

Philanthropic Liaison to the City of Newark

an initiative of the Office of the Mayor and
the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers

Purpose and Impact

Philanthropy has played a vital role in Newark for decades. Following the election of Newark Mayor Cory A. Booker, the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG) created the position of the philanthropic liaison to work with the new administration and leverage philanthropy's impact on the city. In 2007, in collaboration with the Office of the Mayor, CNJG hired the city's first liaison – modeled after a similar position in the State of Michigan – to harness interest, foster greater effectiveness and attract resources toward policy and programmatic areas that affect Newark's residents. A director-level position, the liaison helps identify and broker strategic partnerships between the city and foundations to leverage public-private opportunities to improve the lives of Newarkers.

Objectives

- Facilitate partnerships among state, regional, and national funders and the City of Newark, consistent with the Mayor's priorities for the City
- Communicate between and among grantmakers and City officials
- Increase municipal officials' understanding of philanthropy and the potential roles it can play in partnership with municipal government
- Respond to opportunities for new local and regional public/private partnerships
- Attract new grants and private money to Newark

Governance

The Philanthropic Liaison is governed by an Advisory Committee representing contributing funders, CNJG, and the Office of the Mayor. Members include:

- Bari Mattes, Senior Advisor to Mayor Booker
- Nina Stack, Council of New Jersey Grantmakers
- David Grant, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
- Irene Cooper-Basch, Victoria Foundation
- Hans Dekker, Community Foundation of New Jersey
- Curtland Fields, Turrell Fund
- Barbara Reisman, Schumann Fund for New Jersey
- Deborah Sagner, Sagner Family Foundation

“The City can’t do this alone. It takes strategic alliances with federal and state officials, community and faith-based organizations, and the leveraging arm of philanthropic institutions. The office of the philanthropic liaison creates stronger connections with funders. The matching grants from the private sector show that these efforts are working.”

Mayor Cory A. Booker, City of Newark

“The Victoria Foundation is proud to join a group of private funders concerned about the city of Newark to support the philanthropic liaison. The position has successfully brought innovative program opportunities that address critical urban needs to the attention of the foundation community. This is an illustration of private/public partnership at its very best.”

Irene Cooper-Basch, Victoria Foundation

“The philanthropic liaison has enjoyed great success in forging new partnerships and collaborations between the foundation community and the public sector to help improve the lives of Newark families.”

Nina Stack, Council of New Jersey Grantmakers

Accomplishments

In just over a year, the philanthropic liaison has brokered foundation gifts of \$7.9 million to advance Newark initiatives. The liaison used these funds to match and secure an additional \$5.2 million in public funding, for total support of \$13.1 million. More leveraging power was realized through \$13.5 million in Newark-focused State resources from multiple agencies that had never before been identified, catalogued, and combined, helping secure national funding. To date, the liaison has leveraged \$26.6 million in private and public dollars in support of programs for prisoner reentry, greening and sustainability, child and family well-being, and economic development.

Priorities and Activities

Prisoner Reentry

- Convened first funders' briefing on prison reentry efforts since the Mayor came into office
- Engineered a \$2 million match from seven funders to meet a grant from the United States Department of Labor for an overall \$5 million Prisoner Reentry Initiative
- Leveraged foundation support toward a \$1.8 million application to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, in support of housing for homeless ex-offenders and the disabled
- Shepherded a municipal \$446,000 request toward congressional support of Opportunity Reconnect, the city's one-stop center for ex-offenders
- Developed growing relationships with national foundations interested in creating philanthropic opportunities in Newark

Greening and Sustainability

- Launched "Organizing for Newark's Green Future," attended by more than 100 grantmakers, nonprofit leaders, and other stakeholders

- Brought the Trust for Public Land, Project USE, and NewarkWorks together to create "Park Works," a pilot youth program that leveraged work force dollars on top of the city's \$40 million investment in parks

Child and Family Well Being

- Served as liaison between regional and national funders on a \$2 million partnership to address childhood lead-poisoning abatement
- Introduced funders to the Youth Employment and Education Success Center, a one-stop center with multiple wrap-around services for at-risk youth
- Served on the development committee of the Council on Family Success

Economic Development

- Incorporated funders into the launch of Newark's Master Plan and the creation of a community engagement program
- Linked funders to committees addressing policies surrounding foreclosures and predatory lending
- Won funding for city planners to explore best practices for social enterprise development models



Jeremy V. Johnson was appointed the city's first philanthropic liaison in August 2007. Well-known in the state's grantmaking and nonprofit communities, he has more than 20 years of experience including a decade as the head of foundation and government development for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. He resides in Newark's Central Ward.

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