



May 1, 2020

Dear Governor Murphy:

Thank you for your leadership and work to date during this pandemic.

**With this letter, the leaders of more than 100 civic sector institutions – New Jersey Together member institutions, friends, and allies – write to request an urgent, virtual meeting with you.** The undersigned represent and work with more than 100,000 New Jerseyans – they are communities of faith, social service providers, advocacy groups, labor unions, and organizations that work directly with schools.

All of us have been directly impacted by and engaged with this health and economic crisis. Some of our members and constituents have been sick, while others have lost their lives. Some risk their lives everyday on the front lines, providing healthcare or groceries, while others have lost their jobs. Our institutions have continued to serve – providing food, counseling, spiritual care, or direct services to those impacted. And we have continued to listen and advocate – trying to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are not forgotten.

We write to you today for two reasons: first, to offer our help as we hopefully turn the corner from the peak of infections, and second, to suggest concrete actions you can take that will set New Jersey up as an example for the nation. We know critical decisions are being made now, which makes it important that we meet.

### **Concrete Ways Our Institutions are Able & Willing to Help**

As we reach the “top of the curve,” we are conscious that the challenges New Jersey now faces are still stark. As you have acknowledged in your “Road Back,” reopening our state’s economy with care and ensuring that the relief provided serves the interests of all residents will be critical. Our institutions are deeply rooted in the communities where we serve. We know and have relationships of trust with some of the state’s most vulnerable communities. As part of the Industrial Areas Foundation, New Jersey Together brings allies across the country, as well as decades of experience making concrete gains possible.

Here are concrete actions we are ready and willing to take in this time:

- **Provide volunteers/staff, space, and other supports for mass testing, contact tracing, training of volunteers & staff.** Mass testing and contact tracing will be a monumental task. It will require space, trained volunteers and staff, PPE, and more. Our institutions, members, and constituents are ready and willing to help.
- **Advocate with political leaders across political and geographic divides to ensure New Jersey’s recovery benefits everyone.** The 100 signatories below are non-partisan and directly connected to more than 100,000 New Jerseyans in every part of the state. These signatures were gathered in about a week. We will continue to strengthen our relationships in the coming weeks and months to make changes that are needed.
- **Work with colleagues in other states to support New Jersey in getting full benefit and relief from the federal government.** New Jersey Together has 65 sister organizations across the country working together to respond to this crisis. Together, we have relationships with more than half of the

U.S. Senate. Other signatories on this letter have their own relationships through their denominations and networks. We will press for changes at the federal level that directly benefit New Jersey families.

### **Concrete and Recommended Actions You and the State of New Jersey Should Take Now**

We have seen time and time again as a state and nation that crises like the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbate inequalities unless proactive action is taken. The Great Recession and the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and Sandy serve as painful reminders of this.

Our proposals are targeted both to get New Jersey's economy moving and to protect many of those groups & communities who have been most negatively impacted by this crisis. They can and should be part of the "Road Back" you described on April 27th. We believe these and other steps will require New Jersey to take full advantage of the Federal Reserve's lending and other sources of capital. It will also require your courage.

- **Expand testing & contact tracing as soon as possible, targeting significant resources in low-income communities, communities of color, and among the elderly.** To begin to open our economy, mass testing and contact tracing must be expanded as soon as it is possible. This will require much more than drive-in testing sites; much of it will need to be targeted in the areas of highest need, particularly low-income communities, communities of color, and among the elderly. Our institutions can help provide space and personnel to make this possible. This can – we hope – start a conversation about how we strengthen the state's healthcare system for the most vulnerable.
- **Provide \$500+ million in rental assistance for those negatively impacted by this crisis.** Your actions early on provided forbearance for mortgage holders and stopped evictions. But 35% of New Jersey households are renters. With 900,000+ already unemployed, rental assistance has repeatedly been prioritized as important by our members and constituents, regardless of immigration status. \$500 million could provide rent relief to 150,000+ households and small businesses (including some non-profits and congregations) for three months. This would get New Jerseyans out of debt to their landlord, prevent a flood of evictions, and allow families to spend more money on their family's needs and on small businesses across the state.
- **Write down or forgive debt individuals owe to the state & stop suspending driver's licenses for this debt.** State and local budgets should not be balanced on the backs of our state's poorest and most vulnerable, particularly at this time. By forgiving or writing down debt owed to state and local governments (e.g., traffic tickets, debt to the welfare system via child support, other fees), you immediately free up cash that will be spent on necessities and local businesses. Current laws also require that drivers' licenses be suspended for these types of debts. In line with a bi-partisan consensus across the country, these barriers should be removed so New Jerseyans can more easily get back to work when the economy reopens.

We want our people, our institutions, and our state to get through this crisis, without repeating the mistakes of the past. We have faith that we will, and we are ready to do our part.

To schedule a mutually convenient time to meet via Zoom or other video conference service, please have your staff coordinate with our Lead Organizer, Frank McMillan at [frank@njtogether.org](mailto:frank@njtogether.org).

Sincerely,

### **Hudson County**

**The Cityline Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Dr. Joshua Rodriguez, Bishop & NJT Board

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Jessica Lambert, Pastor & NJT Board

**New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Dr. Alonzo Perry Sr., Senior Pastor & NJT Board  
Daryn Martin, Deacon

**Jersey City First Wesleyan Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Donavon Shoemaker, Senior Pastor

**St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church,  
Jersey City**

Rev. Rocco C. Danzi, SJ, Vice President for Mission &  
Ministry, Saint Peter's University  
Brigid D'Souza, Finance Council, JCT Strategy Team  
Erich Sekel, Associate Director of Campus Ministry

**The Church of St. Paul and Incarnation, Jersey City**  
The Rev. Thomas Murphy, Rector

**The Waterfront Project, Hudson County**  
Rebecca Symes, Executive Director

**Abundant Joy Community Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Dr. Willard W C Ashley, Sr., SCP, Pastor,  
Psychoanalyst, Retired Professor

**St. Aloysius Catholic Church, Jersey City**  
Sister Georgette Gavioli, SSJ, Pastoral Associate

**Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Thomas Iwanowski, Parochial Vicar

**Journal Square Community Association**  
Bill Armbruster, Secretary

**Fuente de Salvación, Jersey City**  
Rev. Luis Fernandez, Pastor  
Uche Akpa, JCT Strategy Team

**Old Bergen Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Jon Brown, Pastor  
Johnnie Lovejoy, Clerk of Sessions

**Islamic Center of Jersey City**  
Ahmed Shedeed, Director

**Welcome Home Jersey City**  
Alain Mentha, Executive Director

**Jersey City Theater Center, Jersey City**  
Olga Levina, Founder / Artistic Director

**Christ The King Catholic Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Esterminio Chica, Pastor

**Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, Jersey City**  
Bill Lillis, JCT Strategy Team  
Ellen Nash, JCT Strategy Team

**Liberty Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. David Carment, Pastor

**Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Dr. Stanley Hearst II, Pastor

**Hudson Partnership C.M.O., Hudson County**  
Robyn Gorman, Chief Executive Officer  
Steven Campos, Community Resource Director

**Temple Beth El, Jersey City**  
Rabbi Leana Morritt, Rabbi

**Most Excellent Way Learning Life Center, Jersey City**  
Rev. Gloria Walton, Executive Director

**Claremont-Lafayette United Presbyterian Church**  
Rev. Kevin A. Williams, Pastor

**Grace Church Van Vorst, Jersey City**  
The Rev. Laurie Jean Wurm, Rector

**Jersey City Together Education Team**  
Dr. Jyl Josephson, Leader & JCT Strategy Team

**Wallace Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, Bayonne**  
Rev. Dorothy A. Patterson, Pastor

**El Shaddai de AIC Inc., Jersey City**  
Rev. Gedeon Aybar, Senior Pastor

**Hope Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Craig Okpala, Lead Pastor  
Rev. Jeremiah Lepasana, Associate Pastor

**Calvary C.M.E. Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. George A. Dix Jr., Pastor

**Congregation Bnai Jacob of Jersey City**  
Rabbi Bronwen Mullin, Rabbi

**St. John's Lutheran Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Mona Fitch-Elliott, Pastor

**Loving Grace Worship Center, Jersey City**  
Rev. Gregg Curry, Pastor

**Vroom St. Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. William Sweeting, Pastor

**World Outreach Community Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Shyrone Richardson, Pastor

**Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Eli D. Smith, Pastor

**Hudson County Central Labor Council**  
Barry Kushnir, President

**St. Patrick's & Assumption-All Saints Church**  
Fr. Marc-Arthur François, Pastor

**Christ United Methodist Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Mark Schol, Pastor

**The Hub Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Jonathan Olavarria, Pastor

**CityLife Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Pedro Reis, Lead Pastor

**Downtown Community Church, Jersey City**  
Rev. Wayne Burton, Pastor

**Open Door Worship Center, Jersey City**  
Rev. Frances Teabout, Pastor

## **Morris County**

**Church of God in Christ For All Saints, Morristown**  
Rev. Robert Rogers, Pastor

**Temple B'nai Or, Morristown**  
Rabbi Michael Satz, Rabbi

**Presbyterian Church in Morristown, Morristown**  
Rev. Dr. David J. Smazik, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Sarah Green, Associate Pastor

**Morristown Unitarian Fellowship**  
Rev. Alison Miller, Senior Minister

**Bethel A.M.E. Church, Morristown**  
Rev. Dr. Sidney S. Williams Jr., Senior Pastor

**St. Margaret Queen of Scotland R.C. Church**  
Fr. Hernan Arias, Pastor

**Morris Habitat for Humanity**  
Blair Schleicher Wilson, Chief Executive Officer  
Jasmine Lim, Board of Directors

**Church of the Redeemer, Morristown**  
The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Black, Rector

## **Essex County**

**Bnai Keshet, Montclair**  
Rabbi Elliott Tepperman, Senior Rabbi & NJT Board

**Bethany Baptist Church, Newark**  
Rev. Timothy L. Adkins-Jones, Senior Pastor

**Peace Temple C.O.G.I.C., Newark**  
Pr. Javon Allen, Pastor

**Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Short Hills**  
Rabbi Matthew D. Gewirtz, Senior Rabbi

**Temple B'nai Abraham, Livingston**  
Rabbi David Z. Vaisberg, Senior Rabbi  
Rabbi Faith Joy Dantowitz, Rabbi

**St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Montclair**  
Rev. Dr. Peter Savastano, Priest Associate

**Congregation Shomreh Emunah, Montclair**  
Rabbi David Greenstein, Rabbi

**Trinity Presbyterian Church, Montclair**  
Rev. Anita Wright, Pastor

**St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Morristown**  
The Rev. Robert G. Trache, Interim Rector  
Dee Klikier, Outreach Coordinator

**Brookside Community Church, Mendham**  
The Rev. Nicolette Siragusa, Pastor

**Center for Spiritual Living Morristown**  
Rev. Dr. Frankie Timmers, Spiritual Director

**Saint Mark Lutheran Church, Morristown**  
**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Florham Park**  
Rev. Beau D. Nelson

**Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center**  
Diana Mejia, Co-Coordinator

**MAKOMnj, Morristown**  
Rabbi Ellie Miller, Rabbi

**Martin Luther King Observance Committee**  
Dr. David A. Hollowell, Chair

**The Mark Montclair**  
Rev. Leslie Houseworth-Fields, Pastor

**Temple Ner Tamid, Bloomfield**  
Rabbi Marc Katz, Rabbi  
Cantor Meredith Greenberg

**Union Congregational Church, Montclair**  
Rev. Katrina Forman, Associate Minister

**The Episcopal Church of St. James, Upper Montclair**  
The Rev. Audrey Hasselbrook, Assistant Rector

**First Congregational Church of Montclair**  
Rev. John Rogers, Associate Minister

**Grace Church (Episcopal) in Nutley**  
The Rev. Pamela Bakal, Rector

**St. George Episcopal Church, Maplewood**  
Rev. Gary Commins, Priest

**E Noach Schapiro LCSW, LLC**  
Rabbi E. Noach Schapiro

## Other Counties & Non-Geographic Institutions

### *Bergen County*

**Glen Rock Jewish Center, Glen Rock**

Rabbi Jennifer Schlosberg, Rabbi

**All Saints Episcopal Church, Glen Rock**

The Rev. Mark R. Collins, Rector

**Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church, Closter**

Rev. Donna Stewart, Pastor

**St. Anne Roman Catholic Church, Fair Lawn**

Rev. Samuel Monaco, Parochial Vicar

**Religious Society of Friends, Ridgewood, NJ**

Jan T. Philips, Friend

### *Union County*

**Temple Shaarey Shalom, Springfield**

Rabbi Renee Edelman, Rabbi

**Second Presbyterian Church, Union**

Rev. Michael Granzen, Pastor

**St. Matthew Baptist Church, Roselle**

Rev. David Ford Sr., Pastor

**Greater Mount Moriah Baptist Church**

Rev. Barry E. Wise II, Pastor

**Wallace Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Summit**

Rev. Dr. Denison D. Harrield, Jr., Pastor

### *Passaic County*

**First A.M.E. Zion Church, Paterson**

Rev. Dr. Douglas L. Maven, Pastor & NJT Board

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Paterson**

**St. Clement's Episcopal Church, Hawthorne**

Rev. Erik G. Soldwedel, Deacon in Residence

### *Monmouth County*

**St. James Episcopal Church, Bradley Beach**

Rev. Geoff Curtiss, Priest

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Red Bank**

Rev. John Mack Jr., Pastor

### *Middlesex County*

**Trinity U.M.C., Spotswood**

Rev. Ivan Alberts, Pastor

**North Stelton A.M.E. Church, Piscataway**

Rev. Dr. Eric R. Billips Sr., Pastor

**IFPTE Local 194, NJ Turnpike Employees, East Brunswick**

Barry Kushnir, President

**Rutgers University Hillel, New Brunswick**

Rabbi Victor S. Appell, Reform Community Rabbi & Senior Jewish Educator

**Central Jersey Community Center, North Brunswick**

Oktay Sirrik, President

### *Camden County*

**Nafshenu, Cherry Hill**

Rabbi Larry Sernovitz, Rabbi

### *Non-Geographic Institutions*

**Haiti Solidarity Network of the Northeast**

Rev. Jack Martin, Board Member

**Zakee Bowser Enrichment Foundation**

Rev. Dina L. Bowser, Co-Founder

Gina Bowser, Co-Founder

## Denominational, Statewide, or Regional Organizations

**Episcopal Diocese of Newark**

The Rt. Rev. Carlye J. Hughes, Bishop

**New Jersey Third Jurisdiction, Church of God in Christ**

Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Knight Sr., Bishop

**A.M.E. Zion Church, Jersey City District**

Rev. Dr. Douglas L. Maven, Presiding Elder

**Catholic Archdiocese of Newark**

Rev. Timothy Graff, Director of Social Concerns

**The NJ Coalition of Latino Pastors & Ministers**

Rev. Raul Ruiz, President

Rev. Bolivar Flores, Vice President

**New Jersey Policy Perspective**

Brandon McKoy, President

**NJ Sierra Club**

Jeff Tittel, Director

**NJ-CAIC**

Rev. J. Amos Caley, Organizer

**Fines & Fees Justice Center**

Priya Sarathy Jones, National Campaign Director

**New Jersey Together**

Frank McMillan, Lead Organizer

Boris Franklin, Associate Organizer