

Grantee News

Policy Victories:

- The Environmental Protection Agency released its plan to clean up the lower eight miles of the Passaic River which has been contaminated due to decades of industrial and chemical pollution with toxins such as dioxin (used to make Agent Orange) and mercury. This plan calls for the removal of 3.5 million cubic yards of sediment before the riverbed is capped with two feet of sand. The Newark Community Advisory Group (co-chaired by NY/NJ Baykeeper's Debbie Mans, and made up of the Ironbound Community Corporation, other community organizations, and Newark residents) is an advocate for the proposed clean-up plan. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- In early 2016, the State Legislature approved a concurrent resolution to prevent against the weakening of NJ's Flood Hazard Area Control Act regulations by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) by arguing that the proposed rules violate the intent of the Clean Water Act and other environmental protections due to advocacy by NJ Highlands Coalition, ANJEC, and partners. NJDEP had 30 days to revise or withdraw its proposed rules, and did so in advance of its mid-March deadline, promising to rewrite the rules to address concerns over weakened protections for NJ's waters. Had NJDEP failed to do so, the Legislature could have followed through with its threat to invalidate the proposed rules through a second concurrent resolution. Read more [here](#).
- East Orange and Bloomfield moved to establish a \$15 minimum wage for municipal employees, making them the second and third NJ municipalities to do so (Jersey City did so in February). Mayors of both towns hope that municipal adoption of a \$15 minimum wage will spur other municipalities and the state to do the same. The Better Choices for NJ coalition, NJ Citizen Action, and NJ Policy Perspective have led efforts to raise the minimum wage in NJ. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- Due to efforts by the NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Perth Amboy launched its municipal ID program, making ID cards available to Perth Amboy residents aged 14 and older. Municipal ID cards will provide residents with an alternative form of identification that will allow them to access local services, such as signing up a library card or opening a bank account. Read more [here](#).
- After more than six years of advocacy by Drug Policy Alliance and partners, the NJ Department of Health has announced that it will convene a panel of physicians and health professionals to determine whether eligibility for NJ's medical marijuana program should be expanded to include more medical conditions, including lupus, post-traumatic stress disorder, and chronic pain. Read more [here](#).

Policy Updates:

- Isles, the Housing and Community Development Network of NJ, and partners continue to advocate for policies to prevent lead poisoning in NJ. This past month, two such measures were proposed in the State Senate – one to restore \$10 million to the Lead Hazard Control Fund and another to match NJ's definitions of lead poisoning (measured in blood tests) in line with national standards from the Center on Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (NJ defines lead poisoning as levels at or over 10 µg/dL of lead, while the CDC level is 5 µg/dL). This issue has gained more urgency in the last week as evidence of elevated levels of lead was found in water at 30 Newark public schools. Newark is not the only district to find elevated levels of lead in its water; in 2002, Camden public

schools switched to bottled water after water at seven public schools was found to have elevated levels of lead and the State is now considering whether additional school districts should be tested. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

- Due to advocacy by Anti-Poverty Network of NJ, NJ Anti-Hunger Coalition, NJ Policy Perspective, and partners, the State Legislature passed a bill that would provide a minimum of \$21 for heating assistance through the NJ Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to qualified families thus qualifying them for additional federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The bill now heads to Governor Christie's desk. The 2014 Farm Bill altered the structure of the federal "Heat and Eat" program by increasing the minimum amount of energy assistance per 12-month period needed to qualify for additional SNAP benefits from \$1 to \$21. While 11 of the 14 "Heat and Eat" eligible states and Washington D.C. acted to increase energy assistance benefits in order to continue to allow low-income families to qualify for much-needed nutrition assistance, Governor Christie vetoed a bill during the last legislative session that would have done the same, resulting in a loss of approximately \$90 of food assistance per month for 159,000 NJ households. For more information, read [here](#).
- NJ's first bail reform pilot program was launched in the Morris-Sussex vicinage as a result of the 2014 bail reform ballot amendment championed by Drug Policy Alliance, ACLU-NJ, and NJ Institute for Social Justice. Two other pilot programs are expected to launch this month in Passaic and Camden counties, and the statewide bail reform measures will take effect in January 2017. Read more [here](#).
- ACLU-NJ, Ironbound Community Corporation, NJ Institute for Social Justice, and partners called for the Newark Municipal Council to pass an ordinance to establish the nation's strongest permanent civilian complaint review board (CCRB) in Newark. Last year, advocates successfully pushed for Newark Mayor Baraka to issue an executive order establishing a CCRB. A final vote on the ordinance is expected later this week. Read more [here](#).
- A bill to require NJ employers to provide workers with paid sick leave has cleared the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, and has the potential to affect 1.2 million NJ workers if signed into law. The bill would allow employees to earn one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked. NJ Citizen Action, the Better Choices for NJ coalition, Anti-Poverty Network, NJ Policy Perspective, the Time to Care coalition, and partners have advocated for earned sick leave and have led efforts to pass municipal earned sick leave ordinances. Read more [here](#).

Policy Reports:

- Pinelands Preservation Alliance released its annual *State of the Pinelands* report, highlighting the increased threats to the Pinelands regions, including the South Jersey Gas pipeline that was recently approved by the Board of Public Utilities, a second pipeline that is advancing through the approval process, and off-roading that is destroying preserved areas. The report also acknowledged the negative effects of increasing political pressure on the Pinelands Commission and staff. Read the full report [here](#).
- NJ For Transit released its report, *Stuck at the Station: 15 Years of Declining Investment Has Harmed New Jersey's Ability to Deliver High-Quality Transit Service*, highlighting how disinvestment in NJ Transit (despite increased ridership) has stalled much-needed capital projects (Hudson-Bergen Light Rail extension, Glassboro-Camden Light Rail, bus rapid transit, etc.), and has resulted in declining efficiency and quality of transit service. Read the full report [here](#).

Honors and Recognition:

- A number of grantees were honored for their contributions during the NJ General Assembly's Women's History Month Ceremony on March 14th – Staci Berger, Housing and Community Development Network of NJ; Serena Rice, Anti-Poverty Network of NJ (APN); Analilia Mejia, NJ Working Families Alliance; Ceil Zalkind, Advocates for Children of NJ; Joyce Campbell, Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton and APN Board member; Diane Riley, Community FoodBank of NJ and APN Board member, and others.

Events

- March 15th—[NJ Spotlight Webinar: Tiered Networks](#)
- March 18th—[20th Annual NJ Land Conservation Rally](#)
- March 30th—[APN General Meeting](#)
- April 13th—[Engaging in Dialogues about Poverty: An Interactive Workshop](#) (open to Anti-Poverty Network/NASW-NJ members only; sign into APN website to view and register for event)
- April 15th—[Woodrow Wilson School Policy Forum: Long-Term Unemployment](#)
- June 2nd—[NJ Foundation for Aging 18th Annual Conference](#)

Job Announcements

- ACLU-NJ—[Policy Counsel](#)
- ACLU-NJ—[Criminal Justice Transparency Fellow](#)
- ACLU-NJ—[Visual Communications Strategist](#)
- Anti-Poverty Network of NJ—[Executive Director](#)
- Clean Water Fund—[Climate Organizer \(Newark\)](#)
- Council of NJ Grantmakers—[Member Services Associate](#)
- Faith in NJ—[Community Organizer](#)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation—[HIV Counselor](#)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation—[Project Recruitment Specialist](#)
- Isles, Inc.—[Job Developer](#)
- Isles, Inc.—[Case Manager](#)
- NJ Citizen Action—[Director of Financial Coaching](#)
- NJ Citizen Action—[Bilingual Loan Counselors](#)
- NJ Citizen Action—[Bilingual Tax Preparers](#)
- NJ Conservation Foundation—[Development Associate](#)
- NJ Conservation Foundation—[Pine Barrens Regional Manager](#)
- NJ for Transit—[Campaign Manager](#)
- NJ Highlands Coalition—[Outreach and Education Director](#)
- NJ Institute for Social Justice—[Director of Philanthropy](#)
- NJ Work Environment Council—[Campaign Organizer](#)

The Fund for New Jersey's news updates will be distributed monthly. Please send policy news and updates, job announcements, and staff updates to Ami Kachalia at akachalia@fundfornj.org.