’t evict residents due to nonpayment, but also examines how those nonprofits will handle the lack of income and stay afloat for the future.

Shelterforce is looking to work more collaboratively to tell local stories that put a face to some of the larger national issues around these core issues of housing and community development. Please reach out if you have issues that are challenging and not finding solutions too, but also if you have gotten things resolved and contacts to help others find solutions.

- **If you have tips on stories:** [info@shelterforce.org](mailto:info@shelterforce.org)
- **Shelterforce COVID-19 resource & news page**: [https://shelterforce.org/category/covid-19/](https://shelterforce.org/category/covid-19/)
Questions for WBGO and Shelterforce:

Q: Shelterforce covers arts and culture and WBGO being a jazz station, so can you talk about how the arts can help heal and how to look at the effects of COVID-19 through that lens? Are you highlighting stories of resilience and through the arts?
A: (Brit) Now that we’ve pivoted into the digital space we’re asking ourselves [at WBGO] how do we engage while still creating an experience? We’re still figuring out what that looks like. A big part of info sharing and conversation in Newark happen in and through our arts and culture community here. Finding ways to bridge [the arts/culture and news spaces] is important – things like storytelling imitations. If we can offer WBGO as a partner to independent creatives and media types of organizations, we can talk about how WBGO can use our platform to amplify what those smaller organizations or individuals are doing. That’s something we’re already doing, but we’re also looking to push that further.

(Keli Tianga, Shelterforce Senior Editor) Shelterforce has been collecting stories they have seen with regard to the long-term effects on arts and culture and community development. Many artists are just starting get their footing and COVID-19 effects could be a huge blow to them. Shelterforce is about to repost a piece from an artist who is talking about trying to live and eat at this time because she no longer has an income. There are a lot of organizations that support artists but we also know there is no way that support is enough to address the huge need. We are trying to get an understanding on how these folks are literally going to survive and keep a roof over their head without being able to do what they do.

(Miriam) The long-term story is about resilience. Residence service coordinators are working to combat the isolation for people who are already in isolation. Recently, Shelterforce ran a story (in the works before COVID-19 hit) about artwork created by people who were formerly incarcerated, which was a great example of people to use art to deal with struggles and challenges.

(Elizabeth Murphy, Creative New Jersey) Here in New Jersey, arts organizations are working to help artists: ArtPride NJ is starting to help organize artists to get their work online, New Jersey Theatre Alliance has been holding weekly roundtable zoom calls with their members to try and help that community figure out how to continue to create their work. A lot of individual arts organizations that are offering innovative online content. I recommend that you reconnect with the arts organizations that you were previously engaging with!

Q: Do you know what is happening to people living in shelters or transitional housing?
A: (Brit) Newark has concerns of over-policing and how to properly social distance. For people living in transitional housing or shelters, they are planning their day on where to get hot food and meals because in shelters and transitional housing you’re rarely able to keep a refrigerator or have access to a stovetop to make food. People in these situations have concerns about properly sanitized spaces, access to gloves, masks, food. What are ways that we can meet the needs that are in different types of living situations during these times.

(Miriam) The situation for these folks is really serious. There are weekly calls happening with national coalitions of housing to address the issues these individuals face.
Q: Is anyone covering the local small business journey through COVID-19, their ability to access the stimulus funding and how entrepreneurs/storefronts, especially, are anticipating the potential for their survival, ability to navigate, and growth through the process of reopening of the economy?

A: Some resources to look at shared by call participants:

- ROI NJ covers the business community in NJ and has done reporting on small business challenges: https://www.roi-nj.com/
- NFIB Research Foundation has a large section for small businesses on COVID-19 and had been doing a multi-part survey project on the effects on small businesses across the country: https://www.nfib.com/content/analysis/coronavirus/latest-on-coronavirus-from-nfib/

RESOURCES

Mental health services and support:

- Mental Health Association NJ: Please feel free to share our free virtual support offerings: https://www.mhanj.org/virtual-support-and-learning-opportunities/
- Our call line is open 7 days per week for emotional support 866.202.HELP(4357)
- Any questions, feel free to reach out to Jaime Angelini: jangelini@mhanj.org

Hubs & Collaboratives looking for partnerships or providing information:

- Newark Business Hub supports entrepreneurs with training and network support. Reach out to Jeff Billingsley (Co-Founder) & Kimberlee Williams (Co-Founder and Rutgers Newark Assistant Director of Communications)
  - Open to working with organizations that want to tackle the aspects of diversity and inclusions: http://www.newarkbusinesshub.com/
- American Conference on Diversity is looking to work with organizations that want to tackle aspects of diversity and inclusion: https://americanconferenceondiversity.org/
- News Voices: if anyone wants to strengthen news and info in their community, News Voices wants to help! Email Mike Rispoli: mrispoli@freepress.ne
  - Free Press has also hosted virtual story circles for communities to share stories of resiliency. It’s a good way to share information, create connections, and lift up storytellers in our communities. There are lots of ways other forms of art can do similar things: https://www.freepress.net/our-response/advocacy-organizing/stories-field/stories-atlantic-city-launches
- CivicStory is interested in this conversation: integrating creativity, health, and environmental sustainability could be a unifying ‘going forward’ goal.
  - CivicStory runs the NJ Sustainability Reporting Hub: https://srhub.org/
- Nonprofit Development Center of Southern New Jersey – looks to educate, connect and celebrate nonprofits in south Jersey: https://ndscnj.org/
- Center for Non-Profits email list sign-up: http://www.njnonprofits.org/EmailSignup.html
- South Jersey Strong Website gathering regional municipalities’ postings: http://www.southjerseystrong.com/
Arts, culture, and artist resources:

- ArtPrideNJ: [https://artpridenj.org/covid19](https://artpridenj.org/covid19)
- New Jersey Theatre Alliance: [https://njtheatrealliance.org/](https://njtheatrealliance.org/)
- Monmouth Arts is hosting an online gallery for local artists, as well as a weekly Virtual Stage + Showcase where we are highlighting teen visual arts, performers, and writers. You can find these online programs on our website: [www.monmoutharts.org](http://www.monmoutharts.org). Additionally, we have gathered an extensive compilation of resources for artists, arts organizations, and other members of the community, which can be found here: [https://www.monmoutharts.org/resources](https://www.monmoutharts.org/resources)
- Resource for artists of all disciplines: [https://www.morrisarts.org/2020/04/08/artists-and-arts-organizations-online-resources/](https://www.morrisarts.org/2020/04/08/artists-and-arts-organizations-online-resources/)
- Freelance artist resource page: [https://covid19freelanceartistresource.wordpress.com/](https://covid19freelanceartistresource.wordpress.com/)
- NEA resources for Arts and Culture: [https://www.arts.gov/covid-19-resources-for-artists-and-arts-organizations](https://www.arts.gov/covid-19-resources-for-artists-and-arts-organizations)
- Folks can reach out to your county’s arts council
SUMMARY

Topic: The State of Education during COVID-19

Guest John Mooney, CEO and Education Reporter – NJ Spotlight
https://www.njspotlight.com/

Guest Angela Garretson, Chief External Affairs Officer, New Jersey Institute of Technology
https://www.njit.edu/

Guest Patrick Wall, Senior Reporter – Chalkbeat Newark
https://Chalkbeat.org/newark/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- Alternative online learning programs
- Reporting on how COVID-19 is affecting virtual learning, attendance, food accessibility, special education and more
- Examples of how STEM students at NJIT are making a difference
- Technology gap and how it affects students – articles with more information
- Mental Health hotlines and virtual offerings

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://tinyurl.com/yc6yzxuq
John Mooney (NJ Spotlight)
https://www.njspotlight.com/

John Mooney shared the 30,000-foot view of how our educational system is being affected during the COVID-19 pandemic based on his reporting across New Jersey.

This is an unprecedented time in terms of what has happened to schools, they will be a different place. Nobody was ready for this and definitely not our schools.

Schools across our state already had equity issues before COVID-19 and we are seeing some troubling signs that those equity issues mean some kids are getting left behind, or not getting the same opportunities as others. Core issues include but aren’t limited to:

- Big technology challenges - the State early on said that 100,000 students are without suitable access for distance learning (even if they have a device they may not have internet access at home) – that’s 1 in 10 students in NJ, and that number might be undercounted.
- Students with special needs or disability often need therapy, one-on-one sessions, hands-on learning, or tactile therapies and these cannot happen in this current situation, so how are they being served? Not to mention how is this working out and the added burden on families during this time?
- High Schools were fairly adept to distance learning so the transition was a little easier; but it’s certainly not the case across all grade levels, even understanding that there are non-digital ways to do remote learning.
- It’s a mixed bag and we are learning a lot from this situation; hopefully, there will be lots of lessons going forward from this.
- People are telling Mooney that there is nothing like being in the classroom and having the contact between students, teachers and counselors. In addition to learning schools play a huge role in:
  - Mental health
  - Building social skills
  - Nutrition and fitness
  - We’ll see the effects of missing these supports moving into the future.

What is being done about this?

- Mooney has heard about some truly inspiring and uplifting ways that schools, teachers and families are being creative, and local leaders. A couple of examples:
  - Camden raised $500K from funders, including Campbell Soup Foundation to supply Chromebooks to students. The challenge is how to ensure that opportunities like this are happening everywhere across our state.
  - Educators have managed to reinvent how they do schooling, at least for the time being – and a big shout out to the educators have gone above and beyond in doing this.
  - There are lots of alternative learning options being launched, including:
    - NJTV Learning LIVE (supported in part by NJEA and the State Department of Education): a daily TV show for grades 3 to 6; top notch teachers give lessons from home. [https://www.njtvonline.org/programs/njtv-learning-live/](https://www.njtvonline.org/programs/njtv-learning-live/)
A participant shared that Liberty Science Center is doing a daily science broadcast: [https://lsc.org/education/lsc-in-the-house](https://lsc.org/education/lsc-in-the-house)

Comments from participants and responses from Mooney included:

C: A teacher shared her experiences over the last few weeks: I holds Zoom calls with students 3 times a week and I post lessons in google classroom. Since we started I've seen a decline in kids showing up for the virtual classes. I work in an economically underprivileged area. Many of the students don't have access to the internet or computers. Like many schools, my school district was not prepared. My school is currently working on sending out technology surveys to find out who does not have access to internet, and the school is also working with T-Mobile for service. I’m worried about those kids who are slipping through the cracks and that I’m losing contact with my kids.

R: A lot of districts are not prepared for this and it is concerning how slowly the schools are responding to the inequity. What we want to know more about is how are schools, and the State, responding to obvious inequity? This may go on for 6 months. How are schools going to handle this? Any of us who are familiar with education are familiar with the term “Learning Loss” and how that affects students. I wish states would move faster.

C: Do families have help/support at home? Do kids have support at home to participate in these educational programs? There are so many issues in making this transition people are stressed and feel burdened.

R: What I’ve been hearing from the Department of Children and Families, is about the drop in abuse and domestic violence case is worrisome. This is not because there is a drop in cases but rather a drop in reporting of cases. Largely it’s attributed to schools not being in place as a safety net for these kids and monitoring this. We don’t have teachers and coaches who see kids every day and it speaks to the role that schools play.

Angela Garretson (New Jersey Institute of Technology -- NJIT)
[https://www.njit.edu/](https://www.njit.edu/)

Even as a technology school that has a lot of experience in digital learning, NJIT was not prepared for everything that came with COVID 19, despite the fact that they had launched a COVID-19 Task Force as early as January and were able to take significant steps in response to COVID-19 as it began to impact New Jersey and Newark, where NJIT is located. Some of those steps included:

- Extended spring break and turned to remote learning
- Cancelled travel and events on and off campus
- Anyone who was exposed or thought they may have been exposed were requested to self-quarantine
- **NJIT Coronavirus Updates page:** [https://www.njit.edu/coronavirus](https://www.njit.edu/coronavirus)
- All that comes with managing a transition from being a campus where classes are primarily not online to a campus that is fully remote
- NJIT still had to remain open to support the students that were in transition or could not go home.
16.4% of NJIT’s student population are international students, NJIT needed to make sure that dining halls, residence halls, administrative offices and cleaning staff were still able to do their jobs.

- By March, NJIT leadership was able to execute all classes online and classes were only cancelled March 12-14th to get the students and faculty prepared for what was ahead.
- NJIT had to get students off campus and back home - which was unheard of.

NJIT had some pre-planning in place because of the work of the Task Force, and so they had a bit smoother transition and other institutions:

- Week 1 – NJIT surveyed students and faculty to have real time data and information about what NJIT can do to help during this specific pandemic. This was a new form of engagement and participation.
- Around April 15th (about a month after initial steps taken to address COVID-19), NJIT held a virtual Community Forum with the President Joel Bloom & Provost Fadi Deek, focused on health and safety looking at:
  - How may NJIT need to adjust their policies and requirements to make sure these students have the best chance of graduating?
  - What are students struggling with?
  - How do we adjust our grading policy?
  - Addressing graduation
- And don’t forget there were many parents who work at NJIT who had to pick up their children from other institutions because those campuses also shut down.

Another huge piece that educational institutions are having to grapple with are the financial challenges, especially around the fiscal year that begins July 2019 to June 2020.

- Having to give back stipends for housing.
- Supplying vouchers for students
- Offering rebates and other offers to come back for those who aren’t graduating this year
- There are specific challenges for a large institution that deals with flying and international student and faculty travel
- Students who did not need FAFSA before may need it now
- Educating students on the $4 million that is available to students from the CARES Act
- COVID-19 is impacting higher education and the funding they would typically receive will be cut by millions and millions of dollars across our country.
- There is great leadership at NJIT, in Newark’s Mayor Ras Baraka, and in Governor Phil Murphy, but the economic impact is huge. Where is the funding coming from? How is this affecting higher education? These are questions we are trying to answer.

Other impacted areas that NJIT is working on included:

- Their pre-college program that has 4,000 students from public, private and charter schools. The entire educational pipeline is impacted.

What’s next:

- On an uplifting note: NJIT has been working with the county OEM office, local city, Governor’s office to help provide support within the state through their means as a poly tech institution.
NJIT Scholars Produce Hundreds of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Newark Hospitals:
https://news.njit.edu/meeting-demand-honors-scholars-produce-hundreds-personal-protective-equipment

- Our city (Newark) was impacted by the recession 10 years ago and we will be engaging all our stakeholders to create the next steps. We want to be a resource and a partner.
- NJIT is fully operable but will remain on remote learning through the summer and will work with other institutions to assist in this process.
- We are all in this together.
- NJIT Coronavirus Updates page: https://www.njit.edu/coronavirus

Questions for NJIT included:

**Q:** What is NJIT doing for those programs that are more on the hands-on side of education – what are some of the best practices that NJIT professors can recommend?

**A:** Garretson offered to put the participant in direct touch with professors who teach subjects that are traditionally more hands-on (such as chemistry, physics, engineering, etc.), and who could provide more detailed information about teaching methodologies.

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**Patrick Wall (Chalkbeat Newark)**
https://Chalkbeat.org/newark/

Patrick Wall has covered education in different cities and states during the course of his career. Chalkbeat Newark has been around for the past 2 years. Wall has been talking to teachers, parents, students in Newark about their experiences and what this all means for them. It seems most districts are facing similar challenges:

**School Food:**

- Children eat many meals at schools so right away this became a big issue to figure out how to provide meals. Many students are getting at one to two meals a day (breakfast and lunch) and if students are also in an after-school program they may get snacks and sometimes dinner.
- In Newark the vast majority of students qualified for subsidized meals (19,000 students for Breakfast & 21,000 for Lunch).
- Right away the district started grab and go meals. Wall has heard there are issues getting those meals to families – some are not able to pick it up, some may be unable to leave the house:
  - Newark has distributed an average of 4,000 meals per day since the coronavirus shut down school buildings, in contrast to the 40,000 meals per day they were serving when schools were open.
  - Paterson has given out 208,000 in the past 5 weeks and Newark has given out 100,000 -- half as many, so there are questions on the best ways to get these students access to food, including ideas like giving out multiple meals at once to reduce the risk of going out.
Remote Learning:

- High tech learning is not what is happening on the ground in most places. Many teachers had never used ZOOM prior to the pandemic.
- Newark had paper packets ready to go from the day the schools shut down, which included two weeks’ worth of work. Newark made because the school district knew not every family had access to technology for distance learning. Now that the shutdown is longer than expected, districts are starting to think how they can do more interactive learning.
- Newark had to address that a lot of families did not have technology.
  - 1 in 3 families did not have internet access, 1 in 5 did not have a smartphone.
  - Some had Chromebooks, but as of the beginning of April, there were still about 2,000 families that had no computers at home.
  - Some families with multiple kids have been trying to use one Chromebook for all their children.
  - If families had multiple devices connected to the internet, that became an issue for bandwidth – connection became strained and spotty. Access to updated technology has been prohibitive.
  - There are a lot of tech issues you don’t think of at first.

Tech Savviness:

- Being able to actually use these online tools has been a learning curve, as well - not only for the students but for the teachers and parents, too.
- Most teachers and students have not used Zoom or Google Classrooms. Many teachers had to connect with parents to troubleshoot getting students online and become, essentially, tech support for families.
- When some teachers have tried to do Zoom meetings, they are having mixed results - low turnout, tech issues getting online, and how to use unfamiliar technology.
- Even if they are doing Zoom classes, it just doesn’t compare to the classroom – students can’t ask questions and get immediate feedback from teachers, they can’t work with their peers, there’s a lot of stress of working from home and it is really new and hard for students.
- Students sleep schedules are also being affected – from social/emotional issues, fear for parents who are essential workers

Attendance and Assignments:

- There is no clear picture of how and how many students are engaging in remote learning -- the districts can’t calculate it.
  - One high school teacher from the south ward called all 94 of her students - one of the students had just lost her father, other families still didn't have internet or computers, and the teacher hadn’t been able to reach 6 students since schools closed. This teacher told Wall, “I can’t find them and I am thinking about going to their house but it’s too dangerous.”

Schools are putting in an incredible effort without any preparation. The longer this goes on the more these challenges will make things harder and more children will be left behind.

Links to some stories Wall mentioned:

• Attendance: https://newark.chalkbeat.org/2020/4/17/21230488/i-can-t-find-them-attendance-was-already-a-challenge-in-newark-the-coronavirus-created-new-barriers
• Next school year: https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/4/16/21225529/students-will-go-back-to-school-eventually-here-are-5-concrete-ideas-for-helping-them-catch-up-read

Questions for Chalkbeat included:

Q: Why do you think there are so few students accessing the free meals in Newark?
A: It is a puzzle. The theories are that parents are scared to come out of their houses. A lot of other meal resources are being provided which may mean parents are getting to other sources. Access to food closest to home is the ideal situation to get good.

A participant who lives in Newark added that the quality of the lunches is not good and students are not eating them and food closer to home is more accessible – families are relying on food pantries.

Q: Have schools tried creating family "teams" to keep tabs and encourage each other – either student groups or parents in order connect during the course of the week and combating isolation?
A: I’ve definitely heard that parents are helping one another and teachers are putting in BIG overtime (even when they have their own school-aged children. There is an attendance counselor using the basketball team to try and use social media to reach students who have been out of touch and that teachers are having difficulty reaching.

Mooney added: It’s taking a lot of individual ingenuity and it’s hard to sustain – most of these kinds of efforts are scattered and depend on the school or the district.

RESOURCES

Additional resources shared by participants on our call:

Technology gap
• Is Technology Gap Impeding Remote Learning?: https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/04/is-technology-gap-impeding-remote-learning-for-100000-nj-students/
• Reporting from Connecticut on how the technology gap is affecting students there: https://apnews.com/7f263b8f7d3a43d6be014f860d5e4132

Mental health services and support:
• NJ Mental Health Cares, the state's behavioral health information and referral service, now offers help to people dealing with anxiety and worry related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
  o New Jerseyans can call 1-866-202-HELP (4357) for free, confidential support, 7 days a week
  o https://www.mhanj.org/virtual-support-and-learning-opportunities/
  o Any questions, feel free to reach out to Jaime Angelini: jangelini@mhanj.org
• The arts are a key player for our overall health as human beings. It needs to be remembered and considered as time goes on. This is a larger and longer situation than nonprofits anticipated and how the arts and artists can be involved in the recovery should be considered.
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #5 – April 29, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the fifth call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://bit.ly/34WETWm. Calls take place every Wednesday in April and May 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29; May 6, 13, 20, and 27) at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Protecting Our Mental Health during the Pandemic

Guest Jaime Angelini, Director of Consumer Services – Mental Health Association in NJ – Atlantic County
https://www.mhanj.org/

Guest Megan Sullivan, Deputy Director – Disaster and Terrorism Branch, Div. of Mental Health and Addiction Services – NJ Dept. of Human Services

Guest Dr. Diana Salvador, PsyD, Clinical Director – Dept. of Children and Families – Children’s System of Care
https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- Mental and Behavioral Health Resources
- Crisis Hotlines for immediate mental and emotional support – including hotlines specifically for youth, LGBTQ and Veterans
- Resource banks – general and for immigrant communities
- Other mental health resources or suggestions

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/BNRDM1w2oAw
Jaime Angelini (Mental Health Association in NJ – Atlantic County (MHANJ))
https://www.mhanj.org/

Jaime Angelini is a Mental Health Advocate and Educator and has been working in the field for 19 years. The good news for New Jersey, although it stems from another disaster is that a lot of disaster mental health work was done after Superstorm Sandy. The learning and response work around mental health as a result of Sandy is the closest we have for comparison to our current situation dealing with COVID-19, and we’re applying those past lessons to our current response. Angelini spoke broadly about what the MHANJ has been doing:

Since NHANJ Staff began working from home:

• Started to figure out how to offer their services and program online so that consumers and families living with mental health challenges could have access as soon as possible and minimize disruptions to routines for those with mental health challenges. That included:
  o Converted all of their in-person support groups into virtual meetings
• MHANJ went beyond scope of work to work with the need of the community during the pandemic.
  o Created new groups to provide services that addressed the additional needs of parents, teachers, health care workers
  o They are not providing about 50 different online support groups in addition to services provided through phone calls and case management.
  o They are tapping into new folks they didn’t see before – MHANJ has received calls for support from out of the state as well.
• **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT CALL LINE -- 866.202.4357:** MHANJ offers a Call line to help those who need general emotional support but not necessarily traditional counseling.
  o This is an avenue for people to talk about their reactions, and for us to help by validating their reactions, promoting coping skills and ways to mitigate stress. If the caller needs additional support then our call line staff can make that referral.
    ▪ MHANJ is hearing from all sorts of people - parents, healthcare workers, frontline workers.
    ▪ Everyone’s reactions to this will be different and we want to validate everyone's reactions.
    ▪ Parents are struggling with Kids/ Health Care professionals are concerned
  o Call is free and services are available in Spanish.
  o Average call is about 23 minutes, whereas pre-pandemic the average call was about 10-12 minutes.

MHANJ is interested in partnerships with organizations: We want to help you! We are here to provide emotional support for NJ’s people: We haven't gone through anything like this before and we don't know how long the mental health need will be. If interested, please contact us to let us know: [jangelini@mhanj.org](mailto:jangelini@mhanj.org)

**For Free Emotional Support: CALL 866-202-HELP (4357)**
**Solicite apoyo emocional gratuito de personal capacitado: 866-202-HELP (4357)**
**7 Días por Semana de 8am a 9pm**
During the COVID-19 Pandemic, your mental health is vital. Call for free emotional support from trained staff. 866-202-Help (4357) 7 Days per Week 8am to 8pm Multilingual Services Available

You can also download the two MHANJ slides pictured above here: https://bit.ly/2SmMFnz

If you or someone you know is in a crisis situation and having thoughts of death, dying and/or suicide, contact the following resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **NJ Hopeline**: 1-855-654-6735
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**: 1-800-273-8255
- **National Crisis Text Line**: text the word “BRAVE” to 741-741
- **Trevor Lifeline** (LGBTQ specific crisis line): 866-488-7386 or text “Trevor” to 1-202-304-1200
- **Veteran’s Crisis Line** (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline): 1-800-273-8255 or text 838255

**Questions for MHANJ included:**

**Q**: How do Spanish speakers get tracked to a Spanish language counselor?  
**A**: We have bi-lingual staff on call lines and specific support groups in Spanish.

**Q**: Is NJ Mental Health talking about the longer-term issues? After Hurricane Sandy we saw mental health issues emerging sometimes 6 months, 12 months, even 24 months later. Are you considering this?  
**A**: Yes, we absolutely are. We are planning for the short and long term. We will see individuals that bounce back and then we will see individuals struggling with getting back to their “pre-disaster” way of functioning. We provided services and counseling at least two years after Sandy and we have to remember that as people come out of this and return back to “normal” life, life will still will work differently – things have changed. We need to help New Jerseyans the best we can now and later.
The Disaster and Terrorism Branch of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services became an official branch of NJ State government after 9/11, but they have been working on mental health since Hurricane Floyd (1999). The Branch is constantly planning for disaster, and one of the key pieces of their work is the Disaster Response Crisis Counselor (DRCC) program which is funded in part by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

In some ways, what people are experiencing in terms of mental health more closely mirrors post-9/11 symptoms than post-hurricane symptoms - there is more ambient fear:

- Everyone is a little on edge
- We’re not sure if we are safe
- Maybe we know someone who has COVID-10 or suffered a loss, or maybe we’ve been directly affected
- Financial stress due to economic impacts

The Disaster Response Crisis Counselor program – called NJ Hope and Healing, here, is looking at all of these impacts in their planning. The DRCC has about 500 crisis counseling volunteers available around the state at any given time:

- Trains people in psychological first aid using the FEMA-based “neighbor helping neighbor” model. You do not need to be a licensed clinician to be a volunteer providing psychological first aid in this program, and DRCC has volunteers ready to respond.
- Was awarded the “Immediate Services Program” funding from FEMA & SAMSA to meet current emotional needs of people being affected by COVID-19 -- which is everyone in some form or another: The COVID-19 pandemic is very different than the effects of Hurricane Sandy on mental health. The pandemic affects the whole state, unlike other disasters that affect a finite group of people.
- Our state is now entering a phase where crisis counseling programs need to be available for the short term and long term.
- DRCC is Offering webinars on coping with stress.
- DRCC is supporting the Mental Health Association in NJ’s (MHANJ) call lines by developing programs to help NHANJ shorten call for the times by:
  - Having crisis counselors and graduate interns that received training has enabled a proactive approach by reaching out and calling people back that have called the mental health care line.
- The whole mindset of the DRCC is focused on outreach – not forcing people to come to them but to reach out to the most vulnerable populations for mental health stresses – people like:
  - **First responders**: DRCC is offering Zoom support drop-in sessions for EMS/first responders/healthcare workers
  - **People with access challenges and functional needs** (such as dialysis patients)
- People living in recovery from substance abuse or those dealing with active substance abuse. Relapse rates go up during a time of crisis. And it’s particularly important to monitor the continuity of operation plans for those dealing with opiate disorders and who need regular treatment services.
- People dealing with domestic violence – we know that reporting is down, which is not necessarily an indication that it’s happening less, but that it’s not being reported.
- Undocumented populations - Undocumented populations are afraid to go to any kind of agencies

- Partnerships: DRCC looks at who is already working on this most efficiently and develops partnership with those organizations. Right now, the DRCC program and is partnering with:
  - Mental Health Association in NJ (MHANJ): https://www.mhanj.org/
  - Catholic Charities locations throughout the state – there are branches in Camden, Metuchen, Newark, Paterson, Trenton, and many other cities and towns across our state.
  - Family Services Bureau in North Jersey (part of New Community Corporation) – in particular because of the FSB’s languages capacity – they have staff who speak a lot of different languages, and can help to reach lots of people who speak languages other than English. https://www.newcommunity.org/services/health-care-and-behavioral-health/family-service-bureau-of-newark/

One in five people were already suffering a level of anxiety prior to the pandemic, so this type of situation increases those numbers!

- We want to be careful about naming what people are experiencing as PTSD (it’s important to be careful about “diagnosing” people with something without proper evaluation. That said, what people are often feeling is a free-floating anxiety is absolutely real and that will affect people on different levels. That experience is important to address and its essential that there are plans in place to help.
- The Disaster and Terrorism Branch meets regularly with NJ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOADs) to find out where the needs are. VOADs are often groups of nonprofits that are dealing with immediate needs in times of disaster and include social service agencies, food pantries, shelters, medical service providers, faith-based organizations and volunteer groups, among others.
  - NJVOAD: http://www.njvoad.org/

The Disaster and Terrorism Branch is planning also for the long term needs of the residents. When immediate health & safety is secure, people struggle to understand why they don’t feel better, which can be for a host of reasons including feeling grief & loss, financial stressors, disruption of routines, how children may be doing, etc. The long-term recovery for mental health will continue:

- The average length of counseling programs run about 9 months, but:
  - After Superstorm Sandy, we ran counseling programs for 15 months
  - After 9/11, program ran for 3 years

If you’d like to learn more about the DRCC, other programs or how to get involved that are available, email Megan Sullivan at: megan.sullivan@dhs.nj.gov
Questions for the Disaster and Terrorism Branch included:

Q: How many people are in long term recovery from addiction?
A: Nationally, it’s about 23 million.

Q: There is a stigma in Latino communities – aside from security issues – about seeking mental health services. Can you speak to this?
A: We partner with agencies that are already doing other things in those communities and have the relationships. It’s never helpful if I come into a community and say, “Hi, I’m from the government and I’m here to help,” – that doesn’t go over well. There are often cultural stigmas for lots of different immigrant groups; sometimes seeking help with mental health issues is seen as a sign of weakness if you need to talk about it outside the family, and when that happens people don’t want to participate in programs or seek services. We work with the trusted people in those communities – the culture brokers, the folks who already have “boots on the ground” and know how to reach people to help individuals in Latinx and other immigrant communities get the help they need.

Dr. Diana Salvador, Psy.D. (Dept. of Children and Families, Children’s System of Care)
https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/

Dr. Diana Salvador is a child psychologist at the Dept. of Children and Families and she shared what some of the mental health effects are on children during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as resources and ideas for building resiliency.

What we’re seeing:

• The biggest challenge our youth is facing: the disruption of their routine and the disconnection they are experiencing from others.
  1. Schools are their most regimented place and the pandemic has taken away that routine which takes away a place of safety and comfort.
  2. Children are experiencing significant disconnection from others - people they are used to seeing on a daily basis (big and small), means they are not being able to maintain that connection in their day to day life and are losing their network of social support.

• The combination of the two makes us look at this pandemic with a trauma lens.
  o Younger kids know when there is a shift of how the world is functioning around them, even if they don’t understand what’s happening.
  o Older youth know that the pandemic is something significant and it can affect them and people they know and love – and that brings about fear and anxiety, and can give rise to sadness, anger, hyperactivity
  o Kids could be affected developmentally and this fear and anxiety can show up in different ways based on who they are, their temperament, and their age.
  o That said, all our kids are having, to some degree what is considered a normal healthy reaction to a healthy sense of fear that we’re all feeling in our world right now.
• If families are already struggling with issues, the pandemic has now exacerbated those issues:
  o If children are in situations where they are already vulnerable to abuse and neglect, the pandemic compounds these issues, and the mental health behaviors that result need to be addressed in a more comprehensive fashion.
  o It is hard for kids/families that already are struggling with behavior health issues. When we think about youth and the family system around them - nothing's left untouched by the pandemic. This social and environmental challenges are compounded

What we can do:
• Want to try to move toward creating less disruption and more opportunities for connection
• This can be very simple.
• We can help our kids by tuning in and listening – giving them our full attention (without devices in hand or multitasking) and ask them how they are feeling, if there’s anything they want to talk about.
• Work with them to create less disruption in their lives
  o Example: Create a schedule for a child at home to create some sort of routine
  o Others it requires more comprehensive support.
• Therapy is great for some people and is not as effective for others, so there are myriad ways we can help children work through this pandemic.
• In cases where therapy may not be a preferred option, relying on supportive faith-based relationships and families to provide support for children
• However, for those kids who start to develop a real deviation from their baseline, it’s time to think about what additional supports can we mobilize in our communities to help support the entire family system. Deviations from baselines can include:
  o Lack of hygiene
  o Not engaging in daily living activities
  o Isolating
  o Significant mood shift for an extended period of time
  o Behavioral shifts (i.e. maybe an 11-year old is climbing into bed with mom and refusing to sleep in their own bed, when they weren’t before)
• **Second Floor Hotline** - youth of all ages can call or text and speak to someone who is a professional, 24/7. It’s a resource a lot of kids are comfortable with - it’s anonymous and confidential.
  o Healthy adult on the other end of the line providing support and elevating the case if additional supports are determined to be needed
• Media consumption:
  o Important to pay attention to the messaging on social media. Watch what the kids are watching! There is a lot of “normalcy” around drinking (alcohol) and eating or other unhealthy habits. It is really important that we continue to eat well and take care of our bodies. Just because it's glorified on social media doesn’t mean we should be practicing that.
  o If you are watching the news 24/7, so are your kids. We need to stay informed but it does not need to be on in the background all the time!
**Children’s System of Care Services:**
- CSCS runs the state’s behavioral health services across all counties, and to do that they contract with providers to deliver behavioral health therapeutic services, care management services, and family and peer support services.
- This buffet of services is unique: we are the only state in the nation that has such a far reach in terms of children’s behavioral health services that are run by a state entity that are available to anyone who calls.
- These services are driven by youth and family voices – strengths based
- When a family reaches out for services, there is a thorough assessment of the challenges and needs the youth and family are dealing with, and also an assessment of their strengths so that those can be leveraged and can inform coping strategies when tailoring services for the youth and family
- **PerformCare** is the hub for these services around the state: [http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx](http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx)
  - Anyone can help outreach 24/7 to engage in services.
  - Also has a mobile response component which provides emergency crisis intervention services to families where a team will be dispatched – right now the team is virtually dispatched -- to assist.

**Resiliency:**
So often we are trained to look at the problems and struggles, but’s important to remember that -- by far -- so many of our families are far more resilient than they are struggling.
- Keep that in mind and figure out how to help our youth and families because there are a lot of strengths.
- **Two factors that build resilience - intrapersonal** (relationship with self) and **interpersonal** (relationship with others).
  - We can leverage those relationships and connections to build personal awareness about how people can take care of themselves, cope and get through this crisis.
- In Googling poetry by youth on “Voices of Youth”: [https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tag/poetry](https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tag/poetry)
  - One youth poet writing about the Coronavirus said: “As Superman would say, 'You are much stronger than you think you are, trust me!'”

**Links to some resources Dr. Salvador mentioned:**
- **PerformCare**: NJ’s contracted system administrator for the NJ Children’s System of Care behavioral health care service array: [http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx](http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx)
  - PerformCare Hotline: 877-652-7624
Questions for Children’s System of Care:

Q: Are there specific indicators that a parent or educator should look for as it relates to mental health in young people? I am concerned that some of my students may be disconnected and not in a good place.

A: If a teacher feels there is a deviation from a child’s baseline functioning - look for a sustained or pattern of behavior change over time in areas like a significant change in mood, a change in functioning at home (eating, sleeping, hygiene). Look for a pattern of behavior over time. The best way is to ASK the kids how they are doing, or if there is anything they want to talk about. Keep the dialogue open and let kids know we are willing to listen and be present. When we do, kids will give us the clues we need if they need help. Using the PerformCare number is a very good resource to reach out to get feedback. PerformCare Hotline: 877-652-7624

Q: Are there specific techniques that people can practice at home to reduce anxiety?

A: There is a lot of research on the utility of mindfulness. Any kind of mindfulness technique (yoga, deep breathing, meditation, visual imagery, progressive relaxation) will help. Anything that helps physiologically calm the body will help calm the brain – that the number one, easiest go to for calming anxiety. There are a lot of apps and YouTube videos to help reduce anxiety and stress. Some recommendations from speakers and participants:

- Gonoodle.com has a lot of mindfulness activities integrated for kids.
- CALM (not free, but for a nominal price)
- Breathe 2 Relax apps have great reviews for adults.
- Plus use the things you always do to cope with stress - exercise, eating right, sleeping. Go back to basics.
- “Meditation and Relaxion Pro" is a great meditation app that one participant uses daily.
- ShineApp

RESOURCES

Additional resources shared by participants on our call:

Resource banks – general and for immigrant communities

- Kimi Wei is working on creating a resource bank for immigrants who don’t have enough food, household and baby supplies. If you would like to help with this please contact me at 862-203-8814 or kimiwei88@gmail.com
  - Connect to more pandemic resources via her blog: http://thewei.com/kimi
  - Undocumented immigrants are at a real risk and unable to participate in most resources and ineligible based on their limitations.
• Monmouth Resource Net: Please feel free to add your resources here and we will share throughout the state.  [http://www.monmouthresourcenet.org/news-events/news/coronavirus-resources/](http://www.monmouthresourcenet.org/news-events/news/coronavirus-resources/)

• Wicks Aircraft Supply has CLC Clean All-Purpose Surface Cleaner is an industrial grade, 75% isopropyl alcohol surface cleaner.  [www.WicksAircraft.com](http://www.WicksAircraft.com)

**Other mental health resources or suggestions:**

• Mobile Response and Stabilization Services are accessible 24/7 through 877-652-7624.

• Despite the situation we’re in there is an expectation of being productive, and yet people are struggling with the ability to meet deadlines and focus, particularly if they are being caretakers at home or as part of their work roles (think people working in first-responder, crisis or faith-based fields).  We need to STOP and focus on BEING instead of DOING.  It’s not about lowering expectations - it’s about CHANGING expectations.

• There is not beginning and end to this which makes it difficult.  We have no way to pace ourselves.

• Struggle for people in “caretaking” roles is trying to find a balance – do they have anyone to take care of them, or are caretakers able to give themselves the freedom to take care of themselves.
  
  o  It’s challenging for some to ask for help.  We can ask those closest to us to keep a watch on us and point it out because it is hard to see it within ourselves.  Figure out what is an emergency for ME versus what is an emergency for YOU.  They can be different.  It is a way to prioritize what you may need to do for yourself first in order to continue to be able to support others.

• The Arts Wellbeing Collective out of Australia is a great program around the mental health and well-being in the theater community.  [https://www.artswellbeingcollective.com.au/](https://www.artswellbeingcollective.com.au/)

• Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide:  [https://www.sptsusa.org/](https://www.sptsusa.org/)
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #6 – May 6, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the sixth call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://bit.ly/34WETWm. For screen reader-friendly registration, use the following link: https://forms.gle/9kUIyVvKr8akMENA6 Calls take place every Wednesday in April and May 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29; May 6, 13, 20, and 27) at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Accessibility for All Abilities: How people with disabilities are navigating the COVID-19 reality

Guest Joseph Geleta, Director – Office of Emergency Management, NJ Dept. of Human Services
http://www.ready.nj.gov/

Guest Scott Elliott, Executive Director – Progressive Center for Independent Living
http://pcil.org/

Guest Dr. Bernice Davis, Psy.D., Director – New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, NJ Dept. of Human Services
https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/home/

This call was developed in partnership with Eyes Like Mine, Inc. (https://www.eyeslikemine.org/) and the Center for Non-Profits (http://www.njnonprofits.org/).

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:
- Programs and services for people with disability, access and functional needs
- Registries and services for emergency communications
- Crisis Counseling and Mental Health hotlines and services
- Apps and tech solutions for improving access and communication to make interactions more accessible

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/QdBkRV39IOU
Joseph Geleta (Office of Emergency Management, NJ Dept. of Human Services)
http://www.ready.nj.gov/

About the NJ Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and how it operates:
New Jersey’s Office of Emergency Management works closely with NJ’s state police. The state police coordinate emergency management in our state which is fairly unique – in fact, Michigan is the only other state to have state police coordinate management. Joseph Geleta is the Director of NJ’s OEM.

- OEM works in coordination with Colonel Pat Callahan at the NJ State Police in putting together the state’s emergency operations plan.
- Broke in 15 distinct units
- Dept. of Human Services manages unit #6, which is mass care and emergency assistance, which includes activities including: sheltering, feeding, distribution of emergency supplies and family reunification.

Right now, OEM is working in coordination with state’s Emergency Operations Center because it has been activated in response to this pandemic.

- Emergency Support Function #8 is managed by the NJ Department of Health, and obviously they have a lot on their plate.
- OEM has been supporting our Dept. of Health colleagues.
- Most disasters start local and end local - so when the local office of emergency management (for a municipality) becomes strained, they request assistance from the county OEM, and then the state OEM will assist if needed, working in partnership with agencies across the state.
- If the State OEM becomes strained, we ask for assistance at the federal level from FEMA

How NJ’s State OEM is tackling COVID-19 and people with Disability, Access and Functional Needs (DAFN):
In response to the coronavirus, NJ received a Presidentially declared disaster back in March - DR4488 – which opened up the state to FEMA assistance:

- Those federal resources are in Category B, which includes “public assistance” such as emergency protective measures; and also “individual assistance” which is strictly limited to crisis counselling.
- NJ’s OEM has many partners that help us out in mass care – it’s not just the county and local. We are also working with a lot of community-based, faith-based, non-government organizations, and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) during times of disaster. It’s the relationships we foster outside of government which help aid in disaster response.

This is a very different disaster than we have encountered, it's not like a flood or a hurricane- It's a never-ending marathon

- This is a 24/7 job to help the people we serve which is why the Crisis Counseling Center is so important especially for us in OEM - which is why it is important we all take a break.
- **There is a Crisis Counseling Helpline available 7 days a week 8am - 8pm (866 202 HELP 4357)**
- We recommend you take that break and speak to someone when you're going through a crisis.
Commissioner Carol Johnson is very proactive in making sure our vulnerable and disability, access and functional need (DAFN) populations are served throughout this process. Early on she sent out email to our county OEM partners to make sure that they are connecting with those vulnerable populations.

- NJ’s OEM is connecting with vulnerable populations either through Register Ready - NJ’s special needs registry for disasters (information submitted to the registry is confidential):
  - For Registry Assistance, dial 211 (toll-free) and an operator will assist you in registering.
  - Alerts - Mobile / Text (SMS) & E-Mail:
    - NIXLE - Subscribe to the NJ State Police on Nixle Connect
      New Jersey residents can register to receive messages by sending a text message with their zip code to 888777 (data rates may apply depending on your plan). Online registration is also available at www.nixle.com.
  - Links to County Offices of Emergency Management, websites, social media and alert systems: http://www.ready.nj.gov/about/association.html

- OEM also works with the various divisions of NJ’s Department of Health & Human Services, which are thoroughly engaged in supporting our populations throughout the crisis. Those divisions include:
  - Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD):
    https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html
  - Division of Disability Services (DDS):
    https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/home/index.html
  - Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH):
    https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddhh/index.shtml
  - Division of Aging Services (DoAS):
    https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/index.html
  - Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS):
    https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/home/index.html
  - Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI):
    https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/home/index.html

- Wellness checks: For those who feel socially isolated, we are conducting wellness checks - simple phone calls conducted by our county OEMs, Division of Aging Services, and many volunteers.
  For example, NJ’s OEM and Division of Aging Services, in coordination with area agencies on aging are making sure that seniors who may need groceries delivered have volunteers who can help. Volunteers are also helping at food banks to get food boxes out.

Commissioner Carol Johnson was very proactive and received some much-needed funding;

- Received $36 million in funding to support NJ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP benefits)
- Received $24 million from the “Families First Act” to support Disability, Access and Functional Needs populations, especially those who need direct support service providers who wanted wage increases, because they are going out into the front lines
- Received $6.3 million for the feeding of our seniors, for those who are socially isolated and need food delivered
- Received $20 million to support emergency childcare
Weekly calls that OEM is running:

- County Access and Functional Needs coordinators
- Core advisory groups that are linked in distinctly to our Disability and Access Functional Needs (DAFN) community.
- Statewide Centers for Independent Living: https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/resources/cntrindlivindex.html
- It’s important that we continue staying in contact DAFN population during this “marathon” and as we may potentially see spikes of new Coronavirus cases as we head into the fall.

Resources Joseph mentioned during the call:

- The NJ Department of Human Services Coronavirus website: https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html
- How you can plan and prepare for disasters: https://www.nj.gov/njoem/plan-prepare/index.shtml
- NJ State Crisis Hotline: 866-202-HELP (4357)

Comments and discussion with OEM included:

**One participant raised the impact of masks on people who are hard-of-hearing or deaf:**

C: One of the critical issues for people who are deaf or suffer hearing loss are MASKS. MASKS are causing huge issues with folks being able to understand people. The mask reduces the decibel level to the person speaking and does not allow for lip reading or facial expression recognition. It is important to be aware of this and come prepared with communication tools (paper and pencil, note writing, ipads, phones, apps, google transcribe, otter). Masks are impacting everyone with a hearing loss, especially seniors.

Masks with a clear insert are good for social interactions but not usable in the medical setting because they do not meet the rigorous filtering standards that our hospital workers need to keep themselves safe. https://www.hearinglikeme.com/what-to-know-about-clear-medical-masks-for-lip-reading/

**Scott Elliott (Progressive Center for Independent Living (PCIL))**

http://pcil.org/

Scott Elliott is the Executive Director of the Progressive Center for Independent Living (PCIL), Chair of the NJ Association of Centers for Independent Living, and is a members of the NJ OEM’s statewide NJ GAINED group mentioned above by Joseph Geleta. Scott has been working in the independent living and emergency
preparedness education fields for about 20 years to help people with disabilities, their families, human service providers and first responders be better prepared in times of disaster. Contact Scott by email at: Scott.elliott@pcil.org or by phone at: 609-581-4500.

**Mission of the centers is to provide core services and support to people with disabilities.**
- To be clear, PCIL and our sister organizations are not housing providers: we assist people to find their own housing, among other services. There are 500 centers across the nation, 11 in NJ.
- We are governed by people with disabilities, our staff, our board of directors are made up of people with disabilities.
- These centers for independent living work with anyone with a disability and any age, including with our aging populations and school-aged populations.
- We are advocacy and community based, and have been around since the early 70s in California where they were started.
- Our centers cover every county in NJ – some centers cover multiple counties
  - Find the center nearest you at the NJ State Independent Living Council website: [https://www.njsilc.org/](https://www.njsilc.org/)

**COVID-19 Response:**
- We are learning that no matter how much we prepare, you are never totally prepared for what comes your way.
- Since the middle of March our centers have made contact with 15,000 people with disabilities in NJ
  - Wellness checks is a big part of what we are doing.
- **Properly equipped homes:** The pandemic has really increased the challenges for many of us and we have folks that are not fully equipped with what they need at their homes, from ramps and technology to generators during a loss of power can be major challenges for people with disabilities.
- **Food:** Access to food is a big issue across the state. The numbers of people in need in North, Central and South Jersey are currently changing.
- **Personal care assistance** is a big problem
  - We are working to ensure the families that are home are getting the personal care assistance that they need, and
  - that those personal care assistants are taking precautions to stay safe and contain the possible spread of the virus to their clients.
- **Mental health:** We are staying focused on mental health around this as well to help families and individuals in a positive way.
  - PCIL is holding weekly Zoom calls focused on positive activities including different forms of art and music to help relieve stress and help people keep busy. We’re looking at doing more of this.
- Other kinds of services range from helping people fill out forms for receiving unemployment, to, job hunting, to assisting someone who had to leave a group home and needed to rent a hospital bed until they could get the bed they needed, to sourcing masks, to working with volunteers to do grocery shopping and picking up medications.
- We working with Project Freedom campuses to help their residents with access to basic needs, as well. [https://www.projectfreedom.org/](https://www.projectfreedom.org/)
• Advising people on what to do, what not to do, and how we can help them in any way possible regardless of disability, age, or need.
• Scott’s colleague in Atlantic County’s Center also said that even if someone is referred to them and they aren’t able to directly assist they can work to connect people to other resources and organizations that may be able to do so.

Dr. Bernice Davis, Psy.D. (Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBNI), NJ Dept. of Human Services)
https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/home/

Dr. Davis, Director of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), has worked with the NJ Dept. of Human Services for 26 years and with CBVI for 16 of those years. Contact the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired: Call 877-685-8878 or AskCBVI@dhs.state.nj.us.

About the Commission:
CBVI’s mission is to promote and provide services to persons who are blind, deaf, deaf/blind, and visually impaired. All services are from infancy to senior citizens.
• The Commission is under the NJ Department of Humans Services (DHS). The DHS covers all people with or without disabilities. NJ has an estimated 259,000 residents who have varying levels of vision loss. The Commission has been of service to NJ since 1910, making 2020 its 110th anniversary of work and service to NJ.
• CBVI has regional offices statewide. Main Administrative office is in Newark (153 Halsey St Newark,NJ 07102) but has regional offices in New Brunswick (Joseph Kohn Training Center), Newark, Freehold, Cherry Hill, Atlantic City.
• In all of those regional offices we offer services in:
  o Vocational Rehabilitation - focused on maintaining employment, training for employment
  o Independent living services - eye health, diabetic education, orientation and mobility training, i.e how to travel and move around neighborhood or workspaces
  o Project Best - community eye screening service, referral to doctors who specialize in vision, including emergency eye health services
  o ASPIRE (peer to peer support program) started in 2015 which started with 23 care support groups and today has 63. (more on this below)
• CBVI provides a number of different programs and services which can be found on their website: https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/services/

COVID-19 Response:
• Resources and referrals: One of things we have been doing during the pandemic is provide people with resources/refer people; help them get food, food delivery systems, prescription access, and listen to concerns with transportation. CBVI helps connect people to other DHS divisions for assistance on a variety of areas.
• **Peer Support:** CBVI wants to highlight the ASPIRE program – Peer to peer group meetings occur throughout the state and help to combat social isolation. If people are dealing with visual adjustments or just need to connect, these groups are key.

• **Educational services:** With social distancing, we’ve had to create a remote platform to provide educational services.
  - CVBI Team is still working hard to offer quality education services, and we have been using remote services to help our population learn and compete with sighted peers.
  - Teachers are using assistive technologies, including teleconferencing or video conferencing, to be able to communicate with students and teachers.
  - Able to continue teaching braille.
  - Specialists teach assistive technology for students or people who are working.
  - Library Equal Access Program (LEAP): call The Talking Book and Braille Center at 800-792-8322.

• **Blind Business owners and Entrepreneurs:** Federal program that helps blind entrepreneurs and small business owners, many are devastated and we have had phone calls with them to see what services we can offer.
  - CBVI Having conversation with small business owners to provide guidance on the unemployment process and just letting them talk sometimes if needed.

• **Wellness calls:** CBVI is reaching out to people to check in and see how they can be of service.

• **Staying connected:** Calling all the consumers that the commission works with to continue to create connections and communication to see what people need. NJ Department of Humans Services Divisions are all working closely together Independent living programs, service programs and vocational programs. All departments work closely together and help each other with services.

• **Healthcare worker guide:** The Commission recently developed a healthcare guide for health professionals to distribute and help bridge the gap in understanding how to work with people with different abilities.

**Questions for CBVI included:**

**Q:** We have some colleagues on the call today who do not traditionally service communities of people with disabilities. We want to close that gap. During this time are their ways where all of us can be more inclusive in all of the work that we are doing in order to make sure we are involving our neighbors who have disabilities?

**A:** CBVI has the Aspire Program (peer to peer) which is incredibly diverse and has speakers to connect and provide resources. Have a community outreach coordinator and social workers, so if there is an encounter for someone with a different need, CBVI may be able to address it through a different group or department of DHS.

Scott Elliott: The independent living world tries to build relationships with ANY organization (chambers, rotaries, nonprofits, for-profits) to be able to be all inclusive to provide as much assistance as needed for ANYONE in need. 20% of the NJ population are people with disabilities. There are also a lot of folks with hidden disabilities (mental health).
Q: Thank you to Dr. Davis, my care team of Quintina, Ralph and Toni have helped me immensely. Since they always take good care of me, I'm wondering, is there a stress management program in place to help the case managers and mobility specialists decompress and take care of themselves during this challenging time? Thank you for all that you do.

A: In regard to orientation and mobility specialists: DHS has put out emails that the employee assistance program is available, which includes counseling and support services for the state staff, regardless of department or service. It is very much needed right now. There are also local and larger resources for therapeutic counseling, which also impact mental health issues.

Scott Elliott: There are many local resources for therapeutic counseling. Mental health care impacts people with mobility issues, so please feel free to contact me and you can share my email. Contact Scott by email at: Scott.elliott@pcil.org or by phone at: 609-581-4500.

Q: It’s awesome that you teach braille. Is this only for the those with vision loss or impairment? Could anyone learn this?

A: The commission for the blind has eligibility requirements for those we teach. Only for persons who are deemed eligible.

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RESOURCES

Additional resources shared by participants on our call:

Additional resources suggested:
  - food delivery meals on wheels for seniors: www.gogograndparent.com -
  - NJ211 – Dial 211 from your phone is also a statewide resource by dialing 211
  - Focusing on accessibility is huge - all organizations can work on making their workplaces more accessible and to minimize bias in their employment and hiring practices. Also, a lot of setups for remote work would be extremely helpful as longer-term options for employees with disabilities or to help others with disabilities

Upcoming programs from Eyes Like Mine and the Greater Vision Foundation:
  - Eyes Like Mine: https://www.eyeslikemine.org/
  - Eyes Like Mine Audio Book Club: Call 978-990-5223 Access Code: 2561166
    o Register for the Audio Book Club here: https://forms.gle/8V9FLqHNGVYbbCm96
  - Eyes Like Mine – Mimosas with the Mamas on Saturday May 9th 1pm-3pm. Register here: https://forms.gle/ZQu3pwB8cAYpVFNh8
  - Eyes Like Mine Cut the Corona Karaoke Hotline (2pm-4pm) and Facebook Watch Party (4pm-5pm) every Sunday: Call 978-990-5233 Access Code: 2561166
Greater Vision Foundation’s Blind Talent 20/20 – June 2020. Register for auditions at www.blindtalent.org or email gvfblindtalent@gmail.com

Creative New Jersey – Accessibility Tech

Apps, Tips and Tricks to help people of all abilities connect

Creative New Jersey has been working with community members to be more inclusive in our programming. As we continue to grow into improving our accessibility to all people, we have learned about technology that can help people across our state connect. We have some suggested smartphone app technology that you may want to try. We have included information on apps to assist:

- Low vision, blind, and sighted individuals
- Hard of hearing, deaf and hearing individuals
- Tips on open captioning, closed captioning and large print documents
- Translation for speakers of different languages

Website links are included for each app, and you can use your phone’s camera to scan the QR codes listed, as well. Scanning the QR codes with your Smartphone should prompt you to open the app store on your phone. You can also open your smartphone’s app store and search for the app by name.

This short list of apps, tips and tricks is by no means comprehensive – this is just where we have started and we welcome other suggestions, tips and tricks from all of you! Please share your thoughts with us by emailing Director of Programming Kacy O’Brien at kobrien@creativenj.org.

Accessibility

Smartphone Apps

There are several smartphone apps that you can download for free that can assist with accessibility – for everyone, not just those who are differently-abled. You can search your phone’s app store for options, and here are some suggestions:

For navigating physical spaces with low-vision / blindness:

Aira (pronounced Eye-Rah) is a visual navigation app that allows you to call into a center that connects you with a live person who can help you navigate spaces, read signs, and more. The navigator will access your
smartphone’s camera and will see what the phone is pointed at in real-time. NOTE: calls that last under five minutes are free. Calls over five minutes have a cost to them – contact Aira for more details. Link to Aira: https://aira.io/

**Aira (visual navigation) App**

**Android QR code**

[SCAN ME](https://aira.io/)

**iPhone QR code**

[SCAN ME](https://aira.io/)

**For communicating between hard-of-hearing / deaf / hearing individuals:**

**Live Transcribe** is an Android phone app and **eyeHear** is an iPhone App that, like voice text-messaging, transcribes what a person is saying in real time and displays it on the screen of your phone to be read. This app is most effective in one-to-one or small group conversations, and may be less effective in larger groups and settings with background noise. Link to **Live Transcribe (android)**: [https://bit.ly/35FKiRZ](https://bit.ly/35FKiRZ). Link to **eyeHear - iOS (iphones)**: [https://apple.co/2SKyAR8](https://apple.co/2SKyAR8)

**Live Transcribe App**

**Android QR code**

[SCAN ME](https://bit.ly/35FKiRZ)

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Convening communities at the intersection of creativity, collaboration and inclusion.

info@creativenj.org     www.creativenj.org
Continuation of apps for communicating between hard-of-hearing / deaf / hearing individuals:

**Open Captioning**

We recently learned about a way to do open captioning (real-time captions) at live events in a way that can be free or low-cost. This is not an ideal option, but it can help organizations and groups with tight budgets to take the first steps to making programs accessible. While this method may not perfectly capture all words and does not capture punctuation, it is a low-cost solution for open captioning.

This open captioning requires a Chrome Browser. Open a Google doc where you want the text to be displayed. Click the “Tools” menu at the top of the Google doc and choose “Voice Typing”. You will see a microphone icon appear on the left of your screen. You can choose the language that the text will display in to help with word recognition (don’t speak in English but choose Spanish as the language – it’s not a translator). Click the microphone icon to turn it on and speak. You will see the text appear in the Google doc. If you pause for too long while speaking, the microphone will turn off and if you click away into another program the microphone will stop recording. You will need to click it again to reactivate it.
If you’re interested in learning more about how the Google Voice Typing open captioning set up works for your own organization or group, you can speak with Creative New Jersey Director of Programming, Kacy O’Brien. We learned about this from Thyson Halley at the Newark Public Library, so you can also reach out to him to learn more about this technology. We are still working on ways to be able to integrate open captioning (real-time captions) on Zoom calls.

**Closed Captioning**
Closed captions (transcription of a video that is applied as captions after the video is completed) are available as an automatic feature for most videos when uploaded to YouTube. Once you have uploaded a video to YouTube and waited for captions to be generated, you can edit the captions in the Details section of the video you are editing. Scroll to “Subtitles and CC for original video language” and you will see “English by YouTube (automatic).” Click the three dots to get a dropdown menu and select “Edit on Classical Studio.” You will see a new screen that has a column of all the captions for your video on the left side of the screen and the video itself on the right side of the screen. Click the “Edit” button above the video. This will open up your captions for editing.

**Large Print documents**
Large print documents can always help. Make sure they are high contrast, without formatting like italics that can make the text hard to read. Also make sure that fonts are easy to read (no cursive fonts). Enlarge the font size to 36.

**Multilingual Translation Apps / Aplicaciones de traducción multilingüe / Aplicativos de tradução multilíngue / Applications de traduction multilingues**

There are smart phone apps that can assist you with translating from one language to another. These work best in one-to-one conversations, and may not be as effective in group or noisier settings. You can search your app store for free translators. Google Translate is one that we have used, which works on both Android and iPhones, and is free to use. Link to Google Translate: [https://bit.ly/3dn7x6b](https://bit.ly/3dn7x6b)
Existen aplicaciones de teléfonos inteligentes que pueden ayudarlo a traducir de un idioma a otro. Funcionan mejor en conversaciones uno a uno y pueden no ser tan efectivas en entornos grupales o ruidosos. Puede buscar traductores gratuitos en su tienda de aplicaciones. Google Translate es uno que hemos utilizado, que funciona tanto en Android como en iPhone, y es de uso gratuito.

Existem aplicativos para smartphones que podem ajudá-lo na tradução de um idioma para outro. Eles funcionam melhor em conversas individuais e podem não ser tão eficazes em configurações de grupo ou mais ruidosas. Você pode pesquisar tradutores gratuitos na sua loja de aplicativos. O Google Translate é aquele que usamos, que funciona tanto no Android quanto no iPhone, e é gratuito.

Il existe des applications pour téléphones intelligents qui peuvent vous aider à traduire d'une langue à une autre. Ceux-ci fonctionnent mieux dans les conversations en tête-à-tête et peuvent ne pas être aussi efficaces en groupe ou dans des environnements plus bruyants. Vous pouvez rechercher des traducteurs gratuits dans votre App Store. Google Translate est celui que nous avons utilisé, qui fonctionne à la fois sur Android et sur iPhone, et est gratuit.
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #7 – May 13, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the seventh call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://bit.ly/34WETWm. For screen reader-friendly registration, use the following link: https://forms.gle/9kUIyvVkr8akMENA6 Calls take place every Wednesday in April and May 2020 (April 1, 8, 15,22 and 29; May 6, 13, and 20) at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Resilient Senior Living during COVID-19

Guest Michael Oakes, Senior Vice President – Springpoint Senior Living Foundation
https://springpointsl.org/foundation/

Guest Janet Sharma, Project Coordinator – Age-Friendly Englewood
https://www.age-friendlyenglewood.org/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- Affordable Housing Resources across the state
- Food, drug and supplies resources
- Ideas for reducing isolation among seniors
- Activities and Arts resources for seniors
- Affordable house maintenance and repair services
- Information about starting age-friendly coalitions in your town or city
- Resources from foundations supporting age-friendly efforts

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/GLNHCotViHI
Michael Oakes (Springpoint Senior Living Foundation)

https://springpointsl.org/foundation/

Michael Oakes, VP of the Springpoint Foundation spoke about what challenges our seniors are facing and how Springpoint is leveraging their influence, access and partnerships to support their residents. If you’d like to connect with Michael about possible partnerships, collaborations or help, email him at: moakes@springpointsl.org.

Springpoint Senior Living is the largest nonprofit provider of senior housing in New Jersey and manages different types of senior properties and facilities including:

- 8 Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC) around New Jersey – which include independent living and progressive care as residents age, and also includes a clinic, healthcare & rehab.
- 19 affordable housing communities throughout New Jersey, which are subsidized by HUD. Most of the communities managed are at the low end of the poverty line. These affordable care facilities spread throughout 12 counties in New Jersey and are only for seniors who are living at or below the poverty level.

The Springpoint Foundation focuses on tapping resources for the benefit of their residents, including resident financial assistance and spiritual care programs, affordable housing support, and an internship program for youth interested in senior living careers. https://springpointsl.org/

Challenges for seniors during COVID-19

- **Social Isolation** has been one of the biggest challenges, and particularly for seniors who live in affordable housing communities, though it affects both communities. Seniors have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and residents have high anxiety about whether or not their community will be affected.
  - Seniors are processing news and information about COVID-19 differently than the rest of us (the senior population experiencing a huge surge in illness and death). Isolation is causing heightened anxiety.
- **Food and supplies access**, particularly felt, again, in affordable housing communities
  - The increase in price for food and the access to get the food in the affordable housing senior communities has been a challenge, as most seniors are living on fixed incomes.
- **Mask affordability**
- **Many seniors are unable to get transportation**
  - Grocery stores are doing early hours for seniors but some of the seniors are saying that the early senior hours are not that helpful because they are not ready to be up and out that early. Springpoint has been working to provide them transportation to get to the store.
- **Financial resources**: The pandemic has changed the way Springpoint is reaching out to their vendors to see how they can work with them to provide these essentials. Some residents are living off of $7,000 annually - so increased costs of food and supplies drastically affect them. Springpoint staff are always staying mindful of the financial restrictions that these seniors carry.
Mitigating challenges for seniors

Communication, communication, communication

- Springpoint is in constant communications with the residents, their families, healthcare providers and employees to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Springpoint reports within each community the number of residents with COVID-19, the number of residents who have passed away from it, the number of employees that have it and the safety protocols in place.

Dealing with Social Isolation

- Staff post messages and are reaching out to their residents as much as possible
- The affordable housing communities lie all over the state and staff have been trying to connect them with local schools/children and have created a pen pal program.
  - The East Windsor and Hightstown campuses have a huge Mandarin-speaking population. The schools have started to use senior pen pals as a way for children to practice writing Mandarin.
  - These kinds of connections provide an opportunity for the kids as well as the senior residents. Kids have been taking pictures of themselves and sending it to seniors as well with letters.
- The CCRC campuses have a Springpoint Channel they can watch on TV – and Springpoint has been streaming a variety of content, like yoga classes, for people to watch. Springpoint also makes sure that the channel is used to share positive messages (you are safe, you are OK, we are taking care of you, you are not alone).
- The Springpoint Foundation has reached out to their Benefits Administration (Aetna) and Monmouth Health Association to provide some healthy (mental and physical) programming for the community, as well.
- Staff at the Foundation have been working to raise money to meet these needs. Additionally, development staff are recording quick 1-minute videos saying personalized hellos to residents through an app on their phones and send those to residents. There’s been lots of appreciative feedback on that, as well as handwritten notes that the Foundation staff are sending to residents.

Food and Supplies Access

- Springpoint is leaning on partnerships that already exist and are working with them even more closely during this time:
  - Monmouth and Ocean foodbank and Mercer Street Partners, have been incredible partners in food and supplies access.
  - The Foundation has been reaching out to local restaurants that have positioned themselves as a means to support those in need. For example, if restaurants have been helping to support first responders, Springpoint will reach out to them to see if they may also be able to support seniors. Some can and some can’t, but it never hurts to ask. There are seniors who cannot cook for themselves or leave their homes to get food, and so the Foundation is working with the residential staff to find creative solutions to address the need.
  - Springpoint also reached out to local farmers who may have some excess
    - 4 Communities (spread over Union, Monmouth and Mercer counties) are now getting monthly delivery of fresh fruits and produce by a local farmer in Hightstown
- The Foundation has written a few grants to help buy food from those restaurants and other resources.
• In the beginning of March the board allowed them to use some unrestricted funds to stock food pantries in all 19 affordable housing communities, and have done two rounds of stocking so far. This provides the seniors a bit of safety to be able to have access to the staples they need and not have to worry about traveling.

Masks
• Springpoint has been working with many vendors and partners and have secured masks for each resident. The access and costs of masks is also a challenge – for seniors on a fixed income, $5 for a mask can be a lot.

What can I do?
• Reach out to your board if you are a nonprofit. Springpoint has a corporate and a foundation board and has been able to access resources they never thought they would have a connection with to donate. The board wants to help and are there to be your support and provide resources.
• Reach out to your local Office of Emergency Management to see what is needed and what resources they may have to help. This is not the time to be shy in asking for help!

Comments and questions for Springpoint included:

C: Hearing loss, an invisible disability
In the senior population, about half have a hearing loss. Medicare does not cover hearing aids, and when people are wearing masks, even those seniors with partial hearing are rendered basically deaf. The ones you hear the least are the ones who can’t hear the most, and sometimes people who are experiencing hearing loss hide it. We know that isolation is deadly, and for those who cannot hear, they can’t pick up the phone and just talk to someone. There’s a need for creative ideas to help combat the isolation. (This participant is following up with Springpoint to brainstorm creative ways to help address this issue.)

Q: What are the resources for people who cannot afford the graduated care community but whose income exceeds the limits for the low-income housing?
A: It can be a challenge for people who fall in-between the requirements of different housing options. There are often long waiting lists to get into affordable care facilities. Here are two resources:
  • It is best to check with your county office on aging/social services (scroll down to see contact info for each county’s office: https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html
  • NJ State Housing Resource Center: https://www.nj.gov/njhrc/

Q: Are there resources to help seniors (I’m 74) to assist people with property taxes and reasonably priced home repair?
A: Springpoint is based off of state regulations that they must follow as a nonprofit. There are resources available - The State’s Department of Human Services Division of Aging would be a great place to look: https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html
(Janet Sharma response) There are tax freezes you can get at your local tax office if you meet the income requirements. Rebuilding Together North Jersey is a great resource of this type of service: https://rtnorthjersey.org/. Some community development organizations may also be able to assist.

(Participant suggestion) Another organization to consider is Umbrella, which provides affordable home repair and other services – national service area, and in northern NJ. www.askumbrella.com

Q: Are there things that faith-based organizations can do to support nonprofits that may be providing food and other supports for seniors?

A: Absolutely. If faith-based organizations have programs or are doing work in communities there are definitely opportunities to work together. The best thing to do is reach out to each other and start a conversation.

Janet Sharma (Age-Friendly Englewood)
https://www.age-friendlyenglewood.org/

Janet Sharma retired in 2015 from the Bergen County Volunteer Center, but saw an initiative ramping up by the Grotta Fund (Grotta Fund for Senior Care: https://grottafund.org/) and the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation. You can reach out to Janet at: janet.sharma.44@gmail.com.

These foundations put out a request for proposals for communities to form coalitions to help people Age in Place. Englewood has a very diverse community and a lot of low-income residents, and it seemed like a good candidate for this initiative. Janet submitted a proposal and subsequently received a planning grant, and a continuation grant for this work.

- The first thing that Age-Friendly Englewood did was put out a survey to find where there were gaps in service. They found out that there was a lack of and therefore need of information. Bergen county is a media desert and lacked local reporting sources, particularly after the Bergen Record was purchased by Gannett.
  - To address this issue, Age-Friendly Englewood started a newsletter and created a directory of senior services, which they printed (4,000 in circulation) since many people in the population they are trying to serve either don’t have access to or have difficulty navigating technology. Before COVID-19 hit, the local hospital is going to redesign and reprint the directory but they’re obviously busy right now.
  - Began doing a newsletter every day since the shut down because there was so much information to provide those populations in Englewood the information they desperately needed.
  - The newsletter has been very successful - about 700 people read it a day (42,000 readers so far). Did a survey and 100% of people said they want to get the newsletter every day and the information was useful. Pulling all types of information:
    - Resources and stats
• Programs or supplies that are available to seniors
• Information on testing and contact tracing
• AARP resources
• Info on Food, masks, and other supplies, what the rules are around patronizing restaurants
  • World Center Kitchen (org that helps pay local food providers to provide food to those in need) – Family Promise in Englewood is partnering with them to hand out frozen prepared meals: https://wck.org/
• Plus uplifting videos/messages.

• Got more involved in the network of nonprofits and providing programs that involved seniors and work with other groups to include seniors and get more engaged in the community:
  o Concerts at the library
  o Public art project
  o Pedestrian task force focused on walkability and helping with getting more benches around town
  o Promoting a doo-wop concert at the Bergen Performing Arts Center
  o Blood pressure measuring with the Department of Health
  o Community garden at the low-income senior building
  o Organizing a mental health conference that would address isolation in seniors
  o Intergenerational program working with a local high school to work with seniors

• Age-Friendly Englewood participates on daily call with other social service providers to network and see who needs what.
  o Example - the schools have asked students if they have access to the internet and they said yes, but turns out they meant they had internet access only through their phones - they can't really do their homework off the phone.
    ▪ Worked on getting chromebooks and then Sharma was able to connect the group with Verizon and other providers who offer disaster services.

• Combating Isolation:
  o Age-Friendly Englewood is putting together a list of 20-30 volunteer callers and matching them with people who would like a call. Local Fire and Police Departments can check in on seniors living along, but they aren’t there to chat – it’s a quick call. This is more of a friendly chat.
  o Age-Friendly Englewood has people volunteer to assist seniors and others with technology over the phone, as well, particularly for smartphones.
  o Every Door Direct: Delivering a postcard to every person in town (must be a specific size and bundled a certain way). The postcard Age-Friendly Englewood has created is from the Mayor, Twon Council and Age Friendly Englewood letting people know that they can receive help connecting to resources and to ask if they would like a call or need other services.
    ▪ Every Door Direct Mail: https://www.usps.com/business/every-door-direct-mail.htm
  o Working hard to really find where there are gaps in services and utilizing the connections they already have. Focusing on all who are isolated, not just seniors (single or single-parents home
with kids). Englewood is very interconnected so relying on people to reach out to their neighbors as well

- The town’s Recreation Department has taken on the challenge. Initially of getting food to kids who used to receive subsidized meals at school and other people. They are stationed at local spots to provide food, and partnered with local restaurants. This has expanded to others, as well -- there are no requirements, anyone who needs food can come and get it.
  - Center for Food Action is doing this as well: https://cfanj.org/

**It's critical to keep sharing information:** You don’t know you need a service until you need it, and then you need it immediately, so keep sharing information about resources that are out there!

Other resources from Age-Friendly Englewood:
- Age-Friendly Englewood Resource Links: https://www.age-friendlyenglewood.org/helpful-links-.html
- Age-Friendly Englewood’s Plan: https://www.age-friendlyenglewood.org/our-plan.html

Comments and questions for Age-Friendly Englewood included:

Q: Premiere Stages at Kean University has created a playwriting award for Seniors living in assisted and independent communities. Who can I reach out to at Spring Point and Age Friendly Englewood to get this information out to residents/contacts? http://www.premierestagesatkean.com/announcing-new-award
A: Send to both Janet and Michael. Englewood public library would be another great place to provide this information

(Resource from participant) Music Moments has started providing singing telegrams – you can call and request a song and message be delivered to someone else, and can be on the call when that happens. For more info email Singing Telegrams at themusicmoment@gmail.com

Q: Are there other organizations like Age-Friendly Englewood, operating in other communities around NJ?
A: There are age-friendly groups in Bergen County towns and cities including: Englewood, Ridgewood, Westwood, Garfield, Teaneck, and Fairlawn. In other counties there are: South Orange-Maplewood, Tri-Town – Chathams and Madison, Elizabeth, Montclair (through the city), Princeton, New Providence, and Livingston.

**Renie Carniol, Executive Director of the Grotta Fund for Senior Care shared information, as well (https://grottafund.org/):** You can get in touch with Renie for more info at: rcarniol@jfedgmw.org

- These Age-Friendly groups are all working to meet the individual needs within these communities. For example: in Essex County -the group was able to get Meals On Wheels into public housing which hadn’t been able to bring those services in locally. Grotta also helped with a GoFundMe page to raise funds. Age Friendly Coordinators are working with Mayors to ensure services are being made available and that...
partnerships with nonprofits are happening. Where these communities had established relationships are now strengthening relationships.

- Jewish Family Service in Central Jersey is looking for food for the City of Elizabeth – the Food Pantry is in desperate need! If you can help, please help!
- People are struggling not only with their grandparents, but those who care for their grandchildren.
- Trinitas and Jewish Family Services are working to helping to provide resources for people who leave the hospital to come home - the care and the supplies.
- Grotta Fund is holding a virtual conference soon: [https://grottafund.org/conference-agenda/](https://grottafund.org/conference-agenda/)

Q: Can people start an age-friendly program in their community?
Contact Janet Sharma or Renie Carniol - they are happy to share what they know and help where they can. There are pop up opportunities for grants sometimes as well. In addition, Livable Communities (facet of AARP) can help you get started, workbooks available for free.

- Janet Sharma: [janet.sharma.44@gmail.com](mailto:janet.sharma.44@gmail.com)
- Renie Carniol: [rcarniol@jfedgmw.org](mailto:rcarniol@jfedgmw.org)
- Livable Communities AARP: [https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/](https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/)

**RESOURCES**

Additional resources shared by participants on our call:

**Activities and Arts resources for seniors:**
- Music Momentum – music therapy practice is providing singing telegrams. Email: [themusicmoment@gmail.com](mailto:themusicmoment@gmail.com)
- The Sparta Camera Club is providing online training for basic photography. Photoshop, Lightroom and photography programs for our members.
- Many community colleges allow seniors to take tuition-free classes online, and some also provide Microsoft Office for free and Adobe products at deep discounts. Contact your local community college to learn more.
- NJ State Library has a lot of resources, including books, movies, music, and health information, as well: [https://www.njla.org/](https://www.njla.org/)

**Affordable Housing Resources for South Jersey:**
- Springpoint is in Burlington and Atlantic County. There is a limited supply on the affordable housing side, unfortunately there tends to be a very long waiting list.
- County Offices on aging/social services (scroll down to see contact info for each county’s office: [https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html)
- NJ State Housing Resource Center: [https://www.nj.gov/njhrc/](https://www.nj.gov/njhrc/)
- Atlantic County resource for housing [https://mhaac.info/housing-and-rental-assistance.html](https://mhaac.info/housing-and-rental-assistance.html)
Housing Navigators:
Bergen County has Navigators to help seniors navigate housing. There may be Navigators in other counties, as well:

- Navigator Notes can be found on Bergen County website/ Senior Services page: [https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/division-of-senior-services](https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/division-of-senior-services)
- To be included to get Navigator Notes on a regular basis, with any Hot Topic interim blasts: email seniors@co.bergen.nj.us or call Maureen McCormick at 201-336-7435....for any senior age 60+ who has any questions about programs and services in Bergen County can call the Senior Help Line at 201-336-7400

Food delivery and drug information:

- Paterson NJ Volunteer food delivery: Neighbor Express Volunteer Grocery delivery in Paterson: [https://tinyurl.com/yçjp4bs](https://tinyurl.com/yçjp4bs)
- MedlinePlus - government info source for drugs: [https://medlineplus.gov/](https://medlineplus.gov/)

Affordable house maintenance and repair services:

- The State’s Department of Human Services Division of Aging: [https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html)
- Rebuilding Together North Jersey is a great resource of this type of service: [https://rtnorthjersey.org/](https://rtnorthjersey.org/). Some community development organizations may also be able to assist.
- Umbrella, which provides affordable home repair and other services – national service area, and in northern NJ. [www.askumbrella.com](http://www.askumbrella.com)

Resources for Older Adults from Age-Friendly Englewood’s Newsletter:
COVID-19 Checklist for Older Adults from AARP: [https://bit.ly/3dEt7TP](https://bit.ly/3dEt7TP)

If you are lonely or isolated:
The Englewood Fire Department checks daily on the welfare of older adults, differently-abled residents, or those who may have special needs, but who live alone, with no one to look in on them on a daily basis. To sign up, click on the link above or call 201-568-6304.

- Friendly Callers - If you would like a call from a friendly local volunteer, email agefriendlyenglewood@gmail.com
- Check with your local fire or police department about wellness checks.

Beware of Scammers!

- Scammers Turn to Extortion Emails: [https://tinyurl.com/y8p4v8vl](https://tinyurl.com/y8p4v8vl)
- Call AARP's Fraud Watch Hotline 1-877-908-3360
- and check out [www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork)

Exercises for older adults

• 4 lower body strength exercises: https://tinyurl.com/y9zaqbe8

Pandemic Makes Clear the Case for Advance Care Planning
• Five Wishes is an approach to discussing your care and comfort choices.
• Free webinar about "Five Wishes" Wed., May 13 - call 201-592-5783
• https://tinyurl.com/y9rp6hko

Face Coverings
• How to Clean and Re-Use a Facemask: https://tinyurl.com/yazjxkvu
• Click here for CDC guidelines: https://tinyurl.com/yden73x4
Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the eighth call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://bit.ly/34WETWm. For screen reader-friendly registration, use the following link: https://forms.gle/9kU1VvyKr8akMENA6 Calls take place every Wednesday in April and May 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29; May 6, 13, and 20) at 10am. The two final calls in this series will be June 3rd and June 10th at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Food Access and Security During COVID-19

Guest Dwayne A. Curry, M.Ed., Program Officer – Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
https://www.rwjf.org/

Guest Mary Celis, Director, Health Initiatives – Passaic County Food Policy Council, United Way of Passaic County
https://www.unitedwaypassaic.org/food-policy-council

Guest Alex Wills, Community Relations Director – Cathedral Kitchen
https://www.cathedralkitchen.org/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- Food banks and pantries
- Where to find info on food banks and pantries
- Farms, Farmers markets and community gardens
- Food deliveries and delivery services

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/GcnW7VFU6XU
Dwayne Curry, M.Ed. (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)

https://www.rwjf.org/

Dwayne Curry work at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) focuses on the health of children and families throughout the country, with the goal of ensuring that all families regardless of background or income have the opportunities that they need to thrive. Those opportunities include being able to foster a healthy environment beginning at a child’s earliest age. Two of the strategies that Curry is working on include shifting mindsets so that children are seen as deserving and advancing policy around critical issues, of which food security is an essential part.


Food security and access is impacting everyone throughout the country:

- According to the USDA report in 2019 there are over 37 million Americans that struggle with hunger and 11 million of them are children.
- In New Jersey, that means there 865,000 adults who struggle with hunger (that’s 1 in 10 adults) and 26,000 children (1 in 8 children).

Pre-COVID Income Inequality:

- NJ is ranked in top 10 states for income inequality (in recent years, NJ has moved from the 12th spot to the 9th spot, trending toward worse income inequality). The only states that have rank higher than NJ in income inequality are New York, Louisiana, Connecticut being the top 3 and Florida and California in the top ten, as well.
- In New Jersey there is a narrative of two states in one - rich vs. poor, those who have access and those who don’t.
  - Essex, Hudson, and Mercer Counties (with Essex being at the top) have the highest income inequality in our state. The average household income in Millburn is $214,000 and not even 10 miles away in Newark, the average household income drops to $37,000. This happens throughout the state and also throughout the country.

During COVID-19:

COVID-19 has elevated issues that were often below the surface. The federal government’s COVID-19 relief package provided millions in funding to prevent hunger. Part of that funding went to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program and school food programs.

- SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the country:
- In 2019 it served 36 million people nationally. About 13% were elderly, 10% were families with disabilities and the rest were people under the age of 50 who did not have children.
In New Jersey, 680,000 people were served by SNAP, of which 46% were children, 18% were elderly, and 30% were people with disabilities (which is three times the national level).

SNAP has shown to really assistance in a number of ways:
  - Lifts people out of poverty: In 2019 3.1 million people were lifted out of poverty throughout the SNAP programs.
  - Boosts the economy (one SNAP dollar generates about $1.70 in economic activity). In New Jersey just over $1 billion was generated through SNAP and that generated about $1.7 billion in economic activity.
  - During the Pandemic there have been a lot of flexibilities within SNAP and other programs. New Jersey has been moving forward with a lot of flexibility and waivers, such as:
    - **Pandemic EBT** allows children that would receive free and reduced lunch at school to be able to access meals by automatically transferring the subsidy for the free or reduced lunch (about $110-$114 per child) to the family’s SNAP EBT.
    - For children who aren’t registered with SNAP but receive free or reduced lunches at school, that subsidy amount is sent directly to the child’s house on a card. This is really important for populations that normally would not qualify for SNAP, especially immigrant and mixed status populations.
    - Waivers and flexibility with the interview process so that more people can participate in SNAP.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched $50 million dollar humanitarian relief fund in response to the pandemic. Some of that relief went to organizations like:
  - Feeding America who provide support to over 200 food banks in the country and over 600 food pantries.
  - Community FoodBank of NJ is packing about 2,000 boxes of food a day, which provide a total of approximately 80,000 meals a day. [https://cfbnj.org/](https://cfbnj.org/)
  - Feeding America has a list of local food banks that are searchable by zip code: [https://www.feedingamerica.org/](https://www.feedingamerica.org/)
  - Meals on Wheels provides food to 2.2 million seniors and people with disabilities. [https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/](https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/)
  - NJ Health Initiatives, which is a statewide grant making program of RWJF, serves a key need to reach some of the smaller communities who may not have access to charitable funding. [https://www.njhi.org/](https://www.njhi.org/)
    - Some of NJHI’s grantees have been shifting their projects to focus on food.
      - For example, in Perth Amboy and Somerset County have been providing food for community members or paying volunteers who are experiencing hardship or job loss.
The NJ YMCA Alliance has been doing an excellent job of providing support for the house-less children population and getting them meals. The YMCA Alliance has been working primarily in Bergen and is increasing efforts in Passaic County. They have also been delivering hot and cold meals and hygiene products to the Trenton district.

A number of other different efforts are happening, including:
- School districts providing food to children
- SNAP educators now are able to assist people in filling out SNAP benefit applications and processing.

Additional resources from Dwayne Curry:
- Urban Institute has a list of evidence based solutions as the crisis evolves: [https://www.urban.org/features/covid-19-policies-protect-people-and-communities](https://www.urban.org/features/covid-19-policies-protect-people-and-communities)
- Healthy Eating Research supports research on policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) strategies that have strong potential to promote healthy eating among children, especially among lower-income and racial and ethnic minority population groups: [https://healthyeatingresearch.org/](https://healthyeatingresearch.org/)
- Voices for Healthy Kids: [https://voicesforhealthykids.org/](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/)
- Voices for Healthy Kids COVID-19 Resources: [https://voicesforhealthykids.org/internal/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-you-can-use](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/internal/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-you-can-use)
- Voices for Healthy Kids - Grant Opportunities: [https://voicesforhealthykids.org/campaign-resources/grants](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/campaign-resources/grants)

**Questions for RWJF included:**

**Q:** One issue is providing undocumented community members and their families with services they need. Since they don't qualify for SNAP, they've been relying on food pantries. Are there any other options for undocumented families?

**A:** No other resources in NJ yet. There are some upcoming efforts that may happen: for example, California is working on providing cash to undocumented families. These new models that are starting to happen can be a resource for NJ on what to do next. Check out CLASP and the National Immigration Law Center. CLASP: [https://www.clasp.org/](https://www.clasp.org/), National Immigration Law Center: [https://www.nilc.org/](https://www.nilc.org/).

Participant suggestion: City Green’s Garden State Food Network provides funding and technical support for purchases at farmer’s markets to provide more assistance for SNAP (doubling benefits). Consumer to Farmer connection has increased. Farmers are providing a direct opportunity to buy directly from them. [https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn](https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn)

**Q:** I am a teacher and my students have participated in a food drive. I am not sure if that is the best way to support food insecurity. In a recent call with Ronald McDonald House, I was told that making financial donations is the best thing to do to help. Any thoughts?
A: It depends on what you individually are most comfortable with. Provide the assistance that you can whether that is financial or volunteering or something else. Every situation is different as is what people are comfortable with -- it is up to you.

Q: What is the longer-term plan to address food insecurity? What advocacy efforts would you recommend?

A: In the current Heroes Act, there are many people who are advocating for a 15% increase in SNAP benefits. That is one example of the types of supports this Act is hoping to accomplish. There is a multilevel approach that needs to be taken - food security in addition to many the other systems (like income, childcare, etc.) that will directly impact access to food.

Q: Are there any resources for food delivery with statewide food distributions as a resource for residents with disabilities who do not have access to transportation?

A: Yes. The group is called LogistiCare – an organization that works with Medicaid and also serves people who are in need. This is a free service. Transportation has been a huge issue in regards to people being able to access food. [https://www.logisticare.com/](https://www.logisticare.com/)

Q: Do you have any info on food in the Atlantic City area?

A: There is a great network in AC. Recommend checking the Feeding America Link. It will provide all the information for a zip code. [https://www.feedingamerica.org/](https://www.feedingamerica.org/)

Mary Celis (Passaic County Food Policy Council, United Way of Passaic County)

[https://www.unitedwaypassaic.org/food-policy-council](https://www.unitedwaypassaic.org/food-policy-council)

Passaic County Food Policy Council is a cross-sector coalition formed in 2011. The vision has been to end hunger in Passaic County by addressing the root cause of food insecurity, brings together partners from across the food system, and make healthy food more accessible and affordable to Passaic County residents. Email Mary Celis at: maryc@unitedwaypassaic.org.

In 2016, we created a Blueprint for Action through the support of New Jersey Health Initiatives with the understanding that we couldn’t really address the root cause of food insecurity without thinking about the other social determinants of health. The Blueprint for Action addresses issues around economic opportunity, community safety, access to clinical health care and continued our work to advance strategies around healthy food access.
• Communities are ecosystems and when we look at COVID-19 and how it is impacting low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately we have to think about how the ecosystem really functions and address all of the issues together. You cannot think about hunger in a vacuum.
• Other issues of inequality in the community, such as housing and education are not directly included int the work of the Food Policy Council, but we see them as a part of a whole and over the past 4 to 5 years have shifted our focus to address health disparities, for example:
  o We know that residents who live in one zip code may have a length of life that’s 15 years less than communities that live three miles on the other side of the county.

**COVID-19 Healthy Food Access Challenges:**

• Increased demand for emergency food.
  o Working closely with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and they’ve increased their distribution to a Passaic County by 68% and we are seeing partners in southern Passaic county, Paterson and Clifton really low-income communities
  o Organizations are distributing emergency food at the rate of 600 times greater than before, especially in Paterson and the surrounding areas where low-income workers have been hit the hardest
• COVID-19 has impacted the southern part of the County disproportionately because of trade and transportation access to New York City, which has been the epicenter of this pandemic. The need for emergency food has skyrocketed and created supply chain shortages and food disruptions.
  o We have seen articles about farmers who have let their crops fallow because of the supply chain disruptions to restaurants, schools and all the other places that we’re purchasing food.
  o Food system workforce shortages as workers are testing positive, people needed more physical space in order to work due to social distancing.
• Healthy food is incredibly important to build people’s immune systems – which is especially important for the most vulnerable within the community, like seniors and the house-less population. For medically vulnerable populations we have seen increased costs due to additional expenses (PPE, cleaning supplies, packaging, etc.)
• We have seen a decrease in volunteers as many are not feeling comfortable being out of their homes.
• There has also been a decrease in donations to nonprofits due to the economic downturn and not being able to raise funds through things like galas and other fundraising events. That has been hitting the bottom line of nonprofits, especially those on the front lines.

**Areas of innovation and opportunities / Coalition and partnerships:**

• The Passaic County Pandemic Partnership includes: CUMAC, Paterson Habitat for Humanity, Passaic County Casa, OASIS, Star of Hope Ministries and the Boys and Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic.
• In an effort to continue to bring healthy foods into our communities, particularly where there isn’t access, some of the wards in Paterson and other places have continued to expand healthy corner stores and small business support to ensure that those businesses have healthy food available. The Community FoodBank of New Jersey has been a strong leader in that area.
• The Common Market which is a mission driven nonprofit food distributor based out of Philadelphia that’s been working in New Jersey to increase local food procurement: https://www.thecommonmarket.org/
  o Secured 2,000 farm produce boxes that will be distributed to seniors next week.

• Systems that were broken or challenged before COVID-19, including the food system, have come undone. We want to support policies, systems and environmental changes to think about long-term solutions and how we’re going to leverage dollars to build more resilient communities.
  o Investing in food systems are key
  o Continue to promote/expand community gardens and virtual wellness programs.
  o Farmers markets are working closely with City Green – these farmers markets have doubled the value of SNAP dollars and people are feeling safer going to open-air farmers markets than a grocery store. https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn
  o Thinking about having a Veggie Mobile that are mobile farmers markets that can come to senior centers

• The City of Paterson is innovating and launched the “Neighbor Express” platform to deliver groceries to seniors and we are excited partners that can have been assisting by supplying volunteers. https://paterson.neighborexpress.org/

• In Paterson’s the school district, their driver teams had to quarantine, so nonprofit partners stepped in and donated trucks and drivers to be able to make sure that those three distribution sites at schools can continue to function. Paterson Public Schools is leading the way in terms of feeding students - power of the coalition that is communicating and working together to make this happen.

What you can do:
Collective impact is key here, and it’s important to identify a common agenda and a shared vision to create efficiencies and coordinate activities where we can have a much greater impact than we would if we functioned as individual organizations.

• Working together as we face resource scarcity, we must collaborate and leverage volunteer teams, share information so that we are addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. We’ve been able to identify families that need to quarantine and where food insecurity exists our partners make deliveries using volunteers to reach those families.

Alex Wills (Cathedral Kitchen)
https://www.cathedralkitchen.org/

Cathedral Kitchen is Camden’s largest soup kitchen and food provider, serving an average of 300 people per day. You can contact Alex Wills via email at: alex@cathedralkitchen.org
About Cathedral Kitchen

- Numbers have pretty much stayed the same, though March and April were a little high, and now we’re a little bit lower.
- We continue to serve dinner Monday-Friday from 3:15pm to 5:00pm, and Lunch on Saturday 12pm to 1pm (closed on Sunday).
- Pre-COVID – we have a dental service, culinary and baking program, food truck, garden, contract catering and a cafe. Some of those programs have had to be put on hold or have needed to shift at present.
- Cathedral Kitchen also prepares 1,600 meals each day for eight local halfway houses and shelters in Camden.
- Three quarters of the population serviced are men and about a quarter are women, and a very limited number of families.

Adjustments to our work:

- Changes to distribution policy while continuing to maintain the main mission of serving food to guests each day.
  - Since guests can’t come into the dining room presently, we are serving a hot takeaway meal plus a second bag of takeaway food and bottle of water. We have a flood of support from volunteers, local churches and mosques. Subsequently, we’ve been able to distribute as many as five meat and cheese sandwiches each day, a healthy snack such as protein bars, granola bars or trail mix, and fruit in the secondary takeaway food bag.
  - The dental clinic is suspended and our nurses are set to come back in June
  - Catering has been suspended, but we continue to do 1600 meals each day, 7 days a week, for the eight local halfway houses and shelters seven days a week so we are still doing that contract.
  - The Culinary and Baking program has been suspended
  - Food donations from restaurants that have closed or curtailed their activities has decreased so we are purchasing a lot more food and of course our income is down due to no catering and the cafe being closed.
  - Suspending volunteers for the past 2 months, we are volunteer-driven so our staff is working full-force
  - Social distancing is working out well through markings on the street and we have been getting a lot of support from law enforcement with help encouraging that.
  - Due to social distancing and quarantining, some of the people and organizations we usually provide food to have not been able to accept deliveries or pick up food from Cathedral Kitchen. That’s starting to open a bit: Usually, Cathedral Kitchen provides food to three senior centers in Camden – right now we’re only serving one but hope to be able to serve the other two soon. And we’re able to provide food for Urban Promise’s youth programs

- While our guests are with us:
  - Providing people with literature on washing hands and staying safe, and symptoms of COVID.
  - The County set up two port-a-potties outside the facility and two wash stations out front.
  - Toiletries and socks are also a big need - providing them with toiletries 3 days a week.
Starting to be able to give masks to guests themselves. Income is down and the need to purchase food has increased, but there has been an outpouring of support through in-kind donations and financial donations.

Ways people can help:

- Financial support, if you can.
- Cathedral Kitchen is asking for sample size donations of toiletries - hand lotion, body lotion, toothpaste, full-size toothbrushes, full-size deodorant, sanitizer, soap – and socks. You can never have enough socks.
- There are a lot of programs in Camden that are working together to help combat this issue and help the families in Camden.
  - Cooper’s Ferry working with the South Jersey Food Bank
  - Farmers Against Hunger - providing 10,000 pounds of produce and milk to hundreds of families in Camden
  - South Jersey Food Bank has a list that is extensive with all the food pantries.
  - Meals on Wheels is delivering
  - Catholic Charities and others.
  - Camden Coalition has a lot of good resources

Questions for Passaic County Food Policy Council and Cathedral Kitchen:

**Q: What about for people with disabilities outside of the Medicaid system?**

A: (Alex Wills) Cathedral Kitchen will provide food to anyone but they are unable to deliver to individuals.

**Q: How can people find out more information on what is happening in their county?**

A: (Mary Celis) United Ways respond to community needs. I’m not aware of any other United Ways that have a Food Policy Council. However, there is a need for more of this, and I’m happy to talk with folks about how to get started with a coalition in different counties to combat the challenges. Reach out to your local food bank, for sure - they have been funded to provide more food and many have been able to change the way they are operating in terms of deliveries. They are doing more prepared meals, especially for seniors, emergency food boxes. The USDA just funded $3 billion to purchase from local farmers and distribute through food distributors. NJ should have access to these farm produce boxes with no requirements on who they get delivered to.

Participant suggestion resource: Together North Jersey - Food Access Project through the Livable Task Force. That has great resources. This conversation is going to be continuing through Together North Jersey. [www.togethernorthjersey.com](http://www.togethernorthjersey.com).

RESOURCES

Additional resources shared by participants on our call:

**Food banks and pantries:**
- Community Food Bank of NJ: [https://cfbnj.org/](https://cfbnj.org/)
- Fulfill NJ of Monmouth & Ocean County: [https://fulfillnj.org/](https://fulfillnj.org/)
- Jon Bon Jovi Soul Kitchen (Red Bank & Toms River): [https://jbjsoulkitchen.org/](https://jbjsoulkitchen.org/)
- Beat Center: [https://thebeatcenter.org/](https://thebeatcenter.org/)
- NJ Food Processors Association: [https://www.njfoodprocessors.org/covid-19-resources](https://www.njfoodprocessors.org/covid-19-resources)
- Bridge of Peace Community Church (2755 Tuckahoe Rd, Camden, Mondays, 6-7:30pm, need ID and verification of # in household)
- Krocs Center Emergency Food Service 856-379-6900 (by appointment only)
- Catholic Charities Food Assistance 856-845-9200 (hours to call 8:30am-4pm)
- Touch New Jersey Food Pantry 856-803-3030 (Tue, Wed, Fri, 9-noon, 549 State St., need photo ID)
- Passaic County CASA: [https://www.passaiccountycasa.org/covid19food](https://www.passaiccountycasa.org/covid19food)
- Newark Emergency Services is also having a food distribution tomorrow from 9am-12 at 982 Broad St. Newark, NJ 07102 all must come with i.d. and wear a face mask
- Lunchbreak: [www.lunchbreak.org](http://www.lunchbreak.org)
- NJ211

Where to find info on food banks and pantries:
- Find Food Pantries in NJ by County: [https://www.foodpantries.org/st/new_jersey](https://www.foodpantries.org/st/new_jersey) AND [https://cfbnj.org/findfood/](https://cfbnj.org/findfood/)
- Folks can also call the Office on Aging and Disabilities in their counties.
- Center for Food Access: [https://cfanj.org/](https://cfanj.org/)

**Farms, Farmers markets and community gardens:**
- Interesting efforts in Newark regarding to adopt vacant lots for community gardens: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UehTW3QnZA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UehTW3QnZA)
- Virtual Mobile Farmers Market [https://www.virtua.org/about/mobile-farmers-market](https://www.virtua.org/about/mobile-farmers-market) (for current info on hours and location plans)

Food deliveries and delivery services:
• Mobile, neighborhood grocery shopping. https://www.optimistdaily.com/2020/05/these-trucks-bring-the-grocery-store-to-your-neighborhood/
• Neighbor Express - grocery delivery: https://paterson.neighborexpress.org/
• Meals on Wheels (Seniors only, Camden area) 856-374-6325; or find one near you: https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/
• LogistiCare: https://www.logisticare.com/
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #9 – June 3, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the ninth call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://bit.ly/34WETWm. For screen reader-friendly registration, use the following link: https://forms.gle/9kUiVvyvKr8akMENA6 Calls take place every Wednesday in April and May 2020 (April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29; May 6, 13, and 20) at 10am. The two final calls in this series will be June 3rd and June 10th at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Building Urban Resiliency

Guest speaker #1: Chris T. Pernell, MD, MPH, FACPM, Chief Strategic Integration & Health Equity Officer – University Hospital
http://www.uhnj.org/

Guest speaker #2: Tanya Veltz, Founder & Director – Tree House Cares
https://www.facebook.com/TreeHouseCares/

Tree House Cultural Arts & Entertainment:
https://www.treehouseculturalarts.com/

Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- University Hospital COVID-19 Resources
- Tree House Cares food distribution sites in Newark, Wayne and New Brunswick
- Community Emergency Response Teams
- Reopening guide for nonprofits
- Resources for those with hearing loss
- Other health resources

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/exEVCCYtqVo
As a whole we can work together to build resilience in urban, underserved, disenfranchised, disempowered, immigrant and LGBTQ communities that have borne a disproportionate burden, be it the pandemic of COVID-19, the pandemic of structural and systemic racism, or the pandemic of multiple comorbidities. Too often the conversation goes toward what the individual actor can do to live a more resilient life, but we need to step back and say: what can the system build to cultivate and foster resiliency that encourages and influences behavior and choices.

In the middle of a pandemic and at the epicenter of a chronically disenfranchised community, bearing the burden of structural and systemic racism, how do you still provide high quality care, in a fast pace moving environment where information is changing? Then, how do you maintain a safe and positive work environment for people who have experienced trauma and how do you reassure the community to return to care even as the pandemic recedes?

Dr. Pernell emphasized the power of narrative and storytelling to express what she was experiencing and also as a whole to help people express their feelings. During the call she drew attention to the specifics of what University Hospital was dealing with and how it adapted, and her own experience as a way to think about how those challenges translate to a larger community and how communities need to adapt.

Dr. Pernell is a hospital administrator, a public health physician and also has had COVID-19 impact her family: her father passed away in mid-April from COVID-19 and her sister, a breast cancer survivor, contracted COVID-19 and is still in the long process of recovery. Dr. Pernell shared that she, like other loved ones of COVID-19 victims, could not be with her father because of safety restrictions at the hospital.

- Newark has been at the epicenter of COVID-19, and it’s important to know this is still happening even though we are past the peak and past the surge. People are still being exposed, testing positive, and dying of COVID-19. There are social, economic, political, cultural impacts.
- There has been a realization of decades worth of research in 2 - 3 months regarding the impacts of systemic racism on communities of color.

University Hospital:
- NJ State’s public, academic, medical center
- A community hospital, vested in the mission and mandate to serve the Newark community. This hospital grew out of the uprising of Newark in the late 60s to provide high quality care to communities that have been disenfranchised / impacted by structural racism.
First Diagnosis of COVID-19 at University Hospital occurred in early March 2020

Hospital staff had been in planning stages a couple months before March

By April 9th (the peak for COVID-19 positive patients at the hospital) well over 200 people were receiving care.

There was a higher percentage of those identified as black and Latino/a being affected, also a high percentage of males (higher than the NJ state average). Median age was about 62 (a bit higher than the state average), but the hospital saw patients in every age range.

Currently there are less than 40 patients with COVID-19

Beyond Clinical Solutions:

Community:

- University Hospital is used to serving a community that is medically, behaviorally, and socially complex and COVID-19 adds yet another layer of complexity.
- University Hospital needed to have an immediate response that was adequate, and went beyond clinical solutions.
- The number of layers to this pandemic and service to the patients was extremely complex and the Hospital had to consider how to address:
  - Providing high quality care in the midst of a pandemic, resource constraints, and fast changing guidelines
  - Social/Emotional challenges because of visitor restrictions and figuring out how to bridge the gap in communication overnight
  - Staff - How to keep providing a safe and positive environment.
- The clinical aspect (treatment, safety procedures, etc.) was constantly evolving – new information and guidelines were sometimes coming out daily from the CDC and the NJ Dept of Health.
- University Hospital had to decipher the rapidly changing information not only for their staff, but also for their community.
  - Imagine a fast-paced environment where the scientific data is constantly changing and the individuals who you are trying to keep safe are not sure if they trust the information you’re giving them because of decades, if not generations, of broken trust between institutions and people of color. How does it affect your ability to plan and prepare to help the community it serves?
  - University Hospital had to think about all of these things at once to help their patients. How to continue to deliver high quality clinical care as the information and data is changing?
  - How do we make sure that we have the proper resources to do an appropriate response when our community has been systemically under-resourced?
  - People are now even more concerned with feeding themselves and transportation.
- University Hospital has been dealing with a complex moving target of everyone who needed care and had to make sure that the community that was already heavily burdened would receive the best critical care at this time.

Hospital Staff:

- University Hospital also had to deal with the frontline workers who had to be at work despite stay at home orders, putting themselves and their families at risk. Some workers had the option to telecommute but many could not.
  - One frontline worker lived in NY and he was taking a boat to work, then finding his way to get into the hospital. This is just one example of a person who had to get to work but didn’t have
the access to take public transportation as it was not readily available. This individual had the means to find an alternate way to work: what about those who don’t?

- University Hospital did not get to point that they could not take patients but were at capacity and were at the edges of their ability to provide care. Their providers were in very unfamiliar situations, as was the community. Every aspect of the hospital was affected.
- The Department of Defense provided University Hospital with 90 personnel to help cope with the case load, including physicians, nurses, respiratory therapist, and clinical psychologists.
- Whether your are an organization or a person, you’re facing similar scenarios

How University Hospital adapted:

- Due to the systemic issues that plague Newark, University Hospital knew that there was a greater need to communicate and do more targeted outreach to community members. How we experience all of this will be different from another institution in community of different economic means, different historical legacy, a different ethnic and racial makeup.
- What did we do to not just survive, but to thrive?
  - There was a constant review of data to inform rapid decisions, and having a reflective period to ask ourselves: Was that guidance or policy appropriate? Did it meet the demands of what we needed, and if not, how do we change it? Policies were regularly reimagined to fit what our community needed.
  - Policy changes such as restricting visitors into the hospital which was painful for everyone (for patients who were sick and their family members). Families experienced an intense sense of separation.
  - University Hospital received donations of devices to address questions including: How to become more virtually connected as a hospital? How do we keep families in touch? How do we use technology to keep families in touch? How do they ensure they can speak to the patient and the care team?
  - As a doctor focused on equity, Dr. Pernell prefers to use the phrase “Physical Distancing” because social connectivity is fundamental to good health and physical distancing communicates that we need spatial distancing. We need to find ways to still stay socially connected.
- Building staff resilience:
  - How do we provide a safe and positive work environment amidst an unprecedented public health crisis? We had to build within the system opportunities for resiliency for our staff.
  - Mental Health and Psychological first aid, is something that is talked about but we still don’t have pervasive understanding about what that looks like.
  - Through the clinical leaders and chaplaincy directors we had to raise awareness for staff to process the current climate and what it meant to provide care in a resource-stricken environment. Patients were sicker, there were a lot more to handle, and the situation was sometimes described as being in a battle field.
  - University Hospital have lost 10 people on their staff to COVID-19
  - The Hospital has devised WebEx reflection groups, peer to peer support rounding, counseling one-on-one and group settings, and grief counseling for those who lost loved ones to process and heal from the trauma.
  - Processing and healing from trauma has been something the hospital has had to think about internally and from a community perspective.
Coming back to care:
- Now hospitals are dealing with an alarming lack of non-COVID-19 patients. How do we get people to come back to care?
  - Feb to May the hospital saw a 44% drop in heart attack and stroke encounters. This meant that people were not coming to the hospital even with emergency situations. Mid-March through the end of April saw a 195% increase of DOA calls for EMS, meaning by the time EMS received the call and arrived, people had died or were dying. That is staggering.
- As University Hospital saw their COVID-10 peak come down, they have established many precautions, including:
  - Everyone who comes to the hospital gets a temperature screen and must wear a face mask
  - New patients are asked a lot of questions to determine if they are at risk of having COVID-19
  - Intensified disinfection processes, terminal cleaning, cleaning high touch areas, cleaning aggressively, and physical distancing
  - Making sure they have all the protocols in place.

Questions for Dr. Pernell included:

Q: Does the hospital work with other nonprofit organizations in your work around messaging to reaching out to the community?

A: Care Around the Clock launched about 3.5 weeks ago. It is a patient and community engagement strategy, to reassure patients it is safe to receive care and to disseminate information on health and well-being. Due to the trust issues mentioned before about how black and brown people and the medical system it was important to tap trusted resources on the ground. [http://www.uhnj.org/care/index.htm](http://www.uhnj.org/care/index.htm)
- Tapped into faith-based communities to spread awareness to seek health care if you are symptomatic.
- Mass emails to patients – this is the first time the hospital has ever emailed all 9,000 of its patients
- Created Video messages and PSAs that were attached to partner community-based organizations about coming in for care, the safety precautions we’re taking, what people can expect. It’s about walking them through what we do for transparency and to build trust.
- Email [connected@UH.org](mailto:connected@UH.org) for people who want to be connected to University Hospital
- Holding Facebook live events with the hospital’s CEO and panelists every Thursday, asking community members to host watch parties.
- All these efforts are to help build a more resilient web
- Sending out information in multiple languages as well

Q: What do we need to have in place if there is a second wave? How do we get testing to vulnerable communities and how do we get critical stakeholders involved in this process?
A: Where we struggled as a nation is that we did not start testing soon enough or widely enough. Now you see an aggressive ramp up of availability to testing. Essex County and the City of Newark are providing testing. University Hospital is looking at their capacity – are we able to test people who are asymptomatic? We are working on becoming a designated testing site.

More widespread testing is going to be important, contact tracing is going to be important. We also have to understand what that means to the community - to do contact tracing in a community that has broken trust with institutions? We have to ask ourselves: how do we protect their privacy? We also have to figure out how to get care to where people are. Telehealth has to become a way of life. We worked in partnership with Rutgers University Medical School to make telehealth immediately available. We’d be exploring that option and then overnight we needed to make it a reality, and with Rutgers’ partnership we were able to roll that out quickly. Mental health and behavioral health has transferred to virtual sessions. We need to find ways to do in-home and telemonitoring and develop the ability to have individuals be able to check their own health vitals like blood pressure and blood sugar and then communicate these things back to a health care provider for telehealth services.

University Hospital has been very aggressive in getting the message out on what they have experienced. In print media, our CEO did an op-ed in Star Ledger, and an article with The Record. The funding community has come through with resources related to the pandemic, but more importantly to understand the narrative around how the pandemic has impacted black and brown lives especially for what we’re going to have to use for population health strategies. I’m working on raising resources to set up pop up clinics to go where people are, and I’m apply for grants for telemonitoring. In disinvested communities, when a pandemic/crisis happens, its impacts are on a larger scale.

We need to also build the virtual infrastructure so communities can stay connected to care, one another and information as well as building out those resources. We need a prevention force of community health workers and we need policy change around things like the reimbursement structure. We are very involved in policy advocacy and how community health workers and community healthcare chaplains can be integrated into this work.

Q: How often can staff at University hospital be tested?

A: They are dealing with this actively. Because they are an academic medical center, they have access to trials and health care studies. The study allowed people to regularly be tested to see if they have been exposed. Developing strategies on how to test those who have been exposed. Going to roll out antibody testing. Thinking of a window parameter every week. Most important thing they can do is have PPE, aggressive hand hygiene and physical distancing.

University Hospital has access to innovative research trials patients and a healthcare workers study so that you can sign up and get regular testing as part of the study to see if you have been exposed. We are devising strategies for those whose patients are very high-risk populations - organ transplant - chemo for cancer. Those
staff members will be tested for antibodies, whether or not they have been exposed and keep testing them for the virus in a repetitive fashion.

Q: Considering that disinvestment is a critical factor to healthcare and other issues, how do you take steps to bring voice to the issues and then tap into stakeholders with various resources to help with messaging but also engage to remedy or find and implement solutions?

A: University Hospital has to have in place the following:
   1. rapid access to testing
   2. contact tracing
   3. virtual connections to care
   4. robust networks between anchor institutions and CBOs around the social determinants of health (e.g. housing, food, etc.)
   5. Aggressive engagement and communication strategies to inform, educate and reassure community about COVID-19 specifically (i.e. give accurate data). Communications must be carried out through various channels: print, phone calls, social media, and TV
   6. Care Around the Clock is an example of such a patient and community engagement strategy: 
      http://www.uhnj.org/care/index.htm

Q: My brother’s family lives with my elderly parents to need to have lab tests because of the medications they are taking. My brother and his wife are not getting the needed medical attention for my parents out of fear of COVID. What can I do?

A: Market studies have been done that show 7 out of 10 people recognized their health was being impaired but refused to get help and had symptoms but were afraid to get care. University Hospital’s surveys of our community show that over the next 3 months 7 out of 10 people will return to care. We are dedicated to keeping people safe and showing the community the precautions we are taking and how to use telehealth to check in with their doctor. We have local commercials out, PSA’s that walk you through the process, and we’re testing any admitted patient.

It’s important to address the whole person -- understand that communities have been through a traumatic experience and provide resources and safe spaces for people to process their experiences and to help (in-person, via phone/text, online). Please feel free to share University Hospital’s video PSAs that show cleaning procedures even if the patients don’t receive care at University Hospital – hospitals all over the country are doing similar things.
Tanya Veltz (Tree House Cares)

Tree House Cares: https://www.facebook.com/TreeHouseCares/
Tree House Cultural Arts & Entertainment: https://www.treehouseculturalarts.com/

News articles about Tree House Cares’ work:

- See Tree House Cares in action -- watch the news story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rlEw9IpYGM&feature=youtu.be

Tree House Care/Tree House Cultural Arts & Entertainment is a community outreach organization that provides food, clothing and other sustainable resources for those in need.

- In operation for almost 4 years.
- Since COVID-19 they have been going nonstop.
- Roughly service 200-300 people per week normally, since COVID, serving 500 per week. Providing 400 hot meals per day to seniors and disabled people, and serve the homeless population also. Everything is grab and go.
  - This work includes driving to pick up donated items, cooking, preparing and packaging the food, delivering, organizing volunteers to help with the work, sourcing containers for food, and following food and health safety protocols.
- Tree House Care has been nonstop everyday but are now honoring “Be Still Monday’s in Newark,” a campaign from the City to close businesses on Mondays and keep people safe inside to reduce exposure.
- Tree Hose Cares also partners with other organizations, which has been a tremendous help. Partnerships have allowed them to provide more services and take the time to listen to the people they serve.
  - It is important for everyone to network and partner in order to be successful. The love of people coming together at this time is what makes this continued work possible.
  - Partner with Project Kind to share resources to reach more people. They share resources: https://www.projectkind123.org/
- Partner with Unified Vailsburg Serivces Organization and use their building: http://www.uvso.org/
- Tree House Cares are doing their best to stay on top of the ever-changing information and stay up to date on how to properly service their communities safely.
- Ms. Veltz is grateful for her outreach work because she is able to interact with the community. The scale of the need and the destruction that COVID-19 has caused makes her feel the weight of depression because for so many people the current circumstances are bleak.
- Tree House cares uses social media for their outreach they are doing, to advertize where people can get food, medical resources, and housing.
- The numbers of people in need are growing – not just with COVID-19 but the people suffering and receiving hardships at this time.
- Together we can fight all of this with LOVE.
Ms. Veltz also underscored that because community members won’t have a certain level of literacy around medical issues, all of this is deeply intimidating. For example, Ms. Veltz tested negative for COVID-19 but had a positive antibody result. Because she has a family member who is a health professional, she was able to get assistance to decipher what those results meant – otherwise she would have been scared to death of a positive result.

When people who are not educated on what is being offered, the medical terminology overwhelms these underserved populations. The testing sites need to offer more information, not just swab and provide results. Explain more on the site what the results actually mean, especially as it pertains to having a positive/negative antibody result.

Address for Newark Distribution site:
462 Stanford Ave, Newark
Tuesday through Friday 2-5 hot delivery meals for seniors and those who are homebound
People can also come by and pick up grab and go meals
Sundays at 3pm - grocery distribution
Plus sites in New Brunswick and Wayne.

Questions for Ms. Veltz included:

Q: Does Treehouse Cares continue to accept donations, and if so, what is the best form of donation and how would we get it to you?

A: Yes, we are still accepting monetary donations via PayPal and Cash App Tree House Cares. Non-monetary donations can be dropped off at the address above. We recently partnered with United Way and the Salvation Army to receive non-perishable foods. As of tomorrow (6.4.20) those donations will stop (they have been providing non-perishable boxes for 4 weeks now) so Tree House cares will be in desperate need of non-perishable items. Tree House has access to fresh produce, so non-perishable items are the focus. Donations can be dropped off on Wed - Fri between 3pm - 7pm at the UVSO Community Center (462 Sanford Ave.). No donation is too small. We also have outreach locations in Wayne and New Brunswick on Sundays at 3pm but Newark is the main site. If any families are in need of emergency food they can just reach out.

TreeHCulturalArts@gmail.com

RESOURCES

Additional resources shared by participants on our call:

Community Emergency Response Teams:

Reopening guide for nonprofits:
- Center for Non-Profits - “Going Forward: Best Practices and Considerations for Non-Profit Reopening,”
  - Going Forward: Best Practices and Considerations for #Nonprofit Reopening” - The Center for Non-Profits has partnered on a new guide that we hope will make the reopening process a little easier. This FREE compilation covers many factors you may want to consider, such as workplace safety, human resource issues and more. It includes plenty of helpful links and will be updated periodically as circumstances warrant. https://lnkd.in/de4PJZ3

Resources for those with hearing loss:
- Any questions about hearing loss – particularly now related to masks - and how to communicate effectively, please feel free to reach out to Arlene Romoff at aromoff@aol.com.
  - Reminder that voice recognition software on apps can provide immediate captioning.

Other health resources:
- Mental Health Cares Line 866-202-HELP
- For COVID-19 questions: NJDOH operates 211 which can be reached by calling 211 or 1-800-962-1253
- Text NJCOVID to 898-211
Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations – COVID-19 Response

Call #10 – June 10, 2020

Editor’s note: This summary covers the general topics and resources shared during the tenth call in a series of statewide conversations hosted by Creative New Jersey to bring together our network and help people across our state keep connected, share information, and unite in solidarity as we navigate the Coronavirus response in New Jersey.

To register for Creative New Jersey’s Statewide Conversations on COVID-19 Response, click the following link: https://bit.ly/34WETWm. For screen reader-friendly registration, use the following link: https://forms.gle/9kUiVvKr8akMENA6 Calls take place every Wednesday in April and May 2020 (April 1, 8, 15,22 and 29; May 6, 13, and 20) at 10am. The two final calls in this series will be June 3rd and June 10th at 10am.

SUMMARY

Topic: Racial Justice – What’s Happening in NJ and What You Can Do

Guest speaker #1: Andrea McChristian, Esq., Law and Policy Director, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
https://www.njisj.org/

Guest speaker #2: Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams, Chair & Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies – New Jersey City University and Poet, Artist and Activist
NJCU: https://bit.ly/37n8BF1
https://www.antoinetteelliswilliams.com/

Guest speaker #3: Sheila D. Hull-Freeman, President – Bungalow Park Civic Association and Member – Atlantic City Citizens Advisory Board
https://www.facebook.com/groups/745817398858007/

Guest speaker #4: Derek Minno-Bloom, Social and Food Justice Director – Trinity Episcopal Church, Asbury Park
https://www.trinitynj.com

Guest speaker #5: Caloua Zhané, Alumna and Board Member – Hopeworks and Creative Entrepreneur
https://hopeworks.org/
https://www.calouazhane.com/
Resources shared by speakers and participants during the call include:

- Anti-Racism & Equity-focused Organizations, Coalitions, Trainings
- Healing, Self-Care, Mental and Emotional Wellness for Black People:
- Rights, Resources and Legal Defense (for Protesters and beyond):
- National Resources List
- Reading Lists, Podcasts & Videos
- Support Black-Owned Businesses
- Resources for White People
- Talking to Children about Race & Racism
- Actions you can take
- A Poem by Dr. Ellis-Williams - What Will Our Children Learn From Us Today?

Watch the full recording of this conversation here: https://youtu.be/z1Cm1nbuecY

Creative New Jersey’s Statement of Solidarity is on our website: www.creativenj.org

Andrea McChristian, Esq. (New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ))
https://www.njisj.org/
NJ Institute for Social Justice Take Action page: https://www.njisj.org/action_center

A few months ago we watched COVID-19 have a disproportionate impact on black and brown communities and exposed the cracks our society’s foundation that these communities have known all to well for decades. Today, as we sit in this critical moment, where the murder of George Floyd has sparked a nation-wide uprising, much like the uprising that happened over 50 years ago, across the nation including here in Newark, there are no longer cracks in the foundation because it has broken wide open.

NJISJ is committed to not only repairing the cracks in our society’s foundation through using bold advocacy to build reparative structures for communities of color, but to rebuilding the foundation toward racial equity. NJISJ is calling for everyone to take action on 10 items (NJISJ will be releasing an agenda on those items in the next few days):

1. Policing: Advocate for the ban and criminalization of the use of choke holds.
   - Eliminate police tactics used to heighten situations that can be resolved in other means.
   - Minneapolis has agreed to a ban the choke hold. NY has introduced this type of legislation to ban the choke hold in all circumstances. We are calling on NJ to do the same.
2. Advocating to center the community voice around any police reform effort.
   ○ Newark’s Police Department is currently under a federal consent decree with the Dept. of Justice as a result of a history of police abuses and unconstitutional policing practices
   ○ NJISJ is part of the monitoring team overseeing reforms to the federal consent decree process. As the subject matter expert leads for community engagement on the team, we believe it is critical that Community voice and input be centered in police reform work.

3. Advocating to ensure that Tax payers know that their representatives are using public dollars in a way that serves public interest and that there are alternatives to policing, such as restorative justice models and in situations where there are mental health concerns, social workers are the non-police first responders.

4. Youth Justice: Advocate for the closure of youth prisons
   ○ NJISJ’s “150 Years Is Enough” campaign, which aims to close NJ’s three youth prisons and reinvest those dollars into community-based youth programs
   ○ NJ has the worst black to white youth incarceration disparity rate in the nation. A black child is 21 times more likely to be detained or committed even though black and white commit the same offences at the same rate.
   ○ It costs $300,000 to incarcerate each kid per year. We could invest this money toward a child in a much better way.

5. NJSJ has introduced the “Youth Justice Transformation Act”
   ○ Calls to close NJ’s three youth prisons
   ○ Calls to invest funds into a community-based system of care at the frontline for young people by creating program and services for young people

6. Democracy and Justice - EVERYONE VOTE!

7. Take the Census - particularly in hard to count areas
   ○ Newark and Jersey City which are two hard to count cities in the nation for black people living in hard to count areas

8. Call for all states to relate COVID-19 data by race and ethnicity and by municipality and county.
   ○ Successfully advocated for New Jersey to introduce such a bill but still waiting on New Jersey to release the breakdown.

9. Create ways to create guaranteed income programs.
   ○ As we continue to deal with the pandemic and its fallout, this would provide black and brown communities who have been disproportionately affected with guaranteed income.
   ○ Newark is currently considering a guaranteed income program and their guaranteed income task force just released a report outlining how to get this done. 
   

10. Reparations – Calling for the passage of legislation to create a reparations task force to address the disproportionate disinvestment in black and brown communities due to structural and systemic racism. It’s time for NJ to reckon with the past issues and look at how reparations can be implemented on a statewide basis.
Through this ten-point agenda, NJISJ aims to advance policy proposals that will respond to racial justice issues in the current moment but also build the foundation that we will need to take us beyond it.

Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams (New Jersey City University & Poet, Artist Activist)
NJCU: https://bit.ly/37n8BF1
https://www.antoinetteelliswilliams.com/

Dr. Ellis-Williams is an activist, artist, poet and scholar. During this time, right after the murder of a black runner in a park, Dr. Ellis-Williams created a piece called “Shadows in the Park.” Her thoughts were about the Exonerated Five – how Black bodies are invisible or hyper-sexualized. She created an abstract impressionist piece to impact for others as we move forward.

As a Mother of two boys who has a doctorate in public policy, she thinks a lot about triangulations.

Working on research, the question of triangulation and validity of your outcomes in stress. Her George Floyd moment was Rodney King – it was the first time she saw a visual of brutality, where the police were freed. She remembers the moment vividly and experienced a range of emotions including rage. As Baldwin says, “To be black and living in America at that time was to be in a constant state of Rage.”

In conversation with a colleague who was a member of the black panthers about Rodney King, she was asked her how she was going to channel that rage, Dr. Eliis-Williams created a Teach-In to be engaged in the conversation and start to make change in a positive direction.

She continued to find ways to channel her emotions over the years: Dr. Ellis-Williams got involved in a youth mentorship program at Bethany Baptist Church that paired adult mentors with incarcerated youth. She committed to mentoring and supporting a young person for 10 years, and 15 years later, is still working with her mentee. A learning moment during her mentorship occurred when her mentee expressed overwhelm as she tried to expose him to lots of experiences and opportunities. He told her

1 Ellis-Williams’ “Beware of Shadows in the Park” Mixed Media Paper & Acrylic on Canvas 30” x 40” (2020)
it was too much to take in at one time. This moment led Dr. Ellis-Williams to reflect on the work that we do and that we need to understand where individuals are, and have conversations before we decide to pour things into individuals. It’s not about an individual’s capacity, or heart, it’s that Dr. Ellis-Williams said she and her mentee didn’t yet have the relationship built that they needed.

Building relationships is central to the conversation and the legislation we need to pass is rooted in authentic partnerships.

Dr. Ellis-Williams talked about the number of times white colleagues have used her information or have misrepresented information. Even as the Director of the Africana Studies Center, Dr. Ellis-Williams hosted events with people like Ray Santana from the Exonerated Five, and there was very low attendance. For Black Communities to have to always publicly show pain is problematic and reliving the pain is a lot to ask. Her time in America and has an immigrant has shown her enough pain that she feels she does not need to revisit regularly. As an artist and playwright she wants to engage in conversations and activities that not only heal but are transformative where we are.

Things people can do:
- Read and support black authors and stories that are not sensationalized or about exploitation
- Listening is probably the best political action allies can do at the moment
- Opening up your wallets to individuals who have credentialing to share in the wealth
- We need to also focus on centering these conversations around the ENTIRE black community - black trans men and women for example

As a Board member of the Women of NJPAC, they created “Healing through the Arts” to focus on women who are being physically abused.

The Violence of Non-Violence:
While at Cornell, Dr. Ellis-Williams got to know Dorothy Cotton, who became a mentor to her. Working with Dorothy Cotton in shaping the Beloved Community, she began to understand that it’s not just physical violence that we need to be talking about: There is also the violence of inequality, subjugation, of not allowing voice.

If it takes the killing of George Floyd, Dr. Ellis-Williams is frightened because after the cameras leave, there are still so many people who have someone’s leg on our neck. If that’s not going to create an urgency, do we have to come back again to these moments of this kind of public death? Can we see when there is whitesplaining happening, or pay inequities or wealth gaps – can the inability to buy a home be seen as violence? With these questions, artists are so needed right now not only to record what’s happening but to also find ways to engage in conversation.

NOTE: See Dr. Elli-William’s poem at the close of this document
Sheila D. Hull-Freeman has been an activist since the 1970s. The murder of Dr. King was her activist moment. As she wanted to become active in the community and wanted to raise the issue of racial injustice and had the opportunity from the race riots in the 1960s that trashing our communities wasn't really helping. Sheila was a part of sit-ins, carried petitions for signatures, passed out leaflets, marched and through this learned, rest the neck that holds the head that controls everything to get the attention of people in power and get them to think.

She is proud of this younger generation and the peaceful protests that have been happening. YOU ARE GETTING THE ATTENTION IN A WAY THAT IS CAUSING FOLKS TO THINK. Because of this, real change can happen. Sheila also is very mindful that these protests and activists need to translate this into votes.

The black community in Atlantic City is a microcosm of the activity that takes place politically and economically in Atlantic City. Atlantic City has made huge strides in recent years despite the frequently negative media coverage. Sheila feels that its essential that the media promoting more of the positive things happening in AC.

The issue of getting people in AC out to vote is a difficult thing. I feel wounded at every election when we have less than 20% of eligible registered voters going out to vote. Sheila started asking herself why this was happening and what can be done about it. As someone who moved to Atlantic City, she’s learned from people who were born in and grown up in AC that AC historically has always been a segregated town. People have been conditioned to believe that their vote doesn’t count.

To get more involved in the community, Sheila joined the Bungalow Park Civic Association, and eventually became its President. In this regard, she worked to better serve the neighborhood and community. The geographic boundaries of this neighborhood mean that it’s not an area that is growing and developing because there is not space. So the big challenge is holding on to rateable tax base, which means that it’s important to encourage people to stay and welcome new residents. Secured a Neighborworks grant for Pride in Place - received this grant and used that for projects like refreshing a block-long mural by the award-winning author and artist Kadir Nelson when he was a young art student.

Atlantic City Citizens Advisory Board - Born of Jim Johnson's implementation plan presented to the state – Atlantic City: Building a Foundation for a Shared Prosperity. The Advisory Board has done some important work with the police in Atlantic City through and have a good relationship with the Department. This Advisory Board is a pilot program and they hope to see Citizens Advisory Boards in other towns.

● 2019 Article about Atlantic City Citizens Advisory Board (Press of Atlantic City):
Derek Minno-Bloom (Trinity Episcopal Church, Asbury Park)
https://www.trinitynj.com

Derek represents a small grass roots group focused on social justice work. As a white person, Derek always likes to ground out that he identifies as a settler – that it is Lenni Lenape land that he lives on in Asbury Park, specifically the Sand Hill Nation. It’s an important framework for white folks to identify as settlers to recognize the first racial injustice that happened here on Turtle Island. For those who aren’t familiar with the term “Turtle Island,” for 10,000 years, different indigenous nations referred to the area that is now Mexico, the U.S, and Canada as Turtle Island – they had amazing diplomacy.

Trinity has a social justice program that is intersectional – one that fights all different kinds of oppressions, and we believe Dr. Martin Luther King when he said, “A threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Therefore, Trinity has tried to design a program for complete collected liberation for everyone, specifically in Asbury Park and at large.

- **Food Justice and Housing Justice** are both racial justice issues.
  - Run a food pantry and meal a day service.
  - Organize marches and events with the LGBTQ+ community, as well.
  - As long as racism is here there will be a food insecurity, along with housing injustice
  - We were part of creating the Asbury Park Affordable Housing Coalition which is a decentralized directly democratic group that fights for affordable housing in Asbury Park and is also a multiracial group
    - Exciting news – we helped in partnership with Fair Share Housing to pass eight inclusionary zoning units - 20% affordable housing for any new housing buildings with five or more apartments. Working on tenant organizing and rent control.

- **Economic Justice** – 1 in 8 people control half the world’s wealth. In America, $450 billion has gone to corporations during this pandemic while low income communities still suffer.
  - We created Cooperate Asbury, another directly democratic group inspired by Rising Jackson (https://bit.ly/2MRSvKt) in Jackson Mississippi, which elected the first black socialist Mayor who ran on a municipal ticket and not horizontal ticket, and where they do their city budget by direct democracy (participatory budgeting), if you are familiar with occupy wall street. Cooperate Asbury: https://www.facebook.com/pg/Cooperate-Asbury-329318921016442/about/?ref=page_internal
    - Here’s more info on Participatory Budgeting: https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/

- **Racial Justice Project** - to help folks understand what racism is. White folks think it is just racial prejudice – people being judged by the color of their skin. Critical race theory defines racism as someone who has a racial prejudice and has systemic force to enforce that racial prejudice. https://www.trinitynj.com/racial-justice-project/. Examples:
○ Slavery - there was racial prejudice and system to enforce that racial prejudice was slavery
○ Jim Crow Laws – there was racial prejudice and the systemic force to enforce that racial prejudice was the Jim Crow Laws
○ In 2020: There is a racial prejudice and the systemic force is the police and prison systems to enforce that racial prejudice. The first police in the US were “slave catchers” – the founding of police in America is founding on a highly racist system right out the gate. Even if you are a police officer with the greatest of intentions the system itself continues to support classism and racism in the prison system is supported by the police.

● Started Transformative Justice – started at Trinity and helped founded by Jennifer Lewinsky of Black Lives Matter Asbury Park - looking to abolish the prison system and work with people who are formerly incarcerated to heal from the trauma and create community accountability processes around survivors and crimes to create true healing within the community. And then to train formerly incarcerated to run the program themselves and organize for justice. We recognize that within the 13th amendment that slavery is still legal in jail – we need to decarcerate our states and eliminate slavery. https://aptransformativejustice.org/

Caloua Zhané (Hopeworks & Creative Entrepreneur)

https://hopeworks.org/
https://www.calouazhane.com/
https://www.linkedin.com/in/caloua-lowe/

Caloua spoke about economic justice particularly as it affects young people of color. At the age of 21, Caloua is able to sustain her family, her home and her career and credits that to her experience with Hopeworks, of which she is an alumna and is now a Board Member.

Things that you can do on a personal and a professional level:
● There’s a strong bias around poverty: Poverty doesn’t define work ethic.
  ○ A lot of people assume that if you are poor, it’s because you are not good at what you do or are not a good employee - that is not true.
  ○ To help this issue you can identify real economic challenges that people are facing
    ■ Example: People who have to choose between working two jobs to put food on the table vs. helping their mother.
● Support systemic solutions, such as Raising Minimum Wage
  ○ The minimum wage for tipped workers will climb from $2.63 an hour to $3.13 an hour in 2020.
● Volunteer your services. Everyone has a skill - get involved with your local organizations to help train people who may not be able to go to colleges to get those skills, and donate to alternative pipeline programs, like Hopeworks, that train people who are unable to take the time away to go do college.
● Hopeworks’ mission is to train young people in Camden, ages 16 – 25, in technical computer skills (HTML CSS, Javascript, etc.), and we have three social enterprises to provide them with paid training and internships.

● Ways you can help professionally:
  ○ Paid training
  ○ Help provide resources that address the things that stand in the way of careers, such as access to transportation and schooling – Hopeworks has a scholarship that provides free tuition at Camden County College
  ○ Budget & Financial training – many people of color don’t know how to save money, if that’s even an option, or how investing works
  ○ Look at the bias of the hiring process, is your hiring team diverse? Are you hiring people through referrals? A lot of young people of color don’t have the connections in their networks yet that can help them get in the front door and into an interview
  ○ Access to transportation – is your office accessible to transportation, if not, how are you helping people to get where they need to go?
  ○ Flexible work schedules for people who have to help out at home
  ○ The Degree Barrier - are you only employing people who have Bachelor degrees and do the skills of the job really require a 4-year bachelor degree?
  ○ Hopeworks is always looking for mentors, people to join chat and chews to talk about their skills, and employers to hire their young people.

Questions

Q: How does the social justice work operate from the church’s perspective and how do you get diverse participation for that kind of work?

A: (Derek Minno-Bloom) I come from an organizing background in Black Mesa with the Diné – otherwise known as the Navajo – who were working against a forced relocation from the second largest coal company and the Elders took up arms to resist and we supported them. I also identify as Judeo-Christian, which is pretty hard considering the relative of that herstory/history. There are projects within Trinity that are Trinity-centered - the Transformative Justice Project, which is an abolitionist project, started at Trinity but we wanted to get housing so we started our own nonprofit.

With the Asbury Park Affordable Housing Coalition, I wanted to start at Trinity, but we’re 97% white, and I didn’t want yet another white organization calling the shots, so we partnered with the Asbury Park Diversity Dialogue Group, a multiracial whose talking about hard issues related to race and racism. The Dialogue group connected white folks to the larger community in Asbury Park, so when Tracy Rogers, a housing justice advocate in NJ, reached out and said let’s start this coalition, worked with the
Dialogue Group to a create grassroots group using direct democracy where there are no leaders or bosses and that we all share power.

I found some of the groups have paid organizers but we needed to create grassroots organizations outside of the church in order to grow and gain traction.

(Participant comment) – I’m a woman of faith and I’ve taken anti-racism training with the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond and takes that into all the work that I do. Many houses of worship that are deeply involved in activism, but I do still fine myself debated with white racists Christian who come out of the closet during times like these, but I will not be silenced.

(Dr. Ellis-Williams) As a minister and being interested in ecumenical work, conscious that religious and spiritual houses are not on the forefront as much as I think we can and should be. Because of this, not being able to have the same kind of movement like in the 60s. How are we using those buildings and spaces to do the work?

(Participant comment) The faith-based conversation is so critical. We are moving into a more collective energy. They have silos in all different faiths – and we are doing incredible amounts of work, but we should ask each church to go beyond their congregation and join forces with other like-minded churches and organizations. Interfaith action is something this time demands.

(Dr. Ellis-Williams) A few organizations/people that are doing this type of work: Faith in Action does interfaith trainings, Dr. Boyer, Moral Mondays.

Q: I’m struggling to motivate people to come out and get information where it is offered with regard to issues around racism or getting people to come out to vote? Any additional suggestions?

A: (Dr. Ellis-Williams) People have to feel ownership of the materials and sometimes it is about the urgency of the issue. When we have a sexy sounding program and the time is sexy, turnout is different. People don’t want to be talked AT, they want to have engaging conversation and we have to make it easy for them to do that. People can participate by providing them with a reading list, making sure seniors can get there, that the time is good for people to come. We keep telling young people to vote but when they show up we don’t listen to them. As a professor, hearing people say that young folks aren’t interested – it’s just not true. They may not be interested in the way we talk about it. If you look at Bernie supporters, some of the Latina and white women who were involved sat out the last election as a way to make their point.

Let folks know that their voice matters. Having individuals at the table participating in the conversation and shaping the conversation is important. To make sure that we don’t beat up on them if they don’t come the way that we want them too. How do we use virtual platforms to further the
ability to gather, get out of our comfort zone. This work gets tiring, it gets messy. Different people want to do different things at the same time and that is more than okay – we need to engage differently.

**Participant comment on how the Arts play a role in organizing:**
The arts can also come in to break down initial barriers and allow people to channel their feelings and issues. Art can be used to start a conversation in your community. Familiarize yourself with the basics of how to organize, and then use art to allow people to express themselves without judgement and then move the conversation to ways to help and outreach. Arts and culture is a powerful way to bridge the gap to open up dialogue and see different perspectives.

**Q: Are there ways to get involved in advocacy work in Trenton?**
(Andrea McChristian) Two great resources are the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow has been a great partner in our youth engagement work to close youth prisons: [http://www.endnewjimcrownj.org/](http://www.endnewjimcrownj.org/) and Perry Shaw at A Better Way, who are working on reentry services and programming. [https://www.facebook.com/abetterwaynj/](https://www.facebook.com/abetterwaynj/)

**Comment from Participant about how to do better:**
One of the things I’ve been doing for a couple of decades now is looking at people and saying, “I am racist.” Racism is the water we swim in and the air we breathe: We have to accept that it’s not about “those bad people” over there: It is about ALL of us. We all need to be working on this. The moral imperative for me is learn about myself, to modify my behavior so that I’m not hurting other people, to learn to grow to do what I can. I have made missteps and done things I’m ashamed of not having taken imitative when I could. I have cloaked myself in my white privilege and I know that. But my goal is to keep going forward, to keep trying, to learn one more thing, to make that one more difference, to talk to that one more person. We need to own the fact it’s not about other people and it’s not about shaming, it’s about being the people we want to be, being ourselves.

**Q: What kinds of Anti-Racism training have people done?**
A: (Participant) People Institute for Progress and Beyond. Group of trainers from around the country that have to be brought in by an organizing group. They have a strong presence in the NY/NJ area. In NJ, PISB trainings are often coordinated by the NJ Anti-Racist Alliance. The PISB training is a crash course of racism in America, how it manifests. It is a good primer to have shared language and common history about what racism is and how we’ve come to this point. Sometimes some trainings are set up in ways where black people have to put their issues on display and this group uses an approach that doesn't do that. PISB may be doing some virtual training at this time.
There’s also the Government Alliance for Race and Equity is another group. Undoing Racism: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond resources and anti-racism trainings: https://www.pisab.org/
  ● Government Alliance for Race and Equity: https://www.racialequityalliance.org/m
  ● NJ Anti-Racist Alliance: https://njantiracistalliance.wordpress.com/about-ara/
    ○ NJ Anti-racist Alliance for Undoing Racism workshops Susan Cohen Esquilin, Ph.D., ABPP-Clinical: ARA@esquilins.com

RESOURCES

Additional resources shared by participants and speakers on our call & CNJ staff research:

Anti-Racism & Equity-focused Organizations, Coalitions, Trainings:
  ● Amend the 13th Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/710353612707428/?ref=share
  ● American Conference on Diversity: https://americanconferenceondiversity.org
  ● Association of Black Fundraising Executives: https://www.abfe.org/
  ● Campaign to End the New Jim Crow: http://www.endnewjimcrownj.org
  ● Courageous Conversations: https://courageousconversation.com/
  ● Equity in the Center (toolkits, resources, readings, trainings): https://www.equityinthecenter.org/
  ● Government Alliance for Race and Equity: https://www.racialequityalliance.org/
  ● The Inclusion Project, Rutgers University-Newark: http://theinclusionproject.rutgers.edu/
  ● NAACP New Jersey Conference: http://www.njscnaacp.org/
  ● NAACP Legal Defense Fund: https://www.naacpldf.org/
  ● National Museum of African American History and Culture: https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race
  ● NJ Anti-Racist Alliance: https://njantiracistalliance.wordpress.com/about-ara/
    ○ Susan Cohen Esquilin, Ph.D., ABPP-Clinical - ARA@esquilins.com
  ● New Jersey Institute for Social Justice NJ: https://www.njisj.org/
  ● People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond resources and “Undoing Racism” trainings: https://www.pisab.org/
  ● People’s Organization for Progress (NJ-based): http://njpop.org/wordpress/
  ● Project Implicit: Implicit Association Test for a wide range of biases, including racism: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
  ● Race Forward: https://www.raceforward.org/
  ● Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom: https://sosspeace.org/
Healing, Self-Care, Mental and Emotional Wellness for Black People:
Resources for Black Healing - Micalah Webster, MSW/MHSA (6.1.20):
https://uncw.edu/counseling/documents/resources-for-black-healing_updated_6_1_2020.pdf

(List & descriptions for resources below from Mashable article “13 mental health resources for black people trying to cope right now”: https://mashable.com/article/black-mental-health-resources/)

- **Association of Black Psychologists Self-Care Tool Kit** - This 26-page tool kit, written in English and Spanish, contains information about how stress and trauma affect the body and mind, and self-care strategies for dealing with the effects of racism: https://www.abpsi.org/pdf/FamilyCommunitySelfCareToolKit.pdf

- **Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)** - This nonprofit collective is made up of advocates, artists, therapists, religious leaders, activists, psychologists, and others who are "committed to the emotional/mental health and healing of Black communities." BEAM's website includes details on trainings and events, resources that promote wellness, emotional regulation, and coping skills, and information on how to find a culturally competent therapist. https://www.beam.community/

- **Black Mental Health Alliance**: The Baltimore-based nonprofit helps connect black people searching for a therapist with "culturally-competent and patient-centered licensed mental health professionals" through its confidential referral service. http://www.blackmentalhealth.com/

- **Black Women’s Health Imperative** - This nonprofit organization was founded by black women to "help protect and advance the health and wellness of Black women and girls." The site includes information about physical health as well as a quiz to determine your stress level. https://bwhi.org/

- **Emotional Emancipation Circles**: Emotional emancipation circles are self-help groups "designed to help heal the trauma caused by anti-Black racism." EEC facilitators have been trained in dozens of cities across the U.S., including Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Baltimore. For more information about EEC training and participation, contact the Community Healing Network. https://www.communityhealingnet.org/emotional-emancipation-circle/

- **Liberate App** - The Liberate app offers meditations and talks "designed for the BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] experience." The goal is to facilitate healing by "naming and offering resources for common cultural experiences, like internalized racism and micro-aggressions." The app contains content from more than 40 BIPOC teachers. Monthly and annual subscriptions are available for $9.99 and $71.99, respectively. Financial assistance is available for those who need it. Liberate is available on the Apple Store and Google Play. https://liberatemeditation.com/

- **Melanin and Mental Health** - Run by two black women who are therapists, this website offers a directory of "dope," culturally competent therapists, a podcast about mental health, and additional resources. https://www.melaninandmentalhealth.com/
• **Ourselves Black** - This website focuses on and promotes black mental health with a magazine, newsletter, and podcast. [http://www.ourselvesblack.com/](http://www.ourselvesblack.com/)

• **POC Online Classroom** - This website "by and for people of color" offers readings and resources related to self-care. [http://www.poconlineclassroom.com/self-care/](http://www.poconlineclassroom.com/self-care/)

• **Sista Afya** - This Chicago-based organization focuses on community wellness with workshops, events, and therapy services. [https://www.sistaafya.com/](https://www.sistaafya.com/)

• **Therapy for Black Girls** - Therapy for Black Girls provides mental health and well-being resources for black women and girls. It includes a directory of culturally competent mental health professionals, a podcast, and a membership-based support community. [http://www.therapyforblackgirls.com/](http://www.therapyforblackgirls.com/)

• **The Safe Place App** - Developed by Jasmin Pierre, a black woman who survived a suicide attempt, The Safe Place app is designed to reach black users with information about mental health and self-care tips and resources. The app is free and available at the [Apple Store](https://apps.apple.com/) and [Google Play](https://play.google.com/).

• **Treatment Directories** - When searching for a culturally competent therapist, try the following directories: [Association of Black Psychologists](https://www.abpp.org/), [Inclusive Therapists](https://www.inclusivetherapists.org/), [LGBTQ Psychotherapists of Color](https://www.lgbtqpsych.com/), [National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network](https://www.nqttnetwork.org/), and [Psychology Today Directory of African American Therapists](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/african-american)

**National Resources List:** [https://linktr.ee/nationalresourceslist](https://linktr.ee/nationalresourceslist)

From Derek Minno-Bloom: Links to Google docs with a comprehensive host of resources for taking action, educating yourself and supporting the work of organizations, including:

- National Resource List Updated Spreadsheet
- Bail Funds/Legal Help By City
- George Floyd Resource Compilation
- Minnesota Bail Fund & Support List
- Trans Funds / Resources
- Mental Health Resources
- The Peoples Laundry (Minnesota/St. Paul)
- Black History/Revolutionary Texts/AntiRacism & Library

**Rights, Resources & Legal Defense (for Protesters and beyond) and Voting:**

- ACLU Know Your Rights - Protest Specific: [https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights/](https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights/)
- ACLU Know Your Rights - multiple topics: [https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/](https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/)
• NJISJ: Virtual candidates forum toolkit for those who want to still have access to candidates in contested races:
  https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/709/attachments/original/1588188783/Virtual_Candidate_Forum_Toolkit_FINAL.pdf?1588188783
• Crossroads Theatre will be streaming a radio play, “Black Women and The Ballot” on June 19th at 7:30 p.m., which traces the influence of African American women on suffrage movement and the importance of voting through to the present time. Go to www.crossroadstheatre.com or our Facebook page for details.
• Pro bono Partnership can provide free transactional legal services to 501(c)(3) nonprofits in NJ that are working in the area of social justice: https://www.probonopartner.org/nonprofits-clients/legal-services-we-provide/
• Bail funds for protesters:
  o The Bail Project: https://bailproject.org/
  o Community Justice Exchange National Bail Fund Network: https://www.communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory

Reading Lists, Podcasts & Videos:
• Support Black-owned bookstores by state (Publisher’s Weekly):
• So You Want to Talk About Race? – Ijeoma Oluo: https://bit.ly/2UzObDW
• The Half That’s Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism – Edward Baptist: https://amzn.to/2UCSFcK
• All About Love - Bell Hooks: https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17607.All_About_Love?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=OChEt1YM2a&rank=1
• Antiracism Reading List (Montclair Public Library) - for youth, juveniles and adults. Includes audio books & ebooks, fiction and nonfiction: https://montclairlibrary.org/about/library-news/anti-racism-a-reading-list/
• How to be an Anti-Racist – Ibram X. Kendi: https://www.ibramxkendi.com/how-to-be-an-antiracist-1
• Me and White Supremacy – Layla F. Saad: https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/

• Racial Economic Inequality - Catholic bishops of the United States: https://bit.ly/3hdHKQs

• Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements - Charlene A. Carruthers: https://www.charlenecarruthers.com/unapologetic


• Putting Racism on Table: A Philanthropy Learning Series (Washington Area Grantmakers): https://www.washingtongrantmakers.org/putting-racism-table-learning-series

• White Fragility – Robin DiAngelo: https://robindiangelo.com/publications/

• New Jersey Institute for Social Justice’s latest report, Erasing New Jersey’s Red lines: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/689/attachments/original/1588358478/Erasing_New_Jersey's_Red_Lines_Final.pdf?1588358478

• Slavery by Another Name by Thomas Blackmon is an excellent book that documents how law enforcement continued to enslave black men through convict leasing. https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/14301/slavery-by-another-name-by-douglas-a-blackmon/

• Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing: http://thewei.com/kimi/jemez-principles-for-democratic-organizing-a-guide/

• "Dear Church" by Lenny Duncan is a good book to read. It's written for the Lutheran church, but can be applicable to other white churches: https://lennyduncan.com/

• Scene on Radio podcast: http://www.sceneonradio.org/

• The View From Somewhere: https://www.lewispants.com/

• American Police: Throughline's podcast (June 3 - 1 hr.): Origins of American policing and how those origins put violent control of Black Americans at the heart of the system: https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/869046127/american-police

• Lost for Life (documentary film): https://m.imdb.com/title/tt2866660/

• A play that is a great conversation starter: www.AmericanMoor.com
Support Black-Owned Businesses:

- Black Wall Street: [https://officialblackwallstreet.com/directory/](https://officialblackwallstreet.com/directory/)
- We Buy Black: [https://webbuyblack.com/](https://webbuyblack.com/)

Resources for White People:

- 75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice: [https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234](https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234)
- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, Peggy McIntosh: [https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf](https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf)
- Racism Hurts Everyone – Costs to White People (United Church of Christ, MAssachusetts Conference): [https://www.macucc.org/racismhurtseveryonecoststowhitepeople](https://www.macucc.org/racismhurtseveryonecoststowhitepeople)

Talking to Children about Race & Racism:

- A Starter Kit of Resources for Anti-Racist Awareness and Accountability (Baristanet) includes resources for how to talk about racism with children: [https://baristanet.com/2020/06/starter-kit-of-resources-for-anti-racist-awareness-and-accountability/](https://baristanet.com/2020/06/starter-kit-of-resources-for-anti-racist-awareness-and-accountability/)
• PBS Kids “Talking to Children Authentically about Race and Racism”: https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism

Actions you can take:
• Support the organizations on this call
• Protest
• Vote
• Donate to racial justice organizations, bail funds, and organizations led by people of color
• Complete the Census
• For White People: take responsibility to educate yourself on white privilege, racism, and how you can be a part of helping to dismantle racism in the United States.

Dr. Ellis-Williams shared this poem with permission to include it here:

What Will Our Children Learn From Us Today?
June 1, 2020
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Written by
Antoinette Ellis-Williams, Ph.D. Chair, Women’s & Gender Studies Artist/Poet/ Mother of 2 Black sons, Newark, NJ resident

What will our children learn from us today?
When they fall asleep who will visit them in their dream?
What will our children think of us in this moment?
What will they remember about us, America?

Will they see cowards or heroes
Leaders or weasels?

Who will they meet in their dreams?
Will they find warriors or puppets dangling from strings?
Will they find allies or fake selfie friends?

Will the monsters dressed in clown suits pushing space flights for billionaires try to give them candy again?
Will the ghosts of Trayvon, George, Sean, Sandra Bland invite them to play on the other side of the Jordan land?
Who will they meet in their dreams?

I pray they find us
All of us
Arms open wide  
Firm, resolute seekers of justice and truth. 
I pray they see all of us breathing the same air In the same land Breathing the same air.

I pray they find a human bouquet with rainbow hues. 
Black, brown, purple and beige 
White, red and yellow all living in 
Peace, in one open home in one open nation 
Where freedom bells ring.

Will we teach them the truth? 
Home schooling ain’t for fools. 
What will our children learn from us today? 
Will they know the difference between a Covid mask and protest gear? 
Will they become experts of reading our souls through red eyes and masked faces?

Will they see the pain? Blink once. 
Will they see the rage? Blink twice. 
Will they see we are tired?

Will they know when to run and when to fight?

Will they see the price for justice has already been for paid in full? 
Martin 
Malcolm 
Ella 
Fannie Lou 
Nat Turner & Harriet too 
All paid in full. 
No outstanding bill. 
No debt owed.

Will they become justice looters? 
Taking their place in jobs they deserve 
Stealing back dignity, 
Reclaiming their power 
Reclaiming their name 
Demanding freedom?

What will our children learn from us today?

Will they learn to pray on one knee?
Will they hear another mother’s scream?
What will they feel when flag wavers come? Will they remember great-grand daddy a Tuskegee Airman or cousin Tommy the Vietnam Vet suffering with trauma or aunt Catherine’s Afghan & Iraq war stories?
Whose flag stories will prevail?

Will they know this land is their land?
Will they know why they need to vote?
Will they fight for justice?
Will they die for freedom?
Will they learn to love this country, America?

What will our children learn from us today?
Resources at-a-glance

The following resources originated with speakers and participants on our briefings, and which can be found throughout the summaries above. We’ve gathered and grouped them by issue area for a fast at-a-glance list. While the majority of resources will still be relevant and available, these were captured at point in time and information may have changed since the resources were shared on our calls.

Accessibility

Resources for Nonprofits Serving Individuals with Disabilities:

- NJ’s OEM is connecting with vulnerable populations either through Register Ready - NJ’s special needs registry for disasters (information submitted to the registry is confidential): https://www13.state.nj.us/SpecialNeeds/Signin?ReturnUrl=%2fspecialneeds%2f
  - For Registry Assistance, dial 211 (toll-free) and an operator will assist you in registering.
  - Alerts - Mobile / Text (SMS) & E-Mail:
    - NIXLE - Subscribe to the NJ State Police on Nixle Connect
      New Jersey residents can register to receive messages by sending a text message with their zip code to 888777 (data rates may apply depending on your plan). Online registration is also available at www.nixle.com.

- Support for individuals with disabilities https://njcdd.org/emergency-funding-for-covid-19-pandemic/#1585161569958-94fb120e-3bbe
- Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD):
- Division of Disability Services (DDS):
- Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH):
- Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI):
- Progressive Center for Independent Living COVID-19 resources: http://pcil.org/covid-19-resources/
- Project Freedom campuses to help their residents with access to basic needs, as well. https://www.projectfreedom.org/
- See Creative NJ’s Accessibility Technology recommendation in the Resources section of the May 6 briefing
- Upcoming programs from Eyes Like Mine and the Greater Vision Foundation:
  - Eyes Like Mine: https://www.eyeslikemine.org/
  - Eyes Like Mine Audio Book Club: Call 978-990-5223  Access Code: 2561166
    - Register for the Audio Book Club here: https://forms.gle/8V9FlgHNGVYbbCm96
  - Eyes Like Mine Cut the Corona Karaoke Hotline (2pm-4pm) and Facebook Watch Party (4pm-5pm) every Sunday: Call 978-990-5233  Access Code: 2561166
  - Greater Vision Foundation’s Blind Talent 20/20 – June 2020. Register for auditions at www.blindtalent.org or email gvfblindtalent@gmail.com
- Any questions about hearing loss – particularly now related to masks - and how to communicate effectively, please feel free to reach out to Arlene Romoff at aromoff@aol.com.
  - Reminder that voice recognition software on apps can provide immediate captioning.
Arts, culture, and artist resources

- ArtPrideNJ: [https://artpridenj.org/covid19](https://artpridenj.org/covid19)
- New Jersey Theatre Alliance: [https://njtheatrealliance.org/](https://njtheatrealliance.org/)
- Monmouth Arts online gallery for local artists, as well as a weekly Virtual Stage + Showcase where we are highlighting teen visual arts, performers, and writers: www.monmoutharts.org.
- Resources for artists, arts organizations, and other members of the community: [https://www.monmoutharts.org/resources](https://www.monmoutharts.org/resources)
- Resource for artists of all disciplines: [https://www.morrisarts.org/2020/04/08/artists-and-arts-organizations-online-resources/](https://www.morrisarts.org/2020/04/08/artists-and-arts-organizations-online-resources/)
- Freelance artist resource page: [https://covid19freelanceartistresource.wordpress.com/](https://covid19freelanceartistresource.wordpress.com/)
- NEA resources for Arts and Culture: [https://www.arts.gov/covid-19-resources-for-artists-and-arts-organizations](https://www.arts.gov/covid-19-resources-for-artists-and-arts-organizations)
- The Arts Wellbeing Collective out of Australia is a great program around the mental health and well-being in the theater community. [https://www.artswellbeingcollective.com.au/](https://www.artswellbeingcollective.com.au/)

Communications & Staying Connected resources

- NJ’s OEM is connecting with vulnerable populations either through Register Ready - NJ’s special needs registry for disasters (information submitted to the registry is confidential): [https://www13.state.nj.us/SpecialNeeds/Signin?ReturnUrl=%2fSpecialNeeds%2f](https://www13.state.nj.us/SpecialNeeds/Signin?ReturnUrl=%2fSpecialNeeds%2f)
  - For Registry Assistance, dial 211 (toll-free) and an operator will assist you in registering.
  - Alerts - Mobile / Text (SMS) & E-Mail:
    - NIXLE - Subscribe to the NJ State Police on Nixle Connect
      New Jersey residents can register to receive messages by sending a text message with their zip code to 888777 (data rates may apply depending on your plan). Online registration is also available at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com).
- NJ State Crisis Hotline: 866-202-HELP (4357)
- Urban Institute has a list of evidence based solutions as the crisis evolves: [https://www.urban.org/features/covid-19-policies-protect-people-and-communities](https://www.urban.org/features/covid-19-policies-protect-people-and-communities)
- NJ211 – Dial 211 from your phone is also a statewide resource by dialing 211
- Links to County Offices of Emergency Management, websites, social media and alert systems: [http://www.ready.nj.gov/about/association.html](http://www.ready.nj.gov/about/association.html)
- The NJ Department of Human Services Coronavirus website: [https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html](https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html)
• ‘Rona Call: Free Press, WBGO and other journalism partners are advocating a phone tree model on how to communicate with people who don’t have the technology available – Spanish & English webpages available: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ML7LBwgbyNwetUv7bswpHQp-MrnxrvH/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ML7LBwgbyNwetUv7bswpHQp-MrnxrvH/view?usp=sharing)
  ○ Download the Phone Tree (English): [https://freepress.actionkit.com/mailings/view/14357](https://freepress.actionkit.com/mailings/view/14357)
• NJ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOADs) are often groups of nonprofits that are dealing with immediate needs in times of disaster and include social service agencies, food pantries, shelters, medical service providers, faith-based organizations and volunteer groups, among others. NJVOAD: [http://www.njvoad.org/](http://www.njvoad.org/)

**Farms, Farmers markets and community gardens providing food during COVID-19**

• Virtual Mobile Farmers Market [https://www.virtua.org/about/mobile-farmers-market](https://www.virtua.org/about/mobile-farmers-market)
• Farmers are providing a direct opportunity to buy directly from them. [https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn](https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn)
• The Common Market which is a mission driven nonprofit food distributor based out of Philadelphia that’s been working in New Jersey to increase local food procurement: [https://www.thecommonmarket.org/](https://www.thecommonmarket.org/)
• Farmers markets are working closely with City Green (Paterson, NJ) – these farmers markets have doubled the value of SNAP: [https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn](https://www.citygreenonline.org/gsgfn)

**Food banks and pantries**

• Community Food Bank of NJ: [https://cfbnj.org/](https://cfbnj.org/)
• Fulfill NJ of Monmouth & Ocean County: [https://fulfillnj.org/](https://fulfillnj.org/)
• Jon Bon Jovi Soul Kitchen (Red Bank & Toms River): [https://jbjsoulkitchen.org/](https://jbjsoulkitchen.org/)
• Beat Center: [https://thebeatcenter.org/](https://thebeatcenter.org/)
• Feeding America has a list of local food banks that are searchable by zip code: [https://www.feedingamerica.org/](https://www.feedingamerica.org/)
• NJ Food Processors Association: [https://www.njfoodprocessors.org/covid-19-resources](https://www.njfoodprocessors.org/covid-19-resources)
• Bridge of Peace Community Church (2755 Tuckahoe Rd, Camden, Mondays, 6-7:30pm, need ID and verification of # in household)
• Kroeg Center Emergency Food Service 856-379-6900 (by appointment only)
• Catholic Charities Food Assistance 856-845-9200 (hours to call 8:30am-4pm)
• Touch New Jersey Food Pantry 856-803-3030 (Tue, Wed, Fri, 9-noon, 549 State St., need photo ID)
• Passaic County CASA: [https://www.passaiccountycasa.org/covid19food](https://www.passaiccountycasa.org/covid19food)
• Lunchbreak: [www.lunchbreak.org](http://www.lunchbreak.org)

• The USDA updates searchable database for waivers and flexibilities; search SNAP, WIC, or School Meals: [https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/snap-waivers-flexibilities](https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/snap-waivers-flexibilities)

• Info on food banks, pantries and prescription drugs:
  - Find Food Pantries in NJ by County: [https://www.foodpantries.org/st/new_jersey](https://www.foodpantries.org/st/new_jersey) AND [https://cfbnj.org/findfood/](https://cfbnj.org/findfood/)
  - Call the Office on Aging and Disabilities in their counties
  - Center for Food Access: [https://cfanj.org/](https://cfanj.org/)
  - Healthy Eating Research supports research on policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) strategies that have strong potential to promote healthy eating among children, especially among lower-income and racial and ethnic minority population groups: [https://healthyeatingresearch.org/](https://healthyeatingresearch.org/)
  - MedlinePlus - government info source for drugs: [https://medlineplus.gov/](https://medlineplus.gov/)

Food deliveries and delivery services

• Mobile, neighborhood grocery shopping. [https://www.optimistdaily.com/2020/05/these-trucks-bring-the-grocery-store-to-your-neighborhood/](https://www.optimistdaily.com/2020/05/these-trucks-bring-the-grocery-store-to-your-neighborhood/)

• Neighbor Express - grocery delivery: [https://paterson.neighborexpress.org/](https://paterson.neighborexpress.org/)

• Food delivery meals on wheels for seniors: [www.gogograndparent.com](http://www.gogograndparent.com)

• Meals on Wheels provides food to 2.2 million seniors and people with disabilities. [https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/](https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/)

• Meals on Wheels (Seniors only, Camden area) 856-374-6325; or find one near you:

• LogistiCare: [https://www.logisticare.com/](https://www.logisticare.com/)

• Paterson NJ Volunteer food delivery: Neighbor Express Volunteer Grocery delivery in Paterson: [https://tinyurl.com/vcj4b4s](https://tinyurl.com/vcj4b4s)

• Rahway taxi service is offering their services to go and pick up groceries or run errands: [https://www.rahwaytaxiservice.com/](https://www.rahwaytaxiservice.com/)

• NJ Civil Engineering and GIS Firm, ARH Associates, website supports locally-owned restaurants and helps to provide meals to front line Medical personnel
  - The site highlights participating locally-owned restaurants using Esri ArcGIS Hub (a component of the Esri Geospatial Cloud) and links donations to these businesses through a centralized GoFundMe page managed by ARH. ARH staff will lead the effort in coordinating the promotion of the site, food ordering, and the delivery to the hospitals, medical centers and first responders: [www.arhinthecommunity.com](http://www.arhinthecommunity.com)
Funding Sources

- NJCC Garden State Relief Fund: https://www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org/initiatives/garden-state-relief-fund
  - NJCC will aim to process Garden State Relief Fund applications within 10-14 business days. Learn more here: https://bit.ly/3c8OgMF
  - Special opportunity for businesses located in the THRIVE South Jersey footprint (Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem, and Western Atlantic Counties), thanks to the generous support of the Pascale Sykes Foundation. Learn more here: https://bit.ly/2UX0ZF3
- See the Center for Non-Profit website for a comprehensive list of relief funds: https://www.njnonprofits.org/COVID-19.html
- CNJG’s list of NJ’s Relief Funds: https://www.cnjg.org/nj-focused-response-funds
- Check this out for support for individuals with disabilities https://njcdd.org/emergency-funding-for-covid-19-pandemic/#1585161569958-94fb120e-3bbe
- NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA): https://www.njeda.com/
- NJ Health Initiatives, which is a statewide grant making program of RWJF, serves a key need to reach some of the smaller communities who may not have access to charitable funding. https://www.njhi.org/
- New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund: https://njprf.org/grants/
- Talk to your individual funders and/or financial institution to see if they can help. Candid (previously Foundation Center) has a great online database that you can search to find specific funding: http://www.candid.org
- Voices for Healthy Kids - Grant Opportunities: https://voicesforhealthykids.org/campaign-resources/grants

Hubs & Collaboratives looking for partnerships or providing information

- Newark Business Hub supports entrepreneurs with training and network support. Reach out to Jeff Billingsley (Co-Founder) & Kimberlee Williams (Co-Founder and Rutgers Newark Assistant Director of Communications)
  - Open to working with organizations that want to tackle the aspects of diversity and inclusions: http://www.newarkbusinesshub.com/
- American Conference on Diversity is looking to work with organizations that want to tackle aspects of diversity and inclusion: https://americanconferenceondiversity.org/
- News Voices: if anyone wants to strengthen news and info in their community, News Voices wants to help! Email Mike Rispoli: mrispoli@freepress.net
  - Free Press has also hosted virtual story circles for communities to share stories of resiliency. It’s a good way to share information, create connections, and lift up storytellers in our communities. There are lots of ways other forms of art can do similar things: https://www.freepress.net/our-response/advocacy-organizing/stories-field/stories-atlantic-city-launches
- CivicStory is interested in this conversation: integrating creativity, health, and environmental sustainability could be a unifying ‘going forward’ goal.
  - CivicStory runs the NJ Sustainability Reporting Hub: https://srhub.org/
- Nonprofit Development Center of Southern New Jersey – looks to educate, connect and celebrate nonprofits in south Jersey: https://npdcsnj.org/
Local Journalism, Data and Fact-Checking

- NJ.com is creating a webpage of all businesses that are open in NJ - You can add yourself into the database to get the word out that you are open. [nj.com/open](http://nj.com/open)
  - NJ.com also has #TogetherNJ - inspiring stories of New Jersey coming together in the face of the crisis. [https://www.nj.com/togethernj](https://www.nj.com/togethernj)
- Center for Cooperative Media also collates a daily newsletter Covering COVID-19, which includes resources and articles that local journalists can reprint: [https://mailchi.mp/centerforcooperativemedia/april-15-covering-covid](https://mailchi.mp/centerforcooperativemedia/april-15-covering-covid)
- Virtual Story Circle - Bringing people together to talk about resilient times in their lives to activate resiliency, activate how community is part of the solution here: [bit.ly/acstorycircle](http://bit.ly/acstorycircle)
- Worldometer (also has a lot of interesting statistics): [https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/](https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/)
- Ryan Haygood at the Institute for Social Justice is also advocating for more data: [https://www.njisj.org/institute_and_partners_request_racial_data_on_covid_19_impact](https://www.njisj.org/institute_and_partners_request_racial_data_on_covid_19_impact)
- Oliver Wyman (management consulting firm) ([https://www.oliverwyman.com/our-expertise/insights/2020/apr/covid-19-pandemic-navigator.html](https://www.oliverwyman.com/our-expertise/insights/2020/apr/covid-19-pandemic-navigator.html)) has 8-week forecasts for about 40 countries, and in the US the forecasts are at county level, if the county has >100 confirmed cases. OW does require you to enter your name and email if you want to look at the projections.
- We are also seeing a lot more dis information through social media, though NJ is not considered a “hot spot” for disinformation.
- Fact checking on misinformation and disinformation: [https://firstdraftnews.org/](https://firstdraftnews.org/)
- Another fact checking resource is the International Fact Checking Network at Poynter: [https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/](https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/)

Mental and Emotional Health Resources

If you or someone you know is in a *crisis situation* and having thoughts of *death, dying and/or suicide*, contact the following resources **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**.

- **NJ Hopeline**: 1-855-654-6735
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**: 1-800-273-8255
- **National Crisis Text Line**: text the word “BRAVE” to 741-741
- **Trevor Lifeline** (LGBTQ specific crisis line): 866-488-7386 or text “Trevor” to 1-202-304-1200
- **Veteran’s Crisis Line** (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline): 1-800-273-8255 or text 838255
• **2nd Floor Hotline:** Anonymous and confidential call or text helpline for youth:

• **PerformCare (Youth Mental and Emotional Health Hotline):** NJ’s contracted system administrator for the NJ Children’s System of Care behavioral health care service array:
  ○ **PerformCare Hotline:** 877-652-7624

• **Mobile Response and Stabilization Services** are accessible 24/7 through 877-652-7624.

**Additional Services:**

• **NJ Mental Health Cares** is the state’s behavioral health information and referral service. New Jerseys can call **1-866-202-HELP (4357) for free, confidential support.** NJ Mental Health Cares calls will be answered from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week by live trained specialists.

• **Highlander Center for Education and Research** is providing Mutual Aid calls.

• **Stress and Mental Health resources related to COVID-19:** [https://covidnj.com/stress-mental-health-resources](https://covidnj.com/stress-mental-health-resources)

• **The Healing Solidarity Collective:** [https://collective.healingsolidarity.org/](https://collective.healingsolidarity.org/)

• **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide**

• **Disaster & Terrorism Branch of NJ State Department of Human Services** – provides services during times of disaster

• **Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ Dept. of Human Services**

• **Family Services Bureau** in North Jersey (part of New Community Corporation) have staff who speak a lot of different languages, and can help to reach lots of people who speak languages other than English. [https://www.newcommunity.org/services/health-care-and-behavioral-health/family-service-bureau-of-newark/](https://www.newcommunity.org/services/health-care-and-behavioral-health/family-service-bureau-of-newark/)

• **If you are lonely or isolated:** Local Fire Department and Police Stations may do daily wellness checks on the welfare of older adults, differently-abled residents, or those who may have special needs, but who live alone, with no one to look in on them on a daily basis.

**PPE and Sanitation materials**

• How to Clean and Re-Use a Facemask: [https://tinyurl.com/yazjxkvu](https://tinyurl.com/yazjxkvu)

• Click here for CDC guidelines: [https://tinyurl.com/yden73x4](https://tinyurl.com/yden73x4)

• Wicks Aircraft Supply has CLC Clean All-Purpose Surface Cleaner is an industrial grade, 75% isopropyl alcohol surface cleaner. [www.WicksAircraft.com](http://www.WicksAircraft.com)

**Racial Justice and Equity Resources**

**Anti-Racism & Equity-focused Organizations, Coalitions, Trainings**

• Amend the 13<sup>th</sup> Facebook Group: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/710353612707428/?ref=share](https://www.facebook.com/groups/710353612707428/?ref=share)

• American Conference on Diversity: [https://americanconferenceondiversity.org](https://americanconferenceondiversity.org)

• Association of Black Fundraising Executives: [https://www.abfe.org/](https://www.abfe.org/)

• Black Lives Matter - NJ: [https://www.facebook.com/NJ.BLM/](https://www.facebook.com/NJ.BLM/)

• Campaign to End the New Jim Crow: http://www.endnewjimcrownj.org

• Courageous Conversations: [https://courageousconversation.com/](https://courageousconversation.com/)

• Equity in the Center (toolkits, resources, readings, trainings): [https://www.equityinthecenter.org/](https://www.equityinthecenter.org/)
Government Alliance for Race and Equity: https://www.racialequityalliance.org/
The Inclusion Project, Rutgers University-Newark: http://theinclusionproject.rutgers.edu/
NAACP New Jersey Conference: http://www.njscnaacp.org/
NAACP Legal Defense Fund: https://www.naacpdlf.org/
National Museum of African American History and Culture: https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race
NJ Anti-Racist Alliance: https://njantiracistalliance.wordpress.com/about-ara/
  Susan Cohen Esquilin, Ph.D., ABPP-Clinical - ARA@esquilins.com
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice NJ: https://www.njisj.org/
People's Institute for Survival and Beyond resources and “Undoing Racism” trainings: https://www.pisab.org/
People’s Organization for Progress (NJ-based): http://njpop.org/wordpress/
Project Implicit: Implicit Association Test for a wide range of biases, including racism: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
Race Forward: https://www.raceforward.org/
Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom: https://sosspeace.org/

Healing, Self-Care, Mental and Emotional Wellness for Black People
Resources for Black Healing - Micalah Webster, MSW/MHSA (6.1.20):
https://uncw.edu/counseling/documents/resources-for-black-healing_updated_6_1_2020.pdf

(List & descriptions for resources below from Mashable article “13 mental health resources for black people trying to cope right now”: https://mashable.com/article/black-mental-health-resources/)

- **Association of Black Psychologists Self-Care Tool Kit** - This 26-page tool kit, written in English and Spanish, contains information about how stress and trauma affect the body and mind, and self-care strategies for dealing with the effects of racism: https://www.abpsi.org/pdf/FamilyCommunitySelfCareToolKit.pdf

- **Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)** - This nonprofit collective is made up of advocates, artists, therapists, religious leaders, activists, psychologists, and others who are "committed to the emotional/mental health and healing of Black communities." BEAM's website includes details on trainings and events, resources that promote wellness, emotional regulation, and coping skills, and information on how to find a culturally competent therapist. https://www.beam.community/

- **Black Mental Health Alliance** - The Baltimore-based nonprofit helps connect black people searching for a therapist with "culturally-competent and patient-centered licensed mental health professionals" through its confidential referral service. http://www.blackmentalhealth.com/

- **Black Women’s Health Imperative** - This nonprofit organization was founded by black women to "help protect and advance the health and wellness of Black women and girls." The site includes information about physical health as well as a quiz to determine your stress level. https://bwhi.org/
• **Emotional Emancipation Circles**: Emotional emancipation circles are self-help groups "designed to help heal the trauma caused by anti-Black racism." EEC facilitators have been trained in dozens of cities across the U.S., including Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Baltimore. For more information about EEC training and participation, contact the [Community Healing Network](https://www.communityhealingnet.org/emotional-emancipation-circle/).

• **Liberate App** - The Liberate app offers meditations and talks "designed for the BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] experience." The goal is to facilitate healing by "naming and offering resources for common cultural experiences, like internalized racism and micro-aggressions." The app contains content from more than 40 BIPOC teachers. Monthly and annual subscriptions are available for $9.99 and $71.99, respectively. Financial assistance is available for those who need it. Liberate is available on the [Apple Store](https://www.apple.com) and [Google Play](https://play.google.com).

• **Melanin and Mental Health** - Run by two black women who are therapists, this website offers a directory of "dope," culturally competent therapists, a podcast about mental health, and additional resources. [https://www.melaninandmentalhealth.com/](https://www.melaninandmentalhealth.com/)

• **Ourselves Black** - This website focuses on and promotes black mental health with a magazine, newsletter, and podcast. [http://www.ourselvesblack.com/](http://www.ourselvesblack.com/)

• **POC Online Classroom** - This website "by and for people of color" offers readings and resources related to self-care. [http://www.poconlineclassroom.com/self-care/](http://www.poconlineclassroom.com/self-care/)

• **Sista Afya** - This Chicago-based organization focuses on community wellness with workshops, events, and therapy services. [https://www.sistaafya.com/](https://www.sistaafya.com/)

• **Therapy for Black Girls** - Therapy for Black Girls provides mental health and well-being resources for black women and girls. It includes a directory of culturally competent mental health professionals, a podcast, and a membership-based support community. [http://www.therapyforblackgirls.com/](http://www.therapyforblackgirls.com/)

• **The Safe Place App** - Developed by Jasmin Pierre, a black woman who survived a suicide attempt, The Safe Place app is designed to reach black users with information about mental health and self-care tips and resources. The app is free and available at the [Apple Store](https://www.apple.com) and [Google Play](https://play.google.com).


**National Resources List**
From Derek Minno-Bloom: [https://linktr.ee/nationalresourceslist](https://linktr.ee/nationalresourceslist)
Links to Google docs with a comprehensive host of resources for taking action, educating yourself and supporting the work of organizations, including:

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Convening communities at the intersection of creativity, collaboration and inclusion.

info@creativenj.org    www.creativenj.org
- National Resource List Updated Spreadsheet
- Bail Funds/Legal Help By City
- George Floyd Resource Compilation
- Minnesota Bail Fund & Support List
- Trans Funds / Resources
- Mental Health Resources
- The Peoples Laundry (Minnesota/St. Paul)
- Black History/Revolutionary Texts/AntiRacism & Library

Rights, Resources & Legal Defense (for Protesters and beyond) and Voting
- ACLU Know Your Rights - Protest Specific: https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights/
- ACLU Know Your Rights - multiple topics: https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/
- NJISJ: Virtual candidates forum toolkit for those who want to still have access to candidates in contested races: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/709/attachments/original/1588188783/Virtual_Candidate_Forum_Toolkit_FINAL.pdf?1588188783
- Crossroads Theatre will be streaming a radio play, “Black Women and The Ballot” on June 19th at 7:30 p.m., which traces the influence of African American women on suffrage movement and the importance of voting through to the present time. Go to www.crossroadstheatre.com or our Facebook page for details.
- Probono Partnership can provide free transactional legal services to 501(c)(3) nonprofits in NJ that are working in the area of social justice: https://www.probonopartner.org/nonprofits-clients/legal-services-we-provide/
- Bail funds for protesters:
  - The Bail Project: https://bailproject.org/
  - Community Justice Exchange National Bail Fund Network: https://www.communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory

Reading Lists, Podcasts & Videos

• All About Love - Bell Hooks: https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17607.All_About_Love?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=0ChEt1YM2a&rank=1

• Anti-racism Reading List (Montclair Public Library) - for youth, juveniles and adults. Includes audio books & ebooks, fiction and nonfiction: https://montclairlibrary.org/about/library-news/anti-racism-a-reading-list/


• How to be an Anti-Racist – Ibram X. Kendi: https://www.ibramxkendi.com/how-to-be-an-antiracist-1

• Me and White Supremacy – Layla F. Saad: https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/

• Racial Economic Inequality - Catholic bishops of the United States: https://bit.ly/3hdHKQs

• Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements - Charlene A. Carruthers: https://www.charlenecarruthers.com/unapologetic


• Putting Racism on Table: A Philanthropy Learning Series (Washington Area Grantmakers): https://www.washingtongrantmakers.org/putting-racism-table-learning-series

• White Fragility – Robin DiAngelo: https://robindiangelo.com/publications/

• New Jersey Institute for Social Justice’s latest report, Erasing New Jersey’s Red lines: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/689/attachments/original/1588358478/Erasing_New_Jersey's_Red_Lines_Final.pdf?1588358478

• Slavery by Another Name by Thomas Blackmon is an excellent book that documents how law enforcement continued to enslave black men through convict leasing. https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/14301/slavery-by-another-name-by-douglas-a-blackmon/

• Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing: http://thewei.com/kimi/jemez-principles-for-democratic-organizing-a-guide/
"Dear Church" by Lenny Duncan is a good book to read. It's written for the Lutheran church, but can be applicable to other white churches: https://lennyduncan.com/

Scene on Radio podcast: http://www.sceneonradio.org/

The View From Somewhere: https://www.lewispants.com/

American Police: Throughline's podcast (June 3 - 1 hr.): Origins of American policing and how those origins put violent control of Black Americans at the heart of the system: https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/869046127/american-police

Lost for Life (documentary film): https://m.imdb.com/title/tt2866660/

A play that is a great conversation starter: www.AmericanMoor.com

Support Black-Owned Businesses
- Black Wall Street: https://officialblackwallstreet.com/directory/
- Black Wallet: http://theblackwallet.com/
- We Buy Black: https://webuyblack.com/

Resources for White People
- 75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice: https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234
• Racism Hurts Everyone – Costs to White People (United Church of Christ, MAssachusetts Conference): https://www.macucc.org/racismhursteveryonecoststowhitepeople


• White Fragility -- Robin DiAngelo: https://bookshop.org/books/white-fragility-why-it-s-so-hard-for-white-people-to-talk-about-racism/9780807047415

Talking to Children about Race & Racism

• A Starter Kit of Resources for Anti-Racist Awareness and Accountability (Baristanet) includes resources for how to talk about racism with children: https://baristanet.com/2020/06/starter-kit-of-resources-for-anti-racist-awareness-and-accountability/

• PBS Kids “Talking to Children Authentically about Race and Racism”: https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism

Actions you can take

• Support the organizations on this call
• Protest
• Vote
• Donate to racial justice organizations, bail funds, and organizations led by people of color
• Complete the Census
• For White People: take responsibility to educate yourself on white privilege, racism, and how you can be a part of helping to dismantle racism in the United States.

Resource banks – general and for immigrant communities

• Kimi Wei is working on creating a resource bank for immigrants who don’t have enough food, household and baby supplies. If you would like to help with this please contact me at 862-203-8814 or kimwei88@gmail.com
  o Connect to more pandemic resources via her blog: http://thwei.com/kimi
  o Undocumented immigrants are at a real risk and unable to participate in most resources and ineligible based on their limitations.

• Monmouth Resource Net: Please feel free to add your resources here and we will share throughout the state. http://www.monmouthresourcenet.org/news-events/news/coronavirus-resources/

• Check out CLASP and the National Immigration Law Center. CLASP: https://www.clasp.org/. National Immigration Law Center: https://www.nilc.org/.
Senior Resources

- **Activities and Arts resources for seniors:**
  - Music Momentum – music therapy practice is providing singing telegrams. Email: themusicmoment@gmail.com
  - The Sparta Camera Club is providing online training for basic photography. Photoshop, Lightroom and photography programs for our members.
  - Many community colleges allow seniors to take tuition-free classes online, and some also provide Microsoft Office for free and Adobe products at deep discounts. Contact your local community college to learn more.
  - NJ State Library has a lot of resources, including books, movies, music, and health information, as well: [https://www.njlj.org/](https://www.njlj.org/)

- **Affordable Housing and House Maintenance Resources**
  - County Offices on aging/social services (scroll down to see contact info for each county’s office: [https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/saaaa.html)
  - NJ State Housing Resource Center: [https://www.nj.gov/njhrcc/](https://www.nj.gov/njhrcc/)
  - Atlantic County resource for housing [https://mhaac.info/housing-and-lease-tenancy-assistance.html](https://mhaac.info/housing-and-lease-tenancy-assistance.html)
  - Statewide Centers for Independent Living: [https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/resources/cntrindlivindex.html](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/resources/cntrindlivindex.html)
  - Find the center nearest you at the NJ State Independent Living Council website: [https://www.njsilc.org/](https://www.njsilc.org/)
  - Rebuilding Together North Jersey: [https://rtnorthjersey.org/](https://rtnorthjersey.org/).
  - Housing Navigators: Bergen County has Navigators to help seniors navigate housing. There may be Navigators in other counties, as well:
    - Navigator Notes can be found on Bergen County website/ Senior Services page: [https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/division-of-senior-services](https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/division-of-senior-services)
      - To be included to get Navigator Notes on a regular basis, with any Hot Topic interim blasts: email seniors@co.bergen.nj.us or call Maureen McCormick at 201-336-7435....for any senior age 60+ who has any questions about programs and services in Bergen County can call the Senior Help Line at 201-336-7400
      - Umbrella, which provides affordable home repair and other services – national service area, and in northern NJ. [www.askumbrella.com](http://www.askumbrella.com)

- **Food delivery and drug information:**
  - MedlinePlus - government info source for drugs: [https://medlineplus.gov/](https://medlineplus.gov/)
  - The City of Paterson is innovating and launched the “Neighbor Express” platform to deliver groceries to seniors and we are excited partners that can have been assisting by supplying volunteers. [https://paterson.neighborexpress.org/](https://paterson.neighborexpress.org/)

- **Resources for Older Adults from Age-Friendly Englewood’s Newsletter:**
  - Division of Aging Services (DoAS): [https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/index.html](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/index.html)
  - If you are lonely or isolated: Local Fire Department and Police Stations may do daily wellness checks on the welfare of older adults, differently-abled residents, or those who may have special needs, but who live alone, with no one to look in on them on a daily basis.
Beware of Scammers: Scammers Turn to Extortion Emails: https://tinyurl.com/y8p4v8vl
Call AARP’s Fraud Watch Hotline 1-877-908-3360 and check out www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork

- Exercises for older adults
  - 6 upper body strength exercises: https://bit.ly/3cs65iT
  - 3 balance exercises: https://bit.ly/2YTYa4
  - 4 lower body strength exercises: https://tinyurl.com/y9zaqbe8
- Pandemic Makes Clear the Case for Advance Care Planning: Five Wishes is an approach to discussing your care and comfort choices: https://fivewishes.org/

Small Businesses & NJ Technical Assistance & Pro-bono (free) Support
- NJEDA announces partner agencies to offer technical assistance/services to COVID-19 impacted small businesses applying for SBA Funding Programs. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, preparing financial information, packaging application documentation, and completing and submitting the on-line or paper-based application: https://www.roi-nj.com/2020/03/30/finance/njeda-announces-partner-agencies-to-offer-services-to-covid-19-impacted-small-businesses/
  - African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ): https://www.aaccnj.com/
  - New Jersey State Veterans Chamber of Commerce: https://njchamber.com/
  - Rising Tide Capital: https://www.risingtidecapital.org/
  - Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (SHCCNJ): https://shccnj.org/
- Pro bono (free) support from Capacity Experts, LLC on managing the new remote worker setting. https://capacityexperts.com/subscribe/. Email: pgoldman@capacityexperts.com

State & National Resources
- Connect with the State of NJ at the COVID-19 Hub Page for the latest updates, links to resources for nonprofits, small businesses, individuals: covid19.nj.gov
- Center for Non-Profits: Resources and relief funds at the state and federal level: http://njnonprofits.org/
- New Jersey Organizing Project resource page: https://covidnj.com
- For COVID-19 questions: NJDOH operates 211 which can be reached by calling 211 or 1-800-962-1253
- Text NJCOVID to 898-211
- Center for Non-Profits - “Going Forward: Best Practices and Considerations for Non-Profit Reopening:”
  - Going Forward: Best Practices and Considerations for #Nonprofit Reopening" - The Center for Non-Profits has partnered on a new guide that we hope will make the reopening process a little easier. This FREE compilation covers many factors you may want to consider, such as workplace safety, human resource issues and more. It includes plenty of helpful links and will be updated periodically as circumstances warrant. https://lnkd.in/de4PJZ3

Convening communities at the intersection of creativity, collaboration and inclusion.
info@creativenj.org www.creativenj.org
Technology
- GO TO Meeting is offering 3-month free subscription for nonprofits (contact Center for Non-Profits for more details): [www.njnonprofits.org](http://www.njnonprofits.org)
- Center for Non-Profits will give center members a 20% discount for ZOOM
- [www.TechSoup.org](http://www.TechSoup.org) - tech resources and subscriptions available at significant discounts for nonprofits
- See Creative NJ’s Accessibility Technology recommendation in the Resources section of the May 6 briefing

Youth Resources (Education, Mental Health, Basic Needs)
- NJTV Learning LIVE (supported in part by NJEA and the State Department of Education): a daily TV show for grades 3 to 6; top notch teachers give lessons from home. [https://www.njtvonline.org/programs/njtv-learning-live/](https://www.njtvonline.org/programs/njtv-learning-live/)
- Liberty Science Center is doing a daily science broadcast: [https://lsc.org/education/lsc-in-the-house](https://lsc.org/education/lsc-in-the-house)
- [2nd Floor Hotline](http://www.2ndfloor.org/): Anonymous and confidential call or text helpline for youth: [https://www.2ndfloor.org/](https://www.2ndfloor.org/)
- [PerformCare (Youth Mental and Emotional Health Hotline)](http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx): NJ’s contracted system administrator for the NJ Children’s System of Care behavioral health care service array:
  - PerformCare Hotline: 877-652-7624
- [NCSTN](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/supportingchildren-covid-factsheet.pdf): Supporting Children During Coronavirus:
  - [Child Mind Institute](https://childmind.org/article/supporting-teenagers-and-young-adults-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/): Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults During the Coronavirus Crisis:
  - [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/links/covid-19-mncah-resources-adolescents-and-youth/en/): COVID-19 Resources for Adolescents and Youth:
  - In Googling poetry by youth on “Voices of Youth”: [https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tag/poetry](https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tag/poetry)
  - Voices for Healthy Kids: [https://voicesforhealthykids.org/](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/)
  - Voices for Healthy Kids COVID-19 Resources: [https://voicesforhealthykids.org/internal/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-you-can-use](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/internal/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-you-can-use)
  - Voices for Healthy Kids - Grant Opportunities: [https://voicesforhealthykids.org/campaign-resources/grants](https://voicesforhealthykids.org/campaign-resources/grants)
Our Mission
Creative New Jersey fosters collaboration, community inclusion and creative thinking by convening highly-diverse groups of people with varied cross-sector skills, viewpoints, backgrounds, and lived-experiences, in order to advance a community dialogue around critical issues, build and strengthen diverse community networks, encourage cross-sector and multi-cultural partnerships, and foster equitable community-based solutions.

We welcome all comments and inquiries. If you are interested in learning more about our work in communities please reach out to us at info@creativenj.org and visit our website at www.creativenj.org.

Connect with us on social media:

www.facebook.com/CreativeNJ
www.instagram.com/creative_new_jersey/
www.linkedin.com/company/creative-new-jersey

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