

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: NJEDA, in partnership with Nurture NJ and First Lady Tammy Murphy, Issues Request for Information Seeking Input on the Establishment of a Trenton-Based Center Dedicated to Maternal & Infant Health

04/30/2021

Respondents Encouraged to Submit Ideas About New Center to Address Racial Disparities and Inequities in Care & Outcomes for Mothers and Infants

TRENTON – The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) (<https://www.njeda.com/>), in partnership with Nurture NJ and First Lady Tammy Murphy, issued a Request for Information (RFI) today seeking input to inform the establishment of a Center for Maternal and Infant Health in Trenton which will be dedicated to innovation and research, with an emphasis on addressing racial disparities and ensuring equity in care and outcomes for mothers and infants. The Center for Maternal and Infant Health is a key recommendation from First Lady Tammy Murphy's recently released Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan. The RFI can be found at <https://www.njeda.com/bidding/#OET> (<https://www.njeda.com/bidding/#OET>). Responses to the RFI are due by June 1, 2021.

The RFI, which was issued in conjunction with Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy's offices, the Nurture NJ campaign, and NJEDA's state agency partners at the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), is the latest in a series of steps the State of New Jersey is taking to reduce maternal and infant mortality, particularly among mothers and infants of color.

Nurture NJ (<https://nurturenj.gov/>), a statewide, multi-agency campaign committed to both reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. In January 2021, the First Lady unveiled the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan, which aims to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to deliver and raise a baby through more than 70 specific, actionable recommendations. The establishment of a Center in the state capital that "focuses on innovation and research in maternal and infant health through partnerships with the state's academic, funder, business, and faith communities" is among those recommendations.

"Our Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan was developed in partnership with New Jersey moms and families along with hundreds of experts across our state, both in government and the private sector," **said First Lady Murphy**. "We are now actively engaged in implementing the first phase of these recommendations, including the creation of this one-of-a-kind center, which will be dedicated to innovative research, clinical care, and more to eliminate the inequities at the heart of our maternal health crisis. We are determined to ensure a healthy start for every mother and her baby, and the Center for Maternal Health will play an essential role in continuing our groundbreaking and lifesaving work for decades to come."

New Jersey currently ranks 47th 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 seven times more likely than a white mother to die from maternity-related complications, and a Black baby is over three times more likely than a white baby to die before his or her first birthday.

"Under Governor Murphy and First Lady Murphy's leadership, New Jersey has taken a comprehensive approach to dismantling systemic inequities that exist within our state, and that includes ensuring that women of color get the care they need during their pregnancies and in the months following childbirth," **said New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "One of the most vital ways to achieve this goal is by maintaining an ongoing dialogue with knowledgeable stakeholders who can offer key insights into how the Center can catalyze innovation to tackle this critical issue. The RFI announced today does exactly that."

This RFI aims to build on Nurture NJ's tremendous knowledge base and community engagement process by gathering targeted input on the development and implementation of the Trenton-based Center. Respondents are encouraged to offer input regarding the development of the Center's mission, vision and structure; potential operating models and locations; services and program offerings; strategies and best practices to foster research, innovation, and commercialization in maternal and infant health; potential partners within Trenton and throughout the United States; and considerations for the Authority and its partner agencies in creating initiatives anchored at the Center and within the Trenton community focused on achieving equity in maternal and infant health outcomes.

"The creation of this Center will help eliminate the unacceptable racial disparities that exist in maternal and infant health while also fostering innovation and community revitalization within the state's capital," **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "This RFI will enable Governor Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy and a team across state government to draw on the expertise of individuals familiar with issues surrounding access to infant and maternal healthcare and develop an informed approach to overcoming this pervasive issue."

The NJEDA is seeking responses from qualified entities including, but not limited to: mothers and caregivers; members of communities most affected by disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes; healthcare providers; hospitals and hospital systems; midwives and doulas; health organizations; universities; advocacy organizations; social services providers; municipalities, government agencies and school districts; community stakeholders; policy and academic researchers; real estate developers; business leaders, employers and entrepreneurs; technical assistance providers; and foundations and philanthropic organizations that address infant and maternal health. The NJEDA is seeking responses from entities based within New Jersey as well as those located outside of the state.

"Through our work in promoting safe and inclusive learning environments, we are expanding equitable opportunities for women of color and women of child-bearing age through programs such as the Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG) and other affordability initiatives," **said New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian Bridges**. "The Center for maternal and infant health aligns with our goal of ensuring healthy postsecondary outcomes for mothers and their infants."

"Establishing this Center and investing in research and innovation here in our Capital City are pivotal steps forward in our Administration's commitment to combat disparities in care for mothers and babies of color and make New Jersey a safer place to give birth," said **NJ Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "NJ Human Services looks forward to working with our partners in the First Lady's Nurture NJ campaign to make these plans the reality, improve outcomes, and save lives."

"Nationally and in NJ, maternal and infant mortality are among the worst disparities that Black women experience. The work done by the First Lady to lift up the disparities between our Black and white mothers in our state has been instrumental for this critical conversation needed to save lives. Opening a Center focused on this issue, right in the hub of our government, proves the importance this work has for our state as we work towards health equality for all mothers, infants and families and making New Jersey the best place in the country to raise a family," said **Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman**.

"I am grateful to see us moving closer to establishing a maternal and infant health center in the city of Trenton. The accessibility of doctors is a major barrier that prevents many young women from seeking out the follow up care they need," said **Senator Shirley Turner**. "Coupled with efforts to reduce racial biases within the healthcare field, bringing resources directly to underserved communities is the best thing we can do to reduce maternal mortality rates, especially among Black mothers."

"New Jersey has the third-largest disparity between survival rates among white and Black mothers in the United States. To significantly improve maternal health outcomes for Black mothers and their children, we're going to need people on the ground and in our communities gathering information and offering necessary services to help expecting mothers. We applaud the joint effort between First Lady Tammy Murphy and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and welcome the idea of a Trenton-based center dedicated to improving health equity for Black women," said **Assemblymembers Verlina Reynolds-Jackson and Anthony Verrelli**.

"I'm excited that the state has selected the Capital City for its innovation center focusing on racial disparities related to maternal and infant health," said **Trenton Mayor W. Reed Gusciora**. "Not only do Trenton mothers receive late or no prenatal care at twice the rate of the rest of the state, Trenton's infant mortality rate in the last few years has also been as high as double the state rate, particular among Black residents. Trenton babies also have higher rates than both the state and county of low birthweights and preterm births. Our state partnerships are essential to overcoming this disparity, including this RFI that will help bring critical expertise and innovation to a place where it's needed the most."

"Combining public sector resources and industry expertise will position New Jersey to ensure equitable access to health care for mothers and infants throughout the state," said **Tara Colton, NJEDA's Executive Vice President of Special Projects**. "We are proud to work with our partners on such an important initiative and look forward to developing a world-class Center based with input we receive through this RFI."

All questions concerning this RFI must be submitted in writing no later than 11:59 PM EST, on Monday, May 17, 2021 via e-mail to: MaternalHealthRFI@njeda.com (<mailto:MaternalHealthRFI@njeda.com>)

The subject line of the e-mail should state: "QUESTIONS-2021-RFI-127".

Answers to questions submitted will be publicly posted on the Authority's website on or about Monday, May 24, 2021 at: <https://www.njeda.com/bidding/#OET> (<https://www.njeda.com/bidding/#OET>) as Addendum.

All RFI responses must be submitted in writing no later than 11:59 PM EST on **Tuesday June 1, 2021**, via e-mail to: MaternalHealthRFI@njeda.com (<mailto:MaternalHealthRFI@njeda.com>)

The subject line of the e-mail should state: "RFI Response-2021-RFI-127".

About 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 609-858-6767 or visit <https://www.njeda.com> (<https://www.njeda.com>) and follow @NewJerseyEDA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

About Nurture NJ

To learn more about Nurture NJ, visit [NurtureNJ.nj.gov](https://nurturenj.nj.gov) (<https://nurturenj.nj.gov>).

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