

2024

# NJT PROGRESS



## Advancing the Fight for Fairness in Housing, Criminal Justice Reform, Education, the Environment and more

In 2024, New Jersey Together made important strides in issues connected to Housing and Economic Justice, Education, Criminal Justice and Clean Energy. With deeper and broader support, we can do even more in 2025.

### New Affordable Housing

We were authorized (along with partners the Returning Citizens Support Group and Nehemiah HFDC) to build 40 units of affordable housing in Newark (artist rendering pictured here), many of which will be set aside for people returning from incarceration.

**What's next:** We are [working to identify more sites](#) and build more.



## Fighting for Equity

As NJT leaders Luisa Reyes and Rosemary Nwabueze (in the photo to the right) laid out, hundreds of working class homeowners were pushed into signing documents with hidden deed restrictions that robbed them of 95% of their equity. Our organizing helped convince Jersey City to let people who have deeds under their program keep most of their equity, but the State hasn't made any reforms for the ones they control. Now, the city has raised many homeowners' local property taxes 200%-400%!



**What's Next:** Homeowners, and NJT allies will continue to push for change, as we did in an action on [November 14th](#) outside of Jersey City Hall, until the homeowners get justice.



## Bayfront

A clean energy feasibility study for Bayfront, funded as a result of work by New Jersey Together, confirmed the viability of a thermal network using wastewater heat recovery. This approach could reduce the site's carbon footprint by 30% and lower utility costs, further enhancing the affordability of the committed 2,800 housing units.

**What's next:** We are continuing to work to ensure the housing is built and the energy network is put in place.



## Supportive Housing

To follow up on work by Morris Area Together leaders to help defend CoHome in Morristown (pictured above), we are helping this high quality provider of supportive housing for disabled people, to work with state and local officials to expand similar housing for families with adult children with disabilities, particularly in Morris and Essex Counties.



## Tenant Organizing

We are also helping a group of tenants living in buildings controlled by a web of LLCs in Jersey City to organize to stop horrific conditions like rodents, lack of functioning bathrooms, falling ceilings, and other issues as well as severe and pervasive harassment from landlords in an effort to get them to leave.

**What's Next:** We are working to help these tenants win real positive change particularly by holding their landlords accountable in court and with the Jersey City housing regulators, as we did [on November 21st](#) at a rent leveling board hearing, pictured here.



## Clean Water and Other Repairs to Schools

We helped 14,600 more students (24,600 in total) to get access to clean, safe, lead free drinking fountains in school. We expect to get all 26,600 Jersey City Public School students access to safe drinking water by the end of 2024. Overall, we ensured that the tens of millions of funding we secured for the Jersey City Schools was used properly. As a result of our efforts, every public school in Jersey City has had critically needed physical repairs like fixing roofs, installing new lighting, doors and windows.

**What's Next:** We are now working to identify other necessary upgrades, secure the necessary funds and hold the District accountable to the repairs being made.

## Fines and Fees

Building on [victories in Hudson and Essex Counties](#), we [convinced the state Department of Corrections](#) to help people who have outstanding fines, warrants, detainers and other challenges to get before a Judge while they are incarcerated. This can help reduce their debt and necessity to attend court dates upon release.

What's Next: We are now working to get this reform implemented properly and expanded to other counties. We also hope to ensure that unfair fines are never imposed in the first place.



## Crisis Intervention

We finally secured adequate funding for a pilot [program to trained mental health workers](#) to respond to people in crisis when police are not appropriate. We are monitoring the program's implementation and exploring expansion.



## Criminal Justice Reform Opportunities for 2025:

**Sentencing Reduction:** NJT is working with DOC Commissioner Victoria Kuhn and the Criminal Sentencing Disposition Committee to further reduce sentences for nonviolent offenders and others who are able to play a productive role in society if given a chance.

**Statewide Family Reunification Visitation Program:** NJT is working with member group Second Chance Quest, to expand their Family Visitation Program at the Essex County Correctional Facility, which provides children of incarcerated people family visits, statewide.

## CLEAN ENERGY

We have built a team of congregations and not-for-profits to adopt clean energy to reduce their carbon footprint, energy costs and serve as demonstration projects for their communities. They have already helped some congregations save money on energy and are poised to do more in 2025

**What's next:** We are working to issue an RFP for group purchase of solar power (which will help organizations get the best deal). We have also met with the NJ Bureau of Public Utilities, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and PSE&G to pursue improved incentives and programs to help lower income organizations to make a transition to clean energy.



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, we trained hundreds more leaders in how to organize to make positive change, and helped them to take action on the issues mentioned above and other things that were important to themselves, their families, their communities and beyond. In 2025 we will keep working to identify more leaders and help them grow their power to make New Jersey better and fairer for everyone.

**With your continued support we can do even more in 2025! Please visit [njtogether.org/donate](http://njtogether.org/donate) today and reach out to us at [newjerseytogether@gmail.com](mailto:newjerseytogether@gmail.com) if you would like to know more about how to get involved.**

