

# ANALYZING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES IN THE NEWARK AREA

Jonathan Teters, Master of Public Policy Candidate  
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

# Overview

- Background on the United Way of Greater Newark
- AFE Projects and Responsibilities
- Education Policy: Low Income School District Funding in New Jersey
- Employment Policy: First Source Ordinances and Training for A Changing Workforce
- Other Research Topics: Food Policy, Small Businesses and Out of School Time Advocacy
- Conclusion and Questions

# Background on the United Way of Greater Newark

- Mission: “To disrupt the cycle of poverty by convening, collaborating and investing in strategies to improve outcomes for children and families.”
- Although invested in various projects in Newark, United Way focuses on three key issue areas:
  - Education - Newark Thrives!, My Very Own Library, Celebrity Read
  - Income – VITA program, financial education
  - Health and Wellness – Believe in a Healthy Newark



United Way  
of Greater Newark

# AFE Projects and Responsibilities

- United Way expressed an interest in getting more involved in policy analysis and advocacy
- Focusing on their three main issue areas, United Way's main assignment was to create policy briefs corresponding with their three issue areas
  - Due to shifting timelines and the impact of the pandemic, I collaborated with United Way leadership on the creation of two of these briefs
  - One brief concerned education finance policy in New Jersey
  - The second focused on economic issues in Newark, particularly the role of employment policy in racial equity
- In addition, I was also tasked with researching additional topics as needed for use in presentations and collaborations with other organizations

# Education Policy



- The original goal of the policy brief was to investigate funding for low-income districts in New Jersey, focusing on opportunities for former-Abbott districts
- In particular, United Way was interested in finding funding opportunities for out of school time (OST) programs in order to support the Newark Thrives! Network
- Reviewing the literature involved looking at major school funding legislation in the last few decades, including the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) of 2008, which replaced the standards for funding established by the decades-spanning Abbott litigation

# Education Policy

- The first recommendation that came from researching school finance was a change in New Jersey's school finance formula itself
- New Jersey's school finance formula, although awarding large sums of money to low income and former Abbott districts, is flawed in the following ways:
  - Inaccurately measures special needs students in districts
  - Disadvantages LEP and at-risk students by using a combination funding category for students who fall under both designations
  - Uses a Geographic Cost Adjustment (GCA) that illogically measures labor markets at the county level
- Addressing these flaws would lead to a more efficient and equitable formula, in addition to fully funding the formula in the future



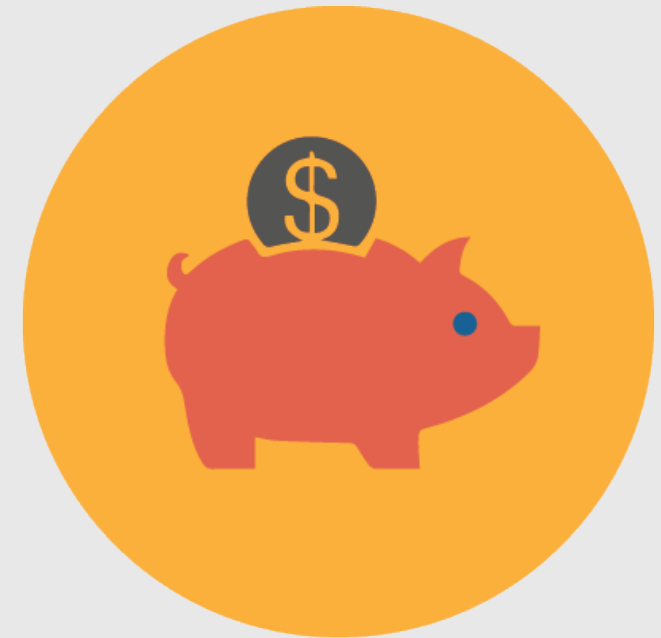


## Education Policy

- Connecting the existing literature to United Way's OST objectives, the brief also included recommendations for supplemental programming to support low income districts like Newark
- Focusing on the achievement gap, the brief discusses the potential to use OST programming to make up for differences in learning between high income and low income students

# Employment Policy

- I was given more freedom to choose the topic of the second brief, but the subject had to relate to Newark's economy and addressing inequality
- Given recent initiatives on Universal Basic Income, the expansion of the EITC and Individual Development Accounts (IDA), United Way leadership expressed a desire to approach asset development from a different perspective
- Employment policy was deemed a relevant area of research and became the focus of the second brief





# Employment Policy

- Several key issues emerged regarding employment policy in Newark:
- Newark residents were not working jobs within the city, meaning local businesses and organizations were not hiring locally
- Newark residents frequently lacked the education and expertise to fill in-demand sectors in Newark
  - This issue was exacerbated by the shift in the employment landscape created by COVID-19
- Newark residents, especially low income residents and people of color, were building assets at a much lower rate than higher income and white residents

An aerial photograph of a city skyline at dusk or dawn. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange. The city buildings are illuminated with warm lights, and some windows are glowing. The foreground shows a mix of residential and commercial buildings, with some trees and a parking lot visible. A large white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and a list of policy recommendations.

# Employment Policy

- Policy recommendations to address these issues included:
- Revising First Source Ordinances to require companies doing business with the city to hire more locals, especially those in populations with worse economic mobility
- Expanding access to trainings through the implementation of stackable credential programs, more informed partnerships with higher education and funding for non-Baccalaureate education
- Encouraging economic development and public works projects to increase job availability

# Additional Topics



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States policies addressing  
food insecurity

The impact of COVID-  
19 on business in New  
Jersey and Newark

Strategies utilized by  
intermediary networks to  
promote greater OST  
funding

# Conclusion

In an attempt to expand its impact, the United Way of Greater Newark looks to understand and disseminate information regarding social policy



As of now, both the education and employment policy briefs are in the process of being reviewed, and may be released to the public to signal the United Way of Greater Newark's policy priorities



QUESTIONS