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Together in Health

Newsletter of The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey

Issue 5 - June 2023

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Our Impact Report



Read our 2022 Impact Report [here](#).

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Internal Changes to Maximize our Impact

Dear Community Partner,

How do you demonstrate that your work is having the intended positive impact on the community? This is the question we routinely ask every organization that receives a grant from The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, and it is a question we have increasingly been asking ourselves. Over the past few months, we have paused receiving new applications so that we could spend time focusing internally on refreshing our processes and procedures. We have asked ourselves how we can better do our work to ensure the limited funds we have the privilege of distributing have the maximum positive impact.

Toward the goal of ensuring a better “customer experience” for our community partners, over the past three months we have looked at virtually all aspects of our operations, working to streamline our application forms and modernize our systems, while remaining both flexible and responsive to emerging

At the same time, we have been reflecting on our more than a quarter-of-a-century history of funding innovative programs in the community. In May, we were pleased to release our [2022 Impact Report](#), which embodies a sharper focus on quantifying the effect our grantmaking has had on the community throughout 2022 and highlights projects that demonstrate best practices for effective service delivery.

While our too-quick partial pause is coming to an end (applications for new grants are now being accepted for consideration in the fourth quarter of 2023), we are now transitioning from the focused work of the pause to a spirit of continuous improvement. We know that sharpening our impact relies on ongoing conversations and listening to our community partners. We invite you to reach out and let us know your thoughts on the recent changes we have made – and on changes you'd like to see in the future.

In good health!



Amy Schechner Michael Schmidt
Board Chair Executive Director and CEO

HFNJ Announces \$470,000 in Second Quarter Giving

We are pleased to announce that HFNJ has awarded \$470,000 to seven New Jersey non-profit organizations in the second quarter of 2023.

All seven of the grants were renewals of projects previously funded by HFNJ. The largest grant of the cycle is a \$175,000 award to YouthBuild Newark to continue support for an Allied Health training program that prepares young people to receive credentials leading to careers in the healthcare field.

[Learn about all our recent grantees](#)



During a listening tour with grantee partners, trustees and staff learned about the restoration of Newark's Riverfront Park with the Trust for Public Land.

Highlights of HFNJ's Recent Changes

During its partial pause in grantmaking, HFNJ's staff and trustees refreshed many of our policies, forms, and initiatives to better reflect working in today's environment. We asked staff and trustees about some of these changes – and what HFNJ's community partners can expect to see in the future.

Amy Schechner, Board Chair

HFNJ released an anti-discrimination / anti-hate statement. Can you tell us about the genesis of this statement, and how it will be used?

The statement came about from internal conversations among trustees, our Executive Director/CEO and staff, who were concerned with rising incidents of antisemitism and other hate speech and activities in our society - including troubling episodes close to home in New Jersey. We wanted to ensure that HFNJ and our grantees take a strong public stance in opposing hate of all kinds. This statement is now embedded within each grant contract we issue and can be found on our website [here](#).

Michael Schmidt, Executive Director / CEO

As HFNJ now emerges from the partial pause, what should we look for going forward?

I am proud how HFNJ trustees came together with our professional staff over the past three months to reflect on our current work and respond to the community. Our listening tour – during

needs of the community and emerging best practices so that they are better equipped with the knowledge to make informed decisions about grant requests.

Sue Wasserman – Trustee and Incoming Co-Chair of HFNJ’s Grants Evaluation Committee

You have been working on revising the application forms and processes that HFNJ uses. What changes can aspiring grantees expect to see in the future?

Our hope is that the new HFNJ application forms will allow aspiring grantees to share details about their proposed projects in a more straightforward way, with less duplication, and focus more on the expected impact of the grant and how they will measure success.

We are no longer asking organizations to fill out the logic model and write a narrative describing their project in paragraph form. Instead, our application will focus on using the logic model to clearly illustrate the project – tracing a path from the proposed activities to the outcomes the grantee hopes to achieve, as well as the plan to measure and evaluate the impact.



Lisa Block – Senior Program Officer

Can you tell us how the work of the Health Equity Task Force hopes to inform the work HFNJ will do in the future?

We are embarking on a learning journey as the first step so that collectively HFNJ’s trustees and staff understand the common language and ‘foundations’ of health equity. Discussions will focus on the difference between health equity and health disparities, recent research and trends as impacted by injustices, and how certain longstanding philanthropic approaches and cultures may perpetuate poor outcomes. The dozens of community leaders we partner with through grants are not only seeking access to health services but health equity, and I fully expect the task force to move forward with a set of recommendations in different areas - some small, some bigger - that embrace equity.

Stephanie Sherman and Marion Medow – Trustees and Co-Chairs of HFNJ’s Grants Evaluation Committee

Our board members hold tremendous collective wisdom gained from considering and evaluating thousands of grant proposals together over the years. Our goal was to distill this wisdom into a document broken into segments including mission alignment, the project's potential impact, and budget review. The questions in the guide will inform future trustees in their decision-making, to ensure that the Foundation continues to fund the most promising organizations and projects making a difference in our community.

Marcy Felsenfeld – Senior Program Officer

Can you tell us about the work of the Behavioral Health Task Force, and what you hope will come out of the research they've done on community needs?



The Task Force assembled a group of professionals who work with teens and adolescents. They spoke about the current mental health crisis facing our youth and ways to strengthen existing support for these children and their families. Many agency leaders echoed concerns about hiring and keeping qualified employees due to non-competitive salaries. We left the convening with a sense that HFNJ investments in the mental health workforce and expanding access to affordable services will be a focus of our work moving forward.

The Task Force is convening another discussion with a group of social service organizations and not-for-profit mental health providers this summer. My hope is that we will complete our research in the coming months through a final convening of organizations in the Greater Newark area early in the fall.

Kevin McManemin – Grants and Community Outreach Manager

The Foundation recently changed some long-time rules around its smaller grants program. What were the changes?

Since its inception, HFNJ has had a fast-track approval process for smaller, emergency grants. Originally dubbed “Presidential Grants,” for years the limits on these grants were \$25,000. To keep current with the needs of today, the limit has now been raised to \$35,000, and the grants have been renamed “Special One-time Grants” to better reflect their limited, one-time nature.

Video: Born at the Beth

The Healthcare Foundation of NJ was formed in 1996 from the sale of Newark Beth Israel Medical Center to the RWJ Barnabas system. The roots of the Foundation's heritage and inheritance, therefore, date back much longer – to the 1901 founding of “the Beth” hospital, and the vibrant turn-of-the-century Jewish



To celebrate our history and tell this story, we created a short video drawing together archival historical footage and images to tell the story of HFNJ's roots.

[Watch the video here](#)

Application Acceptance by Grant Type

In 2022, The Healthcare Foundation of NJ received 99 requests for funding across the three types of applications we review: new grants; grant renewals (renewals of existing projects funded by HFNJ); and special one-time grants (grants of \$35,000 or less for one-time special needs).

As the chart below details, an applicant's chances of successfully receiving funding varies greatly by the type of request they are making.



Listening Tour

During the past quarter, HFNJ staff and trustees engaged in 20 community site visits to see programs in action and hear what challenges our grantees are facing on the ground. This is some of what we saw....



Learning about the legacy of environmental damage in Newark's Ironbound neighborhood at Down Bottom Farms community garden.



A staff member and client engage in a game at Jewish Family Service of Central NJ's Coffee House program for seniors with mild dementia, Scotch Plains.



Visiting Friendship Circle's Lifetown complex in Livingston, NJ.



On the ground in Newark's South Ward with the Newark Community Street Team.

What We Are Reading and Watching

- Heather Klein, the HFNJ Community Coordinator at NJY Camps, discusses how [summer camps \(and Jewish camps in particular\)](#) can help children prepare for later transitions in college and adult life.
- NJ.com covered the inspiring [Community Game-Changer Awards given out by HFNJ grantee the HUBB Arts & Trauma Center](#).
- Linda Schwimmer of the NJ Health Care Quality Institute shares details on the first-in-the-nation [Mental Health First Aid training program for perinatal health workers funded by HFNJ](#).
- New report: [The Power of Parks to Promote Public Health](#) by the Trust for Public Land emphasizes the connection between green space in communities and the health of residents.
- Last year, HFNJ provided a \$50,000 grant to *NJ Spotlight News* to support the creation of a dedicated mental health beat. As part of that project, *NJ Spotlight News* hosted a virtual roundtable series that

-View the second roundtable at <https://youtu.be/wbSPWoYjaq0>

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