



New Jersey Economic Development Authority

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (“RFI”)

2021-RFI-COMMUNITY-SP-127

for

Establishing a Trenton-Based Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center

April 30, 2021

1. INTENT/SUMMARY OF SCOPE

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or “Authority”), an independent Authority of the State of New Jersey, in conjunction with the Office of the Governor, Office of the First Lady, the Nurture NJ campaign¹, and its state agency partners at the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) seeking information and ideas to:

- (1) Help inform the establishment and launch of a Center (“Center” or “the Center”) in the state capital (Trenton, NJ) dedicated to maternal and infant health innovation and research, with an emphasis on addressing racial disparities and ensuring equity in care and outcomes for mothers and infants.
- (2) Build on the Nurture NJ strategic plan² by gathering feedback on the proposed vision for the Center, including mission, vision, organizational structure, partnerships, service offerings, staffing, governance and infrastructure.
- (3) Better understand opportunities and challenges to improve maternal and infant health outcomes within the City of Trenton and across the State of New Jersey, including gaps and disparities in clinical care outcomes, as well as potential sites and logistical considerations regarding the Center’s location and operations.
- (4) Learn about models in the United States and throughout the world that should be explored when developing the Center.

¹ Learn more about Nurture NJ including the strategic plan released in 2021 at <https://nurturenj.nj.gov>

² Download the Nurture NJ strategic plan as a PDF at <https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

NJEDA is seeking responses from qualified entities (“Respondents”) including, but not limited to: mothers; 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 initiatives that address infant and maternal health. NJEDA is interested in receiving responses from entities based within New Jersey as well as those located outside of the state.

The information gathered in this RFI may subsequently be used to help the Authority, its partner agencies, and other concerned entities to develop strategies, programs, or other initiatives to help accomplish this goal.

THIS RFI IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL and may not result in a subsequent RFP or further action.

2. BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority serves as the State’s principal agency for driving economic growth. The Authority is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to 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 Authority 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.

In 2019, Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy launched Nurture NJ, a statewide awareness campaign committed to both reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. Currently, New Jersey is ranked 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.

The disparities in maternal and infant outcomes are not the result of differences in genes or behaviors but are mostly explained by the differential historical, social, economic, and health environments experienced by Black and brown women. These economic and social differences matter for health; they are determinants of health, and as long as they exist, so will the disparities in maternal and infant health.

Achieving the goals of Nurture NJ will require innovative and transformative action to achieve structural change. The infrastructure for maternal and infant health is not as resilient, durable or

amenable to innovation as it should be. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for these systems to be more adaptable to address emergent issues.

The Nurture NJ strategic planning process was a multi-pronged, multi-sector approach. The result was a science-based, comprehensive and actionable plan focused on equity and improved outcome for all women and infants. The Nurture NJ strategic plan features nine action areas, the third of which is to “engage multiple sectors to achieve collective impact on health³.” Within that action area, recommendation 3.3 of the strategic plan aims to “establish a Center in the state capital [Trenton] that focuses on innovation and research in maternal and infant health through partnerships with the state’s academic, funder, business, and faith communities.”

The State’s aspiration is for the Center to catalyze innovation and serve as a vital anchor for Nurture NJ, as we work to achieve the goal of making New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to give birth and raise a baby.

Given the Center’s potential to impact a high need community as well as influence the statewide (and national) policy framework, Trenton is a natural choice to host the Center. From 2016 - 2018, Mercer County (which includes Trenton) had the fourth highest number of Black infant deaths (34 out of 383 statewide) and second highest Black infant mortality rate (13.1 per 1,000 births) among all 21 NJ counties⁴.

The Trenton-based Center could serve as a hub for multiple types of services and programs, including but not limited to: a birthing facility; clinical services for prenatal care, postnatal care, family planning, and health services for infants and toddlers; a research and development facility; an innovation and idea generation hub including commercialization; training and talent development programs; maternal data quality collection; food and nutrition programs; social supports; mental health supports; and policy and advocacy initiatives.

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. Specifically, the RFI seeks information regarding the development of the Center’s mission, vision and structure; potential operating models and locations in Trenton; services and program offerings; strategies and best practices to foster research, innovation and commercialization in maternal and infant health; 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.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (if applicable)

This is not applicable to this RFI. All responses are welcomed.

³ <https://nurturenj.nj.gov/9-action-areas/>

⁴ Nurture New Jersey 2021 Strategic Plan, page 28, download as PDF at <https://nurturenj.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210120-Nurture-NJ-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

4. RFI RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Please answer all questions that are relevant to you or your organization, to the best of your ability. The Authority recognizes that respondents may not be able to answer all questions. Answers to these questions are understood to be preliminary and non-binding.

Respondents are free to structure responses as necessary to increase clarity and efficiency of responses.

Description of your role and qualifications:

- 1) Please provide information on your organization, group, government entity, or self including:
 - a. Your name and title
 - b. Your operating/business location(s), including municipality and county (if located in New Jersey)
 - c. Your organization type, e.g. public entity (municipality, county, school district), private business, non-profit organization, private citizen, other (please explain)
 - d. Your capacity and qualifications as they relate to maternal and infant health and/or the development of a maternal and infant health Center
 - e. If applicable, your area of service or reach within New Jersey

- 2) Which best describes you/your organization (list all that apply)?
 - a. Mother/Caregiver
 - b. Community member
 - c. Healthcare provider or facility e.g. Federally Qualified Health Centers
 - d. Hospital or hospital system
 - e. Midwife or doula
 - f. Women's health organization
 - g. University, educational institution, policy or academic researcher
 - h. Advocacy organization
 - i. Social services provider
 - j. Municipality, government agency or school district
 - k. Business leader, employer, entrepreneur
 - l. Real estate developer
 - m. Technical assistance provider
 - n. Foundation or philanthropy
 - o. Other, please explain

Mission and structure of the Center:

- 3) Given the comprehensive nature of the Nurture NJ strategic plan, which elements or action areas are most vital to see reflected in the Center's mission and vision?
- 4) The Center could be structured several ways, e.g. as an independent 501(c)3, as a partnership with a university, hospital and/or health care provider, etc. Can you comment on the strengths and shortcomings of these different types of structures? Are there comparable models in other disciplines or structures in other parts of the country or world that should be considered?
- 5) What type of partnership models could support the Center? Are there existing resources or assets that can be leveraged through different partners? Please comment on both resources that can be leveraged within the greater Trenton area as well as other resources or programs throughout the State and region that could establish a formal connection to the Trenton-based Center.

Scope and Service Offerings:

- 6) What are the types of services you would like to see provided through the Center? What programs could be delivered through a Center for community members?
- 7) Given the breadth of potential services and programs to be housed at the Center, how should the Authority and its partners consider prioritization, timeline, tradeoffs and existing resources within the Trenton area? Where would the Center have the greatest impact or address the largest unmet need? Can you comment on the benefits as well as the challenges of trying to implement these services at one site? Can you comment on the staffing or governance models that should be considered?
- 8) The 'Background' section of this RFI outlines a number of potential services and programs that could be housed at the Center. Are there services, program offerings or sub-specialty areas that are either not on the list but should be considered, or receive a particular focus as part of the Center's development and operations?
- 9) As part of his pledge to build a stronger, fairer economy, Governor Murphy is committed to making New Jersey the State of Innovation and harnessing the power of innovation to create more and better jobs across the state. What type of programs or research facilities could be housed or incubated at the Center to foster innovation in the field of maternal and infant health, especially on specific fields of study related to racial disparities in maternal and child mortality and morbidity? How would the Center's research and development activities enhance and interface with related efforts around the state, country and world?
- 10) The Center could serve as a hub and facilitator of innovation for commercial and non-commercial partners to focus on maternal and infant health, e.g. by providing a physical space and technical assistance, hosting 'innovation sprints,' helping to attract venture

capital to translate research into practice, etc. Are there other models that are specifically focused on this type of incubation and innovation in maternal and infant health? How could the Center distinguish itself from other health innovation hubs?

- 11) The Center aspires to offer clinical services which could also include a birthing facility to help address New Jersey's 'birthing deserts.' Can you comment on the barriers in obtaining quality maternal and infant health care in the Trenton area, including affordability, transportation, location, capacity, trust, social determinants of health, etc.? Please describe challenges that existed prior to COVID-19, as well as new challenges that emerged or were exacerbated due to the pandemic. What should the Center prioritize to help address these barriers and challenges?
- 12) Are there models from other states or countries that New Jersey should draw from when developing the Center's scope? Are there best practices or lessons learned that should be considered? How could New Jersey incorporate these approaches as it creates its own solutions? How would the Center complement – or compete – with these models?
- 13) Are there specific partners in Trenton, other parts of New Jersey, or throughout the United States that you would recommend the center development team partner with? What expertise would they bring to the planning? What role do you envision them playing?

Site location and development:

- 14) The Center will be located within the City of Trenton. Are there specific locations or sites both currently in use and/or available for new development that could be suitable for the types of services and programs described in this RFI? Can you comment on whether the Center should be part of a mixed-use development or a standalone development?
- 15) Should the Center prioritize co-locating all services into one central location? If so, what are the most important factors to be considered when selecting a location? If not, what could a successful model look like with multiple locations and what would the Authority need to consider in exploring a multi-site model, e.g. transportation?

5. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

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> as Addendum.

IT IS THE RESPONDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THIS URL REGULARLY FOR UPDATES.

6. RESPONSE DETAILS (Info Provided to Respondents Regarding Document Submission)

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

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

7. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (from EDA) / **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Respondents may be asked to provide additional information to allow the Authority to better understand the responses or proposed solutions.

8. PROPRIETARY AND/OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Authority reserves the right to copy any information provided by the Respondents. The Authority reserves the right to use ideas that are provided by Respondents, applicants, stakeholders, or vendors. By submitting a Response, the submitter represents that such copying or use of information will not violate any copyrights, licenses, or other agreements with respect to information submitted or product solutions demonstrated, if applicable. Responses must clearly be marked for any information the Respondent deems Proprietary and/or Confidential.

9. DISCLAIMER/NO OBLIGATION

This RFI is not a request for qualification/proposal. It may or may not result in further action.

This RFI is issued solely as a means of gathering information and ideas regarding the Authority's desire to understand strategies to strengthen access to healthy, affordable foods in New Jersey. Interested parties responding to this RFI do so at their own expense. There will be no monetary compensation from the Authority for the time and effort spent in preparing the response to this RFI. All expenses incurred are the sole responsibility of the Respondent.

Should the Authority decide to move forward and issue an RFQ/P or announce a program/product related to this RFI, Respondents need not have submitted a response to this RFI in order to be eligible to respond to the RFP. Should an RFQ/P be issued, responding to this RFI will not affect scoring or consideration for that process.

The Authority is under no obligation to contact Respondents to this RFI.

10. NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Respondents should be aware that responses to this RFI are subject to the “New Jersey Open Public Records Act” (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.), as amended and including all applicable regulations and policies and applicable case law, including the New Jersey Right-to-Know law. All information submitted in response to the RFI is considered public information, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary, except as may be exempted from public disclosure by OPRA and the common law.

Any proprietary and/or confidential information submitted in response to this RFI will be redacted by the Authority. A person or entity submitting a response to this RFI may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to OPRA found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1, when such person or entity has a good faith legal and/or factual basis for such assertion (i.e. information that may be included in another ongoing public procurement or solicitation). The Authority reserves the right to make the determination as to what is proprietary or confidential and will advise the person or entity accordingly. The Authority will not honor any attempt to designate the entirety of a submission as proprietary, confidential and/or to claim copyright protection for the entire proposal. In the event of any challenge to the Respondent’s assertion of confidentiality with which the Authority does not concur, the Respondent shall be solely responsible for defending its designation.