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media@njeda.com

PRESS RELEASE

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## NJEDA SEEKING SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR TRENTON-BASED MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION CENTER

*NJEDA issues RFQ for three service providers to anchor first-of-its-kind center; advance First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ strategic plan*

*NJEDA also seeking expressions of interest from community partners*

TRENTON, N.J. (April 3, 2023) – The [New Jersey Economic Development Authority \(NJEDA\)](#) today took its next step toward developing the Trenton-based Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center, which is central to First Lady Tammy Murphy's [Nurture NJ](#) initiative, by issuing a Request of Qualifications (RFQ) for three anchor tenants to lead the Center. The NJEDA is seeking a health care services provider, an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), and a Trenton-based Multi-Service Organization (MSO) to serve as initial anchor tenants at the Center. These three Lead entities will work collaboratively to provide services to New Jersey expectant and new parents and babies, advance the growth and development of the perinatal workforce, and deliver maternal and infant health policy, research, and innovation focused on eliminating racial disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes.

In tandem with the RFQ, NJEDA is seeking expressions of interests from organizations that may not meet the qualifications for or are not interested in serving in a Lead role but may be interested in providing direct services or establishing partnerships with the Center or the selected Lead partners. This builds on the Murphy Administration's commitment to elevate community voices in the creation of the Center.

"The Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center, through cutting-edge research, data analysis and innovation, will truly be a one-of-a-kind hub for developing groundbreaking solutions to our maternal health crisis," **said First Lady Murphy**. "At its core, this center is designed to create innovative models of care and policy that will transform maternal health care locally in Trenton, across our state, and simultaneously serve as a resource for any and all communities across our nation looking to tackle similar disparities. Importantly, the center will be able to continue our vital work long after the Murphy administration, and we look forward to sharing our best-in-class policies, programs and innovations to better support every mother and baby in our state and country."

"This first-of-its kind Center dedicated to maternal and infant health innovation will ensure Trenton moms and newborns receive the high-quality care and services they need to thrive. But beyond the health care

implications, the Center will spur development, create good-paying jobs, support families, and generate economic activity,” said **NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. “Under Governor Murphy and First Lady Murphy’s leadership, New Jersey has put this cause at the core of its mission of building a more equitable state. When we invest in families, we invest in communities’ long-term growth and prosperity.”

The creation of the Center is a key recommendation from Nurture NJ’s Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan, which is a roadmap to reduce the state’s maternal mortality rates by 50 percent over five years, and to eliminate racial disparities in birth outcomes. The Center is intended to catalyze new innovations to drive improved maternal and infant health outcomes and to serve as a central hub for New Jersey’s stakeholders dedicated to improving the health of New Jersey’s babies and mothers.

The RFQ released today seeks to identify three lead tenants for the development, programming, and ongoing operations of the Maternal Infant and Health Innovation Center. Together the tenants will focus on several key components including comprehensive clinical services; academic research and workforce training; and wrap-around social services. The tenants will work collaboratively toward eliminating racial disparities in maternal and infant health, which will benefit the City of Trenton, New Jersey, and the nation.

Interested parties may only apply for one of the three lead tenant roles. The NJEDA anticipates issuing a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP), which will serve as a procurement for these three lead roles. In order to apply for the RFP, applicants for the three lead roles must respond to this initial RFQ. Successful respondents to the RFP will then enter a long-term lease with the NJEDA for space at the Center. The RFQ can be found [here](#).

The lead Healthcare Clinical Services Provider will offer clinical care to Trenton residents focused on maternal and infant wellbeing and health equity. Services the health care provider will be expected to provide include prenatal and postpartum care, newborn and pediatric care, mental and behavioral health care, doula services, family planning services, and home visitation services. The Healthcare Clinical Services Provider must be a New Jersey-based birthing hospital or maternity hospital or healthcare system containing one or more of these hospitals licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health and approved to accept Medicaid by the New Jersey Department of Human Services. Respondents should provide culturally competent care with specialized approaches for Black and Brown women, teenagers, and individuals with limited English proficiency.

The lead IHE will provide world class research on maternal and infant health with a focus on innovative models of care, data processing, and health equity. The IHE will also serve as a hub for growing and training the perinatal workforce, such as community doulas and certified midwives. Additionally, the IHE tenant may offer pre-college programs in clinical and behavioral science, allied health programs for high schools, college programs that incentivize minority students to study health sciences, and Graduate Medical Education support for cultural competency and equity training. IHEs licensed by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, including senior public institutions, county colleges, and independent New Jersey-based public-mission institutions, may apply.

The Trenton-based MSO will focus on providing services that directly impact social determinants of health such as food insecurity, housing, and transportation – issues that severely impact the daily lives of Trenton residents, especially those of color. Services offered by the MSO may include case management, transportation assistance, assistance enrolling in public benefit programs, linkages to food and housing programs, or exercise and yoga classes. An MSO interested in submitting a response must be headquartered in Trenton, provide direct services within Trenton, be a 501(c)3 organization, and have at least 33% of their revenue come from governmental sources for the past two IRS 990 filings.

Organizations that wish to express interest in providing services through or partnership with the Center, but do not wish or may not meet qualifications to respond to the RFQ may fill out the Expressions of Interest Form [here](#). NJEDA particularly encourages responses from organizations with deep experience in the Trenton

community and with a track record of culturally competent service delivery that addresses legacies and patterns of systemic discrimination and bias that has led to disparate outcomes in maternal and infant health.

Last year, the NJEDA entered a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) with the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University to facilitate community engagement, build trust and support among Trenton residents, and understand the services needed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes for the Trenton community. This process is ongoing and will continue to directly inform potential locations for the Center in Trenton; assess current programs and service offerings for expectant mothers and infants in the Trenton area; identify gaps in the service landscape; and recommend opportunities to leverage existing community assets.

“The creation of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center is the first step in addressing the long-standing issue of racially based disparities in the provision of maternal health services in Trenton and the region. Community-centered compassionate and equitable care for black and brown women as well as all women must be the gold standard in health care,” said **Barbara George Johnson, vice president of external affairs and urban policy at Kean University’s John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research.**

In 2019, First Lady Murphy launched Nurture NJ, a statewide initiative dedicated to both reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. The Center accomplishes a major recommendation in the [Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan](#).

New Jersey ranks 36th in the nation for maternal deaths and has one of the widest racial disparities for both maternal and infant mortality. A Black mother in New Jersey is nearly seven times more likely than a white mother to die from maternity-related complications, and a Black baby is three times more likely than a white baby to die before his or her first birthday.

### **About the NJEDA**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) serves as the State’s principal agency for driving economic growth. The NJEDA is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents, and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the NJEDA creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey’s long-term economic competitiveness.

To learn more about NJEDA resources for businesses, call NJEDA Customer Care at 844-965-1125 or visit <https://www.njeda.gov> and follow @NewJerseyEDA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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**NJEDA Board Approves Anchor Tenants for Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center**

TRENTON, N.J. (April 12, 2024) – The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Board on Wednesday approved three anchor tenants to lead the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center (MIHIC) in Trenton.

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## CONTACT US

PO Box 990, Trenton, NJ 08625-0990

36 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08625

(844) 965-1125

EMAIL US

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