

COVID-19 Philanthropic Response in Greater Newark
Phone Call/Webinar
March 17, 2020

NOTES AND NEXT STEPS

Open and Call Framing

The call was convened by Kevin Callaghan on behalf of the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers and the City of Newark to inform/coordinate a philanthropic response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Newark area.

Establishing a Fund to Respond to COVID-19

Catherine Wilson, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Newark

Catherine Wilson summarized the newly created Community COVID-19 Fund. It will focus on:

- Individual Relief – mortgage/rental assistance, medicine, food purchase, utility payments, etc.
- Public Health Needs – space for quarantine, supplies and equipment, testing
- Non-Profit/Social Service Relief – operating funds, funds to support programming related to COVID response
- Long-term Recovery Needs – continued individual relief, medical needs, etc.

The fund will prioritize immediate/basic needs as we get a handle on the full scope of response necessary. Foundations contributing at a certain level will serve on the Advisory Board. The fund will also have “technical advisors” from the non-profit community for giving in specific content areas (e.g. basic needs, non-profits, small business, arts, etc.)

Update from Newark Board of Education

Roger Leon, Superintendent

Newark Public Schools has 16 breakfast/lunch sites for students. There are no resources to provide families with food.

Students were provided with packets to do school work from home for two weeks. If the district needs to stay closed longer, it has capacity to provide students in grades 3-12 with Chromebooks. If there is a long closure, there is a need for “learn at home kits” with books, games, supplies, etc. There is also a need for WiFi hotspots to provide to families without internet.

The Superintendent is open to working with non-profit providers to support families coming to the meal sites with benefit coordination and other services.

Per diem/hourly NPS employees will not be paid while school is out.

Roundup of district needs:

Financial assistance for impacted employees/families
Additional equipment to support building “deep cleaning”
Learn at Home Kits
Additional technology for teachers (assuming a longer closure)
WiFi hotspots for families without internet
Chromebooks for students in grades K-2
Support for large-scale copying (assuming a longer closure)

Factors to Consider for Newark’s Most Vulnerable Populations

Dr. Denise Rodgers, Chair, Newark Homeless Commission and Chair of Believe in a Healthy Newark

From the health perspective, Dr. Rodgers discussed the importance of social distancing as the only way to get a handle on COVID-19. Social distancing disproportionately impacts families who struggle to make ends meet. They may not have funds to buy two weeks of groceries or make their home a resource-rich environment for children. The biggest need is supplemental income to support purchases that will allow people to shelter in place.

Additional items to consider:

- Mental health services and hotlines
 - People staying in the home can lead to additional mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence issues.
- Care for the homeless population
 - When there is a case in a homeless shelter, the whole shelter will be locked down and will need extra resources.
- Communications
 - There are many myths about COVID-19. It is important to get the right information into people’s hands.

Next Steps

1. The goal is to raise a fund that will facilitate a response that is coordinated, aligned, and helps to get resources quickly to where they are needed most without duplication of effort. Contact Catherine Wilson at cwilson@uwnewark.org if you are interested in discussing a contribution.
2. There will be a weekly coordinating call on Tuesday mornings at 11am to update each other on the response and to hear from people on the front lines.
3. The Council of NJ Grantmakers and the Center for Non-Profits are hosting a webinar on Friday at 2:00pm to discuss statewide response. In addition, the First Lady’s Office is discussing a statewide public-private partnership. More on this to come.