

SEARCH

GO

[HOME](#)[NEWS](#)[WEATHER](#)[SPORTS](#)[SHOWS](#)[RADIO](#)[ABOUT](#)[CONTACT](#)

NJHI Announces \$2 Million Next Generation Community Leaders Initiative

Last Edited: Jul 12, 2017 1:07 PM EDT

By SNJ Today Staff [CONNECT](#)

Photo: Provided by the New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI)

Bridgeton, Newark mayors among those joining youth-serving organizations to provide leadership training for up to 300 teens over three years

CAMDEN, N.J – New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI) – the statewide grantmaking program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) – today announced plans to harness the energy, knowledge and idealism of young people ages 14-21 across New Jersey, to prepare them as future leaders while learning to address barriers to health in their own communities.

“In New Jersey’s vulnerable communities such as Bridgeton and Newark, up to 40% of the population is under the age of 18. Youth bring a different perspective about their health and their community than adults,” explained Bob Atkins, PhD, RN, FAAN, director of NJHI.

“However, adults don’t always view them as valuable community resources, and youth need such opportunities to be engaged in planning and decision making while receiving adult coaching and guidance to create meaningful, sustainable change. Through this initiative, NJHI will establish a network of 200-plus youth — from varying educational, economic and social backgrounds — and provide leadership development that will equip them to help build a Culture of Health in their communities.”

“ In New Jersey’s vulnerable communities such as Bridgeton and Newark, up to 40% of the population is under the age of 18. Youth bring a different perspective about their health and their community than adults. ”

Through *NJHI: Next Generation Community Leaders*, 10 grants of \$200,000 each have been awarded to organizations over three years to develop the youths’ civic engagement skills, involve them in meaningful summer employment, and help them participate in an alumni network that will be the foundation for their future leadership endeavors. Each grantee will form two teams of local youth, mentor them in leadership and population health issues, and facilitate the teams’ work.

The youth teams will design and implement projects that address the unique health needs of their community.

Throughout the grant period, each grantee will identify opportunities to further engage the youth in leadership roles, perhaps establishing youth advisory boards or inviting the youth teams to report on their work at city council meetings. NJHI will encourage the youth to share their progress and network during statewide youth convenings.

The following organizations have been awarded grants under the *NJHI: Next Generation Community Leaders* initiative:

- **The Abbott Leadership Institute - Rutgers University Foundation, Newark, Essex County**

- o Project Title: Newark Youth Ambassadors - Community Health Division

- **The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City, Atlantic City, Atlantic County**

- o Project Title: Lead A.C.

- **Groundwork Elizabeth, Elizabeth, Union County**

- o Project Title: Preparing Elizabeth's Next Generation of Community Leaders

- **Jewish Renaissance Foundation, Perth Amboy, Middlesex County**

- o Project Title: Emerging Leaders for a Healthier Community

- **Millhill Child & Family Development, Trenton, Mercer County**

- o Project Title: Empowering Trenton through Youth Civic Engagement

- **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of Hudson County, Secaucus, Hudson County**

- o Project Title: Secaucus Next Generation Community Leaders

- **New Jersey Community Development Corporation, Paterson, Passaic County**

- o Project Title: Youth CARES

- **Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County 4-H Youth Development Program, Bound Brook, Somerset County**

- o Project Title: Student Ambassadors for Community Health

- **Tri-County Community Action Agency, Inc., Bridgeton, Cumberland County**

- o Project Title: Next Gen Leaders

- **Urban Promise Ministries, Inc., Camden & Pennsauken, Camden County**

- o Project Title: Leaders of Promise

Civic and government leaders, health and human services officials, and universities from the various communities will also be directly involved with educating the youth participants. Mayor Ras Baraka is among those who will be working directly with the selected youth in Newark, as will Mayor Al Kelly in Bridgeton.

"This work will enable young people to acquire a sophisticated understanding of the barriers to health they see impacting their families, friends and neighbors and provide the resources to affect meaningful, sustainable, change both now and in the future," said Atkins.

"Youth are an underutilized asset, and we can't build healthier communities without them. While we can't predict how many future mayors, school board members, Little League presidents or Chamber of Commerce presidents will emerge from this group, I look forward to seeing the solutions they design, and also watching them mature as community leaders."

To learn more about the NJHI: Next Generation Community Leaders initiative, visit njhi.org and participate in the conversation online with the hashtag #NJLeaders2030. In 2030, the youth participating in NJHI: Next Generation Community Leaders will be 29-31 years old, poised to expand their impact as effective leaders, and one election cycle away from meeting the minimum age requirement for a U.S. presidential bid.

SNJ Today is a Southern New Jersey news and information source that is dedicated to providing current stories related specifically to South Jersey.

Do you have community news or events? Email news@snjtoday.com, text SNJNews to 313131, or call 856.825.NEWS (6397).

[HOME](#)

[NEWS](#)

[WEATHER](#)

[SPORTS](#)

[SHOWS](#)

[RADIO](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[CONTACT](#)

All content © Copyright 2000 - 2017 [Frankly Media](#) and snjtoday. All Rights Reserved. For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#), [Terms of Service](#), and [Ad Choices](#)