

EST. JUNE 2007



African American NEW JERSEY

THE STATE OF BLACK NEW JERSEY 2025 ECONOMIC SUMMIT

ACCOUNTABILITY, OPPORTUNITY & EQUITY

MARCH 25 TH 2025



PRINCETON MARRIOTT - FORRESTAL PRINCETON, NJ





THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY **BROWER STUDENT CENTER**

2000 PENNINGTON RD, EWING TOWNSHIP, NJ 08618 9:00 A.M. 5:00 P.M.

The Annual Black Business Expo provides an opportunity to celebrate Juneteenth and support entrepreneurs pursuing their business endeavors.

Expo 2025 will be a dynamic, and educational collaboration featuring over 60 innovative exhibits, matchmaking sessions, interactive AI Technology for your business, breakout sessions, and over 600 attendees, i.e., corporations, state agencies, non-profit organizations, members of the community, and students.



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE **2025 BLACK BUSINESS EXPO**









ELITE SPONSORS







INNOVATOR SPONSORS









VISIONARY SPONSORS







MICHAEL A. BERNSTEIN
President TCNJ (Invited)

REVEREND DR. STEFFIE BARTLEY, SR.,
Northeast Regional Director,
National Action Network (NAN)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER TO BE ANNOUNCED

RESILIENCE IS OUR HERITAGE

EXPO SCHEDULE

Registration Opens, Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Exhibit Hall Opens

9:00 a.m.

Matchmaking Begins Breakout Session 1

11:00 a.m.

Matchmaking Ends

12:00 p.m.

Luncheon, Presidential Address, Gov. Murphy Remarks , Keynote Speaker

12:00 p.m.

Matchmaking Begins Breakout Session 2

2:00 p.m.

Matchmaking Ends

3:30 p.m.

Expo Hall Closes

4:00 p.m.

Networking Reception Starts

4:00 p.m.

Networking Reception Ends

5:00 p.m.

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PROGRAM

REGISTRATION/ GENERAL SESSION/ NETWORKING - BREAKFAST

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

WELCOME

10:00 a.m. - 10:05 a.m.

AACCNJ Video - "We Are Black Wall Street" 2025 John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM, Founder, President & CEO African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ (AACCNJ)

PANEL 1 - NJ DISPARITY STUDY DISCUSSION

10:05 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Moderator - John E. Harmon, Sr, IOM

Panelists.

Dr. Denise Anderson, Ph.D., MPH Director, AACCNJ Board of Directors, CEO Denise Anderson & Associates

Michael Garner, MBA, CCA Chief Business Diversity Officer City-Wide Mayor's Office of M/WBEs, City Hall Robert Johnson, Esq. Secretary, AACCNJ Board of Directors Director and Chief Diversity Officer **Gibbons Law**

SPONSORSHIP RECOGNITION

11:15 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.

Gold Sponsors Remarks - Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ, PSEG Silver Sponsor Vídeo – ABC-NJ Patron Sponsors - United, Ocean First Bank, Ferreira

LUNCH

11:20 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Awards Presentation - Honoring Equity Partners 2025 Awards Recipient - Gibbons Law

12:35 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.

Moderator - John E. Harmon, Sr, IOM

Panelists:

The Honorable Dan Benson Mercer County Executive, NJ

The Honorable Patricia Hendricks Farmer Mayor of Lawrence, NJ

PANEL 2 - COUNTY & MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE PANEL DISCUSSION

The Honorable Doug Palmer Former Mayor, City of Trenton, NJ The Honorable **Shanel Robinson** Somerset County Commissioner, NJ The Honorable Dahlia Vertreese Mayor of Hillside, NJ

PANEL 3 - GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES PANEL DISCUSSION

1:30 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.

Moderator: John Bailey, Principal, Bailey Consulting Network

Panelists:

The Honorable Ras Baraka Mayor, City of Newark, NJ

The Honorable Josh Gottheimer Congressman, NJ 5th District

The Honorable Jon Bramnick

State Senator, NJ Legislature

The Honorable Jack Ciattarelli Former Assemblyman, NJ Legislature

The Honorable Steve Fulop Mayor, City of Jersey City, NJ

The Honorable Sean Spiller Former Mayor, City of Montclair President, NJ Education Association

Bill Spadea Radio Personality The Honorable Steve Sweeney Former State Senate President, NJ Legislature

The Honorable Ed Durr Former State Senator, NJ Legislature

CLOSING REMAARKS

2:55 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

John E. Harmon, Sr, IOM





African American

Accredited State Chamber of Commerce with Distinction

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EST. JUNE 2007



Letter from the **PRESIDENT**



Greetings Friends, Members, and Supporters,

As we close out another successful year, we at the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) pause to say - Thank you.

This year during the month of June, as we mark our 18th year of operation, we have not lost sight of our mission and purpose. Whether it is a networking conversation, hosting an annual event or providing testimony during a debate over critical legislation you can depend on the professionals at the AACCNJ to be prepared and deliberate in their advocacy of New Jersey's 1.2 million black residents and the 88,000 black owned businesses.

Accordingly, this is not the time to pursue your business or professional goals alone. Given the changes in leadership in Washington, and the impending gubernatorial races in New Jersey, we have a shifting landscape at both the state and federal level.

Ironically, these changes have severe implications and there is legitimate cause for concern locally and nationally. However, from a federal perspective the campaign rhetoric by the new administration is being confirmed by deliberate and intentional acts, in essence fulfilling what was forestated.

However, in New Jersey, wherein black support for the party in power has been grossly over indexed year after year, and yet our vote has not delivered fairness, as it relates to policy, or equity from public economic opportunities, across our state.

For example, in the county of Essex, Blacks and Hispanics make up almost 70 percent of the population and receive less than one percent combined contract opportunities.

The aforementioned underscores the importance of our annual State of Black NJ Economic Summit and illustrates why your attendance and continued engagement is critical and appreciated. It is incumbent on everyone that we become more focused and intentional in our collective efforts to ensure there is transparency, and accountability and processes that afford businesses more equitable participation in contract opportunities in our state. The AACCNJ will remain steadfast in its advocacy to bring this to reality in New Jersey.

For too long, blacks have been taking things at face value only to be met with a disappointing apology. We are better than this! To our elected officials and some corporate leaders, let's strive harder this year to improve our state's competitiveness.

We have an annual calendar of activities and programmatic solutions that are designed to introduce our members and supporters to resources, opportunities, and information, please give us an opportunity to serve as your strategic partner for success.

Have a happy, safe, healthy, and prosperous 2025.

Den E Han

John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM Founder, President & CEO African American Chamber of Commerce of N



The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey performs an

essential role in New Jersey's Economy. As affirmed in its mission statement, the Chamber seeks to economically empower and sustain African American communities, facilitating entrepreneurship

and free enterprise activity within the state, with direct outreach programs. Different from acting as simply an association of allied businesses, the Chamber serves as a proactive advocacy group with a 501(c)3 tax exemption, shared by the National Black Chamber of Commerce.



November 23, 2022, The United States Chamber of Commerce awarded the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey with its Accredited State Chamber with Distinction designation for its sound policies, effective organizational procedures, and positive impact on the community.



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

"Chambers of commerce that achieve an Accreditation designation are truly leaders in their industry." said Raymond P. Towle, U.S. Chamber Vice President, Federation Relations and IOM. "This rigorous review includes all aspects of a chamber's policies, operations, and programming. When chambers of commerce earn the distinction of becoming Accredited, it is a mark of excellence for the organization, its staff, and its leadership. Accredited chambers are recognized for their ability to serve as a resource to their region's businesses while maintaining transparent governance practices, sound financial controls, safe work environments, effective communications, and value in programming. They are commended for their continued advocacy of free enterprise, and for their commitment to serving members and their local businesses. Congratulations on this tremendous accomplishment."

IN 2022, THE AACCNJ RECEIVED A **PERFECT SCORE IN COMMUNICATIONS & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT** FROM THE USCC.

In March of 2019, The United States Chamber of Commerce awarded the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) with three stars Accreditation for its sound policies, effective organizational procedures, and positive impact on the community. The Chamber joins the top 3 percent of all chambers in the nation who are Accredited as both the only accredited Chamber in New Jersey and the only African American Chamber in the US Chamber of Commerce federation to hold this distinction. With approximately 7,000 chambers in the U.S., Accreditation with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is a prestigious honor that distinguishes the high quality, expertise, and strong leadership displayed by Accredited state and local chambers of commerce.

On September 13th, the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) led a delegation of our members to Washington, DC for an impactful Reception/Forum hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Executive Leadership Council, and the Congressional Black Caucus.

"We are extremely delighted to share with our supporters members and designation awarded by the United States to the African Chamber of Commerce American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, of its reaccreditation status "State Chamber with Distinction", said John E. Harmon, Sr., Founder, President & CEO. "The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey is the only Accredited Chamber of Commerce or Business organization in our state - what a significant achievement for the dedicated staff of professionals and Board of Directors."







ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) Inc. was established in 2007 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, B2B (business-to-business) organization in Trenton, New Jersey. The Founder, President and CEO of the AACCNJ is: John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM., jharmon@aaccnj.com Telephone (609) 571-1620

Serving more than 900 active members, the AACCNJ has become a central beacon for minority and non-minority advocacy building, community and government relations, business development, job retention, and education attainment. The Chamber serves as a mechanism for communication, program creation, and strategic implementation of initiatives and resolutions that help build New Jersey's economic landscape.

To date, the AACCNJ has advocated on behalf of its members on several capital development and procurement projects to insure inclusion. The AACCNJ is a conduit to:

Bridging gaps between the **underperforming populations** in New Jersey and a vital resource to initiating dialogue leading to strategies that address the state's overall competitiveness.

Free enterprise activity for Women, Veteran and Minority-owned business.

An open line of communication with state and local government officials, and suppliers.



Workforce and development training, job-readiness programs and recruitment services.



Access to resources in making statewide businesses visible in key markets.



Youth mentorship and entrepreneurial programs.

AACCNJ LOCATIONS

Berkeley College, 536 Broad Street Newark, NJ 07102

Columbia Bank, 905 Broad Street Newark, NJ 07102 379 West State Street Trenton, New Jersey, 08618 (Headquarters) Mill One, 1 North Johnson Avenue Hamilton, NJ 08609

Carnegie Center Building 35 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Atlantic City, NJ 08401



ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS





The New Jersey Disparity Study results, released January 2024, revealed that Black-owned businesses received **1%** or less of state contracts in all industries between fiscal years **2015-2020**. For construction, Black-owned businesses received approximately **\$3.3 million** compared to White-male-owned businesses **\$10.8 billion**. Further, Black-owned businesses received **\$13.7 million** for professional services, compared to White-male-owned businesses **\$3.4 billion**. In response, AACCNJ formed the Disparity Study Task Force Committee to identify real solutions for the Murphy Administration to put in place to address the inequalities in business opportunity and prosperity in the state of New Jersey.



The AACCNJ earned two Bronze Awards in 2024, Winning Show EP 411 "2023 Expo Special" 11/4/2024



The AACCNJ implemented and continued the expansion of several programs and initiatives with the state of NJ.

- Department of Corrections Returning Citizens
- Department of Labor Transformation Project
- Small Business Bonding Programs
- Renewal and expansion of Pathways to Recovery from Mercer County only to Central Region – Oct. 2024
- New program- SNAP Navigator (Mercer County)- Oct. 24
- Inaugural Youth Leadership Summit brought together more than 200 students from high schools across NJ to empower and inspire the next generation of leaders. Mayor Ras Baraka delivered the keynote address

We led a contingency of our President Club Members to a "Free Enterprise, Renewing Growth & Expanding Opportunity" Showcase in Washington DC, in collaboration with the USCC, ELC and Congressional Black Caucus.

AACCNJ engaged Gibbons P.C. to serve as its Government and Regulatory Affairs counsel. Gibbons will counsel the AACCNJ in advocating on behalf of our members; the objective is to represent the AACCNJ on legislative, regulatory, and/or governmental processes affecting Black communities and Black-owned businesses in New Jersey.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

John Harmon installed as a member - One Hundred Black Men of New York, Jan. 2025 John Harmon, release autobiography "Power Moves", January, 2025 Gary Mann confirmed as Chairman of the Board of Directors, AACCNJ Tammeisha Smith confirmed as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors
Tanva Freeman confirmed as Chair of the New York State Black Business Alliance

STAFF RECOGNITION

Jacqueline Baptiste, ROI NJ Influencers - People of Color 2024
Jacqueline Baptiste, ROI NJ Top Women in Business 2024
Carmen Gates, awarded Community Connector, Capital Area YMCA, February 2024
Carmen Gates, promoted to V.P. Community Development & External Affairs Officer, October 2024
Vivian Harmon, promoted to Executive Director, Training and Development Institute, October 2024
Mary Griffin received SDDC 2024, Distinguished Service Award, October 2024
Vivian Harmon - Graduate of Non-Profit Connect- Board-Connect Program, May 2024

ALL MEMBER BENEFITS

- Radio Show
- Membership Spotlight
- Monthly members only virtual call with the President
- Member Events Posted on Website Free promotion of events, ribbon cuttings and services
- Complimentary Regional networking at AACCNJ events
- Dual membership with the US Chamber of Commerce
- Trade specific Roundtables
- Quarterly meetings
- Annual meeting
- Meeting With A Member of Membership Acquisition Team
- Assistance with MBE/MWBE/SBE/DBE Certifications
- Member Resume Portal
- Q&A opportunities with state and local officials and corporate representatives
- Pro Bono Alliance Pro bono legal services *Annual revenues of \$500,000 or less.
- · Ability to post jobs
- Access to RFP opportunities
- Opportunity for referrals and resources for potential opportunities
- Access to members only, promotions and discounts
- Complimentary website development
- Complimentary monthly ROI reports

MEMBERS LV2 - LV5 (\$2,500-\$7,500)

- Spotlight in Magazines
- Guest on RVN TV
- Priority Scheduling as a Quarterly meeting Presenter
- Priority Scheduling as panelist for AACCNI events
- Standalone social media promos

MEMBERS LV6 - LV9 PLUS PRESIDENT'S CLUB (\$10K AND ABOVE)

- Pathway to Success TV appearance
- President club Roundtable Participation
- Unlimited promo shares on social media
- Company name and logo on AACCNJ website
- Recognition at the AACCNJ Annual meeting
- Supplier Chain Diversity
- High level networking and access to unique opportunities
- President club breakfast during BLC
- Support on Legislative and Public Policy matters



































































































































































































BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMITTEES & STAFF OVERVIEW



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr. Denise Anderson, Ph.D.,MPH CEO Denise Anderson & Associates



Racheal Ankrah-Fosu
Chief Technology Advisor
The Galileo PreSchools
Busy Place Early Learning Center, KIDFIN



William Bowie
President & CEO
Empower Construction



Faye Coleman CEO PG Health, LLC



Deborah J. Frazier Wealth Management Advisor LRG Wealth, Advisors/Hightower



Hosea Johnson *Emeritus Board Member President & CEO, Johnson Associates Systems, Inc.



Alton Shaw Vice President of Operations PRWT



Raymond K. Jones
President
We See You, LLC



Dr. Funke Olayinka, MD Owner Nothing Bundt Cake, Wayne, NJ Founder and CEO, GHIT Consulting INC.



Will Smith
Vice President
Corporate Shared Services
South Jersey Industries (SJI)



Robert D. Warrington, Esq. Founding Partner, Dawkins & Warrington Law Group LLC



Thomas Webster Chief Executive Advisor 2020 Business Advisors

COMMUNITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



John E Harmon, Sr., IOM Founder, President & CEO AACCNJ



Schnearia Ashley Senior Vice President Truist Commercial Banking



David Deibert Regional Vice President Enterprise Rental Car



Carin Hep
Assistant Vice President, Small Group & Individual Broker Channel
Sales, Delta Dental of New Jersey, Inc.
Delta Dental of Connecticut, Inc.



Stacey Kavanagh Vice President Market Manager Provident Bank



Viviana LammCEO
Risk Strategy Solutions



Wendy Lanski Director, Enterprise Vendor Management & Operations Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ



Erik Larsen Team Leader C&I Northfield Bank



Bill Stephney Principal Executive Broad Market Media



Jackie P. Taylor Partner/Principal, US Alliance & Ecosystems Leader Public Sector, EY



Ralph D. Weaver Founder & CEO East West Connections



Lawrence Wooten Senior Manager, Supplier Diversity American Water

MEMBERSHIP





Barbara Stubbs CEO, Business Promotion Ideas, Inc.

Brigitte Nazali President & Owner African American

Cynthia Cotton Director & CEO Professional Human



Dr. Denise Anderson, Founder & CEO, Denise Anderson & Associates (DA&A) LLC



Edward Funches President Inclusion Marketing & Advertising Group, Inc.



Nadine Brown, CEO, N&R Divine Cleaning Services LLC



Rahman Karriem Chief Operating Officer Kente Gold Build dba Falkbuilt - Morristown



Takeerah Jones

CEO

Busy Bees
Learning Center LLC





Dr. Denise Anderson, Founder & CEO, Denise Anderson & Associates (DA&A) LLC



Tasha Youngblood Brown, MBA, CISA

Managing Director

DISPARITY STUDY

TASK FORCE



Marcus Dyer, CPA, JD, Treasurer, AACCNJ WithumSmith+Brown, PC



Tanya Freeman, Esq. Chair, NY State Black Business Alliance (NYSBBA) and Managing Partner Family Law Practice Group



John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM Founder, President, & CEO, AACCNJ



Robert Johnson, Esq. Secretary, AACCNJ Chief Diversity Officer, Gibbons Law



Gary Mann Chairman, AACCNJ CEO, Jasfel Analytics



Monique Nelson, Executive Chair, UniWorld Group (UWG)



Tammeisha Smith Vice Chair, AACCNJ CEO, Dunbar Center, Inc.



Robert Warrington, Esq. Former Vice-Chair, AACCNJ Founding Partner, Dawkins & Warrington Law Group, LLC





AACCNJ STAFF



John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM Founder, President & CEO



Jacqueline Baptiste
Executive Advisor to President & CEO
& Brand Ambassador



Mary Griffin, PMP, IOM Vice President of Membership Retention & Programs



Nicole Baptiste, IOM
Vice President, Membership
Acquisition. & Financial Management



Carmen Gates
Vice President of Community
Development and External
Affairs Officer



Bydeia Harmon
Community
Development Officer



Vivian Harmon
Executive Director
Training & Development Institute



Breanna Riddick NYSBBA Membership and Special Projects Manager



Demetra AlstonOutreach Coordinator
Training & Development Institute



Paris Jefferson, BSW

Case Manager

Training & Development Institute



Nyanpu Kerkulah Case Manager Training & Development Institute

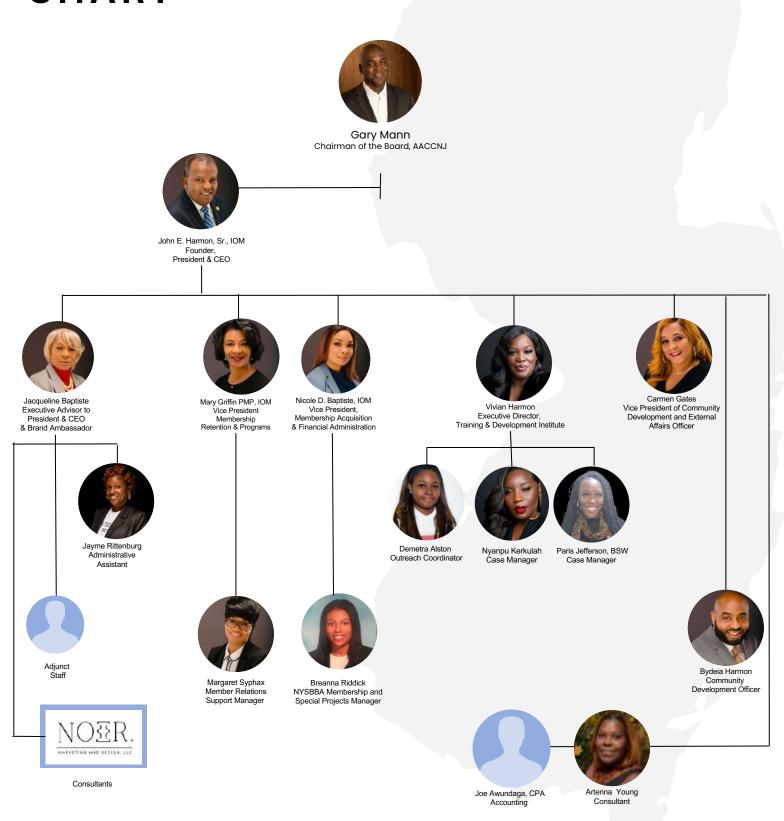


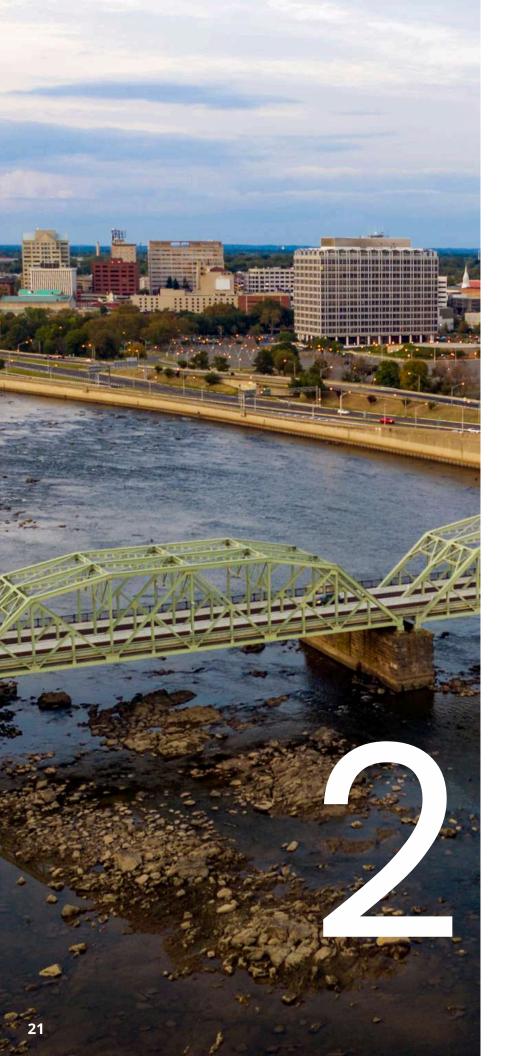
Jayme Rittenburg Administrative Assistant



Margaret Syphax Member Relations Support Manager

ORGANIZATIONAL **CHART**







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AACCNJ ANNUAL REPORT

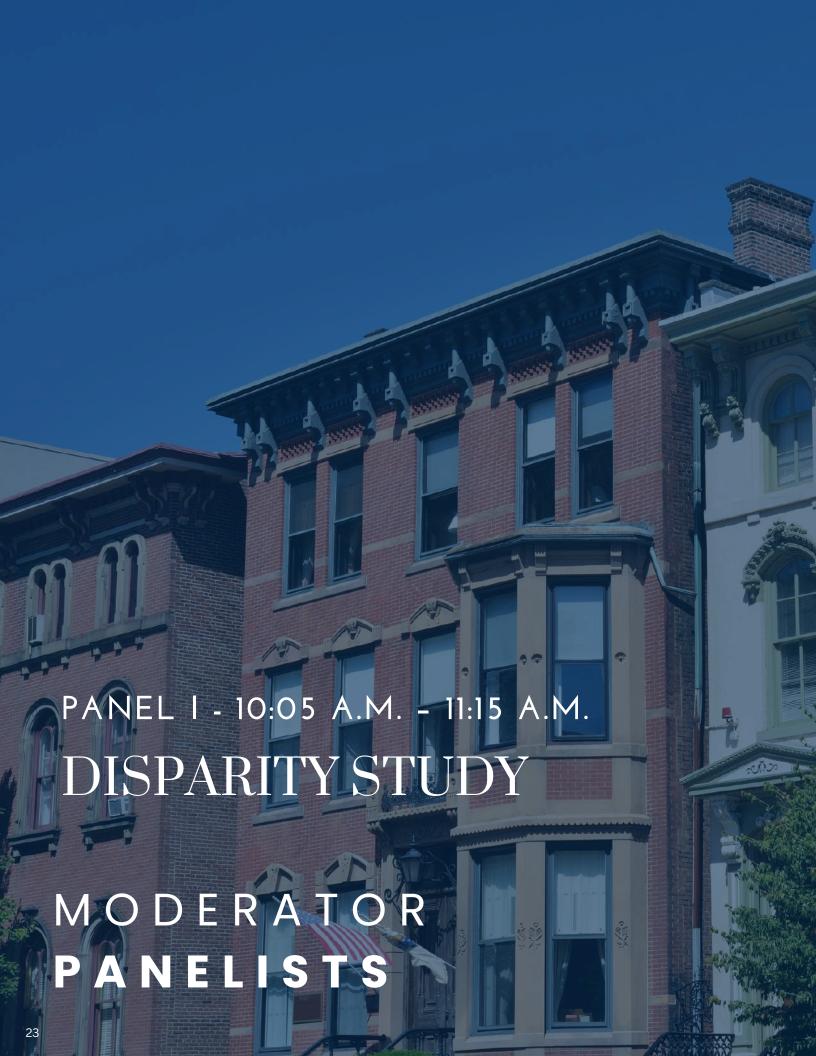
A SUMMARY OF ALL AACCNJ 2024 PROGRAMS, LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS, INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACCOUNTABILITY & RECIPROCITY



SCAN TO READ A DIGITAL COPY OF THE AACCNJ 2024 ANNUAL REPORT







EST. JUNE 2007





JOHN E. HARMON, SR., IOM Founder, President & CEO, AACCNJ

In 1997, as a small businessperson, John E. Harmon, Sr. was an early member of the Metropolitan Trenton African American Chamber of Commerce (MTAACC), becoming its president, two years later. Under his guidance, MTAACC grew its membership, forged alliances with business associations/organizations and government, and forged strategic partnerships in the public and private sectors to benefit African American businesses throughout New Jersey. Harmon recognized the growing need for a statewide organization that could align both government and business interests to advocate for New Jersey's Black entrepreneurs and their communities. That led him to establish the AACCNJ – which is heralded as the leading voice for business development and economic empowerment for New Jersey's Black owned businesses.

Harmon has served as the Founder, President, and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ), since 2007. In this role he has the responsibility of establishing, implementing, and executing the mission, as well as the fiduciary oversight and governance of AACCNJ in accordance with its Bylaws. In addition, he works to identify strategic partnerships in both the public and private sector to connect AACCNJ members and supporters to resources and opportunities to grow and sustain their goals and objectives. Moreover, Harmon serves as an advocate on behalf of the 1.2 million African American residents and the over 88,000 Black owned businesses statewide to ensure that policy at the municipal, county, and federal level provides fairness, equity and access to a level playing field in the marketplace. Harmon hosts the Gold Telly Award winning - AACCNJ monthly television show "Pathway to Success" as well as the Chamber's weekly radio show "The Empowerment Hour."

Prior to his twenty-seven-year career as a chamber executive, Mr. Harmon was previously employed at The Bowery Savings Bank (now part of Capital One Bank) in New York City where he managed the bank's Residential Real Estate Department overlooking major mortgage loan transactions; and at Chemical Bank where he managed third party loan originations for New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. While working at Chemical Bank, Mr. Harmon established The Affordable Housing Loan Program. Following his banking career, Mr. Harmon founded a transportation company in 1989, called Harmon Transfer, Corp. The company transported dry goods, perishable commodities, and produce throughout the Northeast United States and Canada.

Harmon is the Former Chairman of the Board for the National Black Chamber of Commerce; there are 50 Affiliate Chapters of the NBCC and over fifteen international affiliates. Harmon is a member of the US Chamber of Commerce – Board of Directors, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia's Economic Community Advisory Council (ECAC), Hackensack Meridian Health Board of Directors, Jersey Central Power & Light and Hermann Transportation. Harmon is also a Board Member of Digital Place Based

Advertising Association and is a member of the US Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100.

He is the Founder CEO & Chairman of the New York State Black Business Alliance, Inc. (NYSBBA), and was pinned as a new member of the 100 Black Men of NY in January of 2025. Additionally, Mr. Harmon is a Board member of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce (NJCC), New Jersey BPU, Supplier Diversity Development Council (SDDC), Opportunity New Jersey, Better Choices, Better Care NJ, Chairman of Crime Stoppers of Greater Trenton. He is a former Board Member of Fairleigh Dickinson University, Investors Bank, American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), First Book, and Minding Our Business (MOB), a youth entrepreneurial initiative in affiliation with Rider University.

Harmon was awarded in 2024 with the National Association of Corporate Directors Awards non- profit governance award. NJ Biz Power 100 List for 2024, 2023, 2022 and in 2018 to its Power 10 list. Harmon was acknowledged in 2021 and 2022 by ROI-NJ, for two consecutive years as the Number 1 Person of Color in NI and was recognized in ROI-NI "People of Color Influencers" for 2023 and 2018. Harmon was recognized as one of the NJ Business Hall of Fame Class of 2021 Laureates on December 9 th, 2021. In 2021, for the third consecutive year, Harmon was acknowledged in South Jersey Journal's list of the "Twenty-five Most Influential African Americans in New Jersey. Harmon was honored by NJBIA as the Executive of the Year in October of 2022, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra at their Spring Gala in May of 2022. Harmon is also recognized as a Center of Influence (COI) for the United States Army and was selected as a participant in the Joint Civilian Orientation 2018 Conference (JCOC) hosted by the Secretary of Defense. The JCOC program is the oldest and most prestigious public liaison program in the Department of Defense. Harmon was selected as one of 40 individuals (out of 230 applicants) to attend JCOC 18. In addition, Harmon was the only attendee from the State of New Jersey to participate in the conference. Harmon was the first individual selected as a member of the host committee for NFL Super Bowl XLVII held in NJ in 2014.

John E. Harmon, Sr., IOM, ABA, BA, ABA, h.c., BS, L.H.D. h.c. holds an associate degree in Business Administration from Mercer County Community College and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1983. Shortly before graduating in 1983, Harmon received a call from FDU's career development office encouraging him to apply for a management training program for future bank presidents. Of 150 candidates, he was one of only 12 chosen – and the only African American. Mr. Harmon also successfully completed a one-year Fellowship on Regionalism and Sustainability sponsored by The Ford Foundation and completed the Minority Business Management Seminar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in 2009. Additionally, Mr. Harmon completed a four-year Chamber Executive Management Program, at Villanova University, sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in 2014. Harmon was conferred with an honorary Associates Degree in Business Administration from Rowan College Burlington County, in 2014. Harmon was awarded a honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.), honoris causa, from Fairleigh Dickinson University in May of 2022.

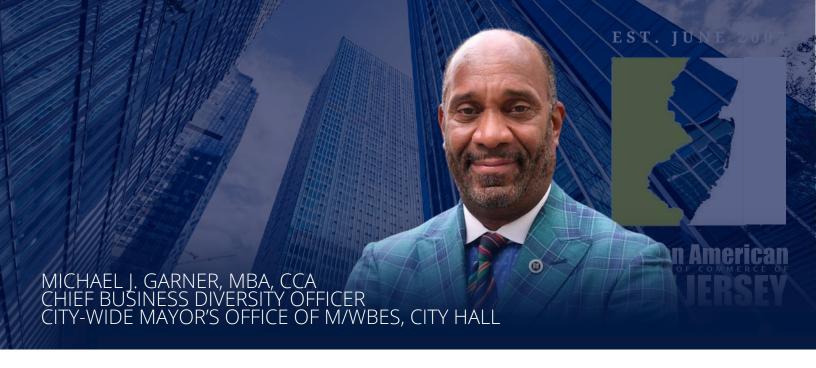
Harmon was bestowed with an honorary degree of Doctor of Business Administration. from Georgian Court University, Lakewood, NJ in 2024. Harmon grew up in a large, working-class family in Trenton, NJ. His father operated his own trucking business; his mother was a factory worker. In high school, Harmon studied auto mechanics and aspired to one day running his own business like his father. Harmon is an avid sports fan, as a young man he played on the local baseball team. Today he enjoys golfing. He has three sons, John Jr., Joshua, and Justin. He is a member of Higher Ground Interdenominational Church, in Ewing, NJ. Harmon released a book in 2025 - Power Moves: The Life and Legacy of a Black Chamber Executive.





Dr. Denise Anderson holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Ecology with a concentration in Dietetics obtained from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. In 2002 (until 2013), she became a Registered Dietitian and received her Master's in Public Health from Rutgers University, School of Public Health. She completed her doctorate in a joint (Rutgers and NJIT) Ph.D. program in Urban Systems - Health Track. Dr. Anderson is a National Center for Quality Assurance (NCQA), Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), Certified Content Expert (CCE). She is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Public Health Prevention Specialist (PHPS) fellow, and Eagleton Institute of Politics fellow (New Jersey State Legislature). Dr. Anderson is the founder and CEO of Denise Anderson & Associates (DA&A), LLC, an independent public health and healthcare consultancy leader offering tailor-made and comprehensive solutions in organizational capacity development, curriculum design and facilitation, and research. DA&A, as a firm that has been capitalizing on the power of healthcare and public health expertise for over two decades – offers expertise as thought partners to help organizations transform, allowing clients to realize impactful datadriven decision-making and increased profits. Dr. Anderson is a board member of the Northern New Jersey American Red Cross, where she serves as the Co-Chair of

the Regional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee. Moreover, she serves as President- Elect for the New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) and is a board member of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ), where she serves as Co-Chair of the Disparity Study Task Force committee



Michael J. Garner, MBA, was appointed New York City's first Citywide Chief Business Diversity Officer by Mayor Eric Adams on February 16, 2023. Mr. Garner formerly served as Chief Diversity & Diversity & Samp; Inclusion Officer at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), State of New York. His tenure at the MTA spanned 14 years from February 2009- through February 2023. He is a diversity champion, making it his personal and professional mission to create a more diverse business environment wherever he's been. By changing New York City's/New York State's Legislative Laws and creating new innovative MWDBE/SDVOB programming, Mr. Garner and his teams at the City of New York, the MTA and the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), have been responsible for more than \$30 billion in contracts and payments to New York State/City Minority and Women-owned Businesses. In addition, during his tenure at the MTA, he and his team increased the hiring of Blacks, Hispanics and Asians by 20%, across the MTA's six different operating agencies.





Mr. Johnson—a corporate attorney focusing on mergers and acquisitions, and a former Assistant Counsel to the Governor of New Jersey from 2010 to 2012—relies on his corporate training and experience to inform his comprehensive corporate practice. Helping business clients expand their markets and establish significant presence throughout the region, Mr. Johnson represents public and private companies, commercial banks, and governmental agencies in connection with mergers and acquisitions, stock and asset purchase transactions, securities regulations, corporate governance matters, credit facilities, public finance, contract drafting, cross-border transactions, and general corporate matters. He also has represented clients in negotiations with the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance for specific exemptions and obtaining certain licenses.

In keeping with his service to the state of New Jersey, he handles private placements matters for the New Jersey Division of Investment, and he is assisting firm client Rowan University in its complex, high-profile acquisition of the School of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.



African American
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF
NEW JERSEY

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Dan Benson grew up in Mercer County's Hamilton Township and went on to receive his Bachelor's degree from Georgetown University, where he studied physics and government, before returning to New Jersey and earning his Master's in Public Policy from Rutgers' Bloustein School. At 25, he was elected to the Hamilton Township Council in 2001, followed by his election to the Mercer County Board of Commissioners in 2008. Dan was elected to the NJ Assembly in 2011, and over twelve years as a legislator he was a prime sponsor on nearly 400 bills signed into law. In 2023 Dan was elected the first new Mercer County Executive in two decades, pledging to bring a new spirit of collaboration, innovation, and transparency to county government. Dan continues to live in Hamilton Township where he and his wife, Dr. Hande Benson, are raising their son Nicholas.



Patricia Hendricks Farmer is a lifelong resident of Lawrence Township. Her family moved to Lawrence in the late 1930's. She is the daughter of Theodore "Buck" Hendricks a WWII Veteran and Angelina Hendricks Verdejo who moved from Puerto Rico in the early 1950s. Patricia is the first Latina mayor of Lawrence Township. She resides in the Historic African American community of Eggerts Crossing and Eldridge Park. A graduate of Temple University, with a BA in Communications, Journalism and Public Relations, she attended Lawrence High School and Mercer County Performing Arts School, and St. Ann's school. Active in the following volunteer organizations, Eggerts Crossing Civic League, First Vice President, which is celebrating 75 years of service to the residents of Lawrence Township this year, Lawrence Neighbors Together an educational and advocacy group for Lawrence residents, Lawrence Township Historical Society, and she is the past president of the Lawrence Township School Board. She is raising her son who attends Lawrence High School and is married to Robert.



Palmer was born in Trenton and attended Trenton public schools. He then graduated from the Bordentown Military Institute in Bordentown, New Jersey. He is a graduate of Virginia's private historically black college Hampton University, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management in 1973. Doug is also a member of Groove Phi Groove fellowship. He took office as mayor of Trenton on July 1, 1990, having defeated former city council president and mayor Carmen Armenti.[1] Palmer helped to initiate the Trenton Office of Policy Studies, now the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy,[2] at Thomas Edison State University a unique think tank under the executive directorship of John P. Thurber, representing a partnership among the Mayor's Office, the University, and foundations to provide high quality focused research to the administration of a small city.

Palmer assembled a talented cabinet, including William Bill Watson as Chief of Staff, Alan Mallach as Director of Housing and Urban Development,[3] and Elizabeth Johnson as Director of Recreation, Natural Resources, and Culture.

Palmer was a member of the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition,[4] a bipartisan group with a stated goal of "making the public safer by getting illegal guns off the streets." The Coalition is co-chaired by Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Palmer announced at a press conference December 7, 2009, that he would not seek a sixth term as mayor of Trenton.



Veteran, U.S. Air Force Reserves, Avionics Specialist; three children, three grandchildren. Professional: Former Borough Administrator, Roselle, NJ. Education: Bachelor of Arts, Labor Studies and Employee Relations, Rutgers University-New Brunswick; Minister of Dance-School of Dance (Theology), Eagles International Training Institute, Frisco, Texas; attended Southern University A&M College, inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma (Physics Honor Society).

AWARDS/RECOGNITION: Named to InsiderNJ.com's 2019 African American Political Power List; Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award, First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, 2019; New Brunswick Area NAACP Political Action Award, 2018; Hidden Physicist (featured in Radiations magazine), Fall 2015; Community Service Award, Remarkable Women Awards, 2014; Eleanor Roosevelt Award, Somerset County Federation of Democratic Women, 2012; Excellence Award, Leadership Development Team, Saint Peter's Healthcare System, 2010; Appreciation Award, Franklin Warriors Parents Club, 2008-2011; Diamond Award, NJ Conference Women Missionary Society, 2019; Service Award for Global Impact, P.E.A.R.L.S., Inc., 2019; Public Service Award, New Jersey Federation of Democratic Women, 2019; Perth Amboy NAACP Military Service Award, 2019; Business Woman of the Year Finalist, BWNICE Somerset Chapter, 2019; Political Citation Award, Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. (Epsilon Alpha Chapter), 2019.



Mayor Dahlia Vertreese brings a strong background in public service and government to the Township of Hillside.

Mayor Vertreese has been a lifelong public servant. The child of a police officer and nurse, she was raised to become well informed of challenges and meet the needs of her community. Mayor Vertreese began her professional career in 2001 as a Labor and Employment Paralegal with Wal- Mart Stores, Inc. and subsequently with Grotta, Glassman, and Hoffman PC, before taking a position as Labor Relations Specialist for the Newark Public Schools.

Mayor Vertreese then transitioned to the classroom, teaching AP US-History/European, Sociology, Holocaust and Genocide as well as, homework center coordinator and literacy classes on Saturday mornings. Mayor Vertreese began her local public service after completing the AFL-CIO Labor Candidate School in 2015, which led to a position on the Hillside Board of Education, where she ultimately served as Board President.

While serving on the Board of Education, she engaged in a door-to-door grassroots campaign to become Mayor. Since taking office in January of 2018, Mayor Vertreese has unselfishly served the residents of Hillside. A few of her accomplishments include:

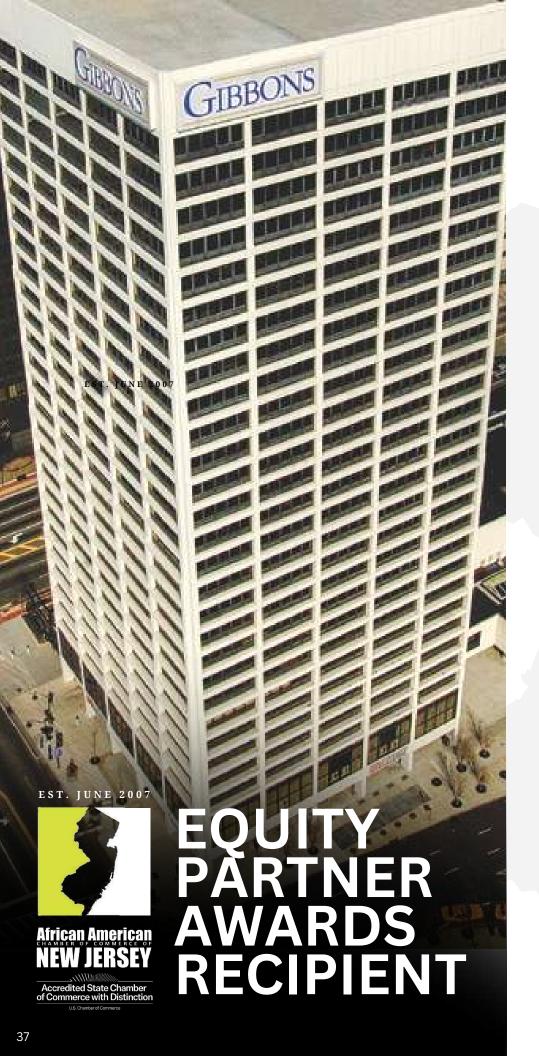
- Successfully relaunching the local public access channel TV-35
- The purchase of a new Senior Services Transportation Bus and a Street Sweeper
- Launching the Township's first Breast Cancer Walk that raised over \$40,000
- Attainment of an A-1 Bond rating, which opens doors for economic development
- The Township's designation as an Opportunity Zone Designation; and,
- Collaboration with Bloomfield College to create the "Hillside College Partner," a Mayoral Scholarship that provides full four-year scholarships to qualified Hillside High School seniors.

A believer in transparency, in March 2019, she presented the first "State of the Town" address in 16 years. Mayor Vertreese continued her efforts to inform the public by conducting Ward specific town halls and engages residents with her "Mayor on the Block" series. A staunch advocate for small businesses, she constantly promotes the Hillside Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Vertreese's work in the labor industry is a testament to her intellect, commitment to working families and grounded approach to advocate for and promote good government. As an organizer and Labor Relations Specialist with Local 68 of the International Union of Operating Engineers, her day-to-day duties include managing grievances and arbitration with Business Agents who represent over 7,000 members throughout the State of New Jersey.

Mayor Vertreese is an active member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. She currently serves on the New Jersey Labor Advisory Council and is a member of the Union County Central Labor Council and the Essex West Hudson Labor Council. Mayor Vertreese is a member of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Newark and is a graduate of the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and History and a Master of Arts in Sociology. Mayor Vertreese is married to Derek and together they are the proud parents of three sons.







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GIBBONS

With offices in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Washington, DC, and Florida, Gibbons has been recognized nationally and regionally for its work. Among the firm's many honors, the New Jersey Law Journal has featured Gibbons in its "Litigation Practice of the Year" program five times, in the labor and employment, class action, products liability, and commercial litigation categories and with the overall "General Litigation Practice of the Year" designation. The firm has been certified as a great workplace by the independent analysts at the Great Place to Work® organization.

The firm's multidisciplinary strengths span practice groups that include Business & Commercial Litigation, Corporate, Employment & Labor Law, Environmental, Financial Restructuring & Creditors' Rights, Government & Regulatory Affairs, Intellectual Property, Products Liability, Real Property, White Collar & Investigations, and Alternative Dispute Resolution. Our attorneys consider all matters opportunities for partnership between Gibbons and our clients. We have established numerous firm-wide client service platforms to reinforce our commitment to these relationships, addressing accessibility, alternative fee arrangements, and knowledge management and thought leadership resources, including custom research and news alerts, complimentary educational seminars, and various blogs and newsletters.

In addition, Gibbons has designed, launched, and cultivated service platforms and campaigns that expand the firm's vision and mission beyond the delivery of legal services, to reinforce the firm's commitments to its employees and to the communities in which it operates. For example:

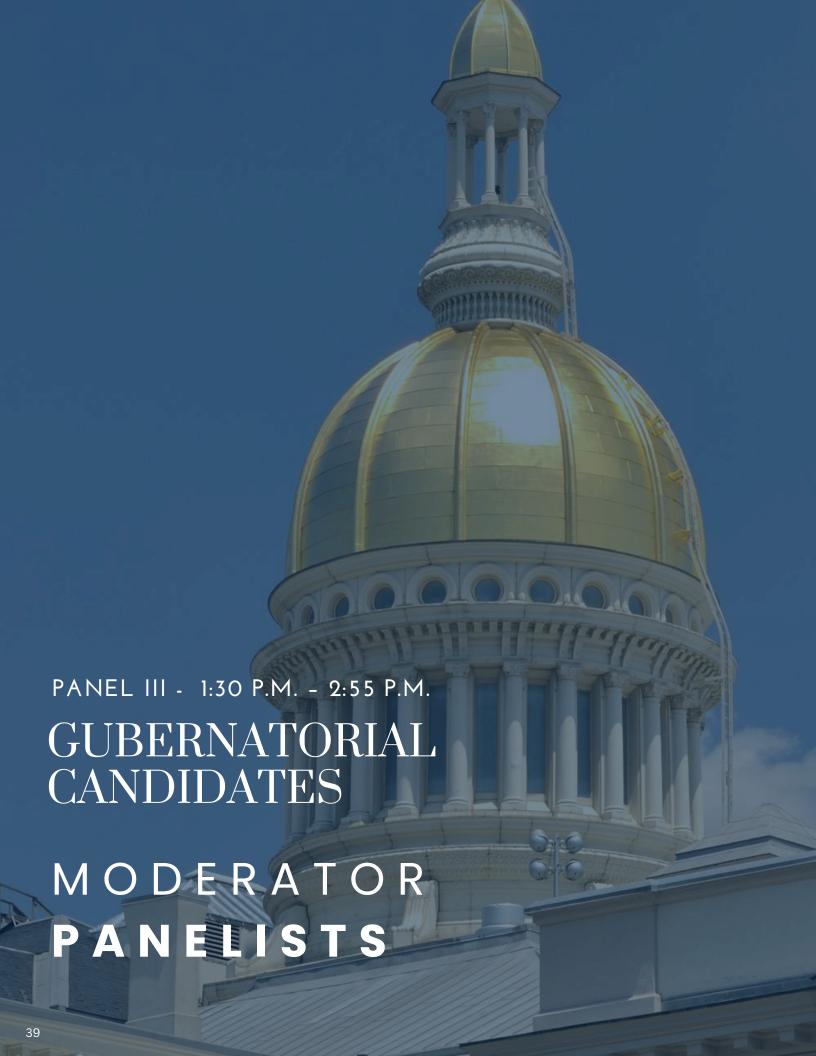
Through the Gibbons Cares and Pro Bono Platforms, the firm donates financial resources, volunteer service, and pro bono legal representation within our communities. The award-winning Gibbons Women's Initiative provides opportunities for firm attorneys and clients to engage together in educational and social programs that foster mentoring, networking, and business development. The Gibbons Diversity Initiative, which promotes inclusion at the firm and throughout the legal and business communities, comprises both internal and external components and involves all aspects of the firm's operation. And, throughout its 35-year history, the John J. Gibbons Fellowship in Public Interest & Constitutional Law has litigated some of the most significant legal issues of our time, from the death penalty and same-sex marriage to equal funding for education and the rights of pregnant women, juvenile defendants, persons with AIDS, immigrants and prison inmates, and others.

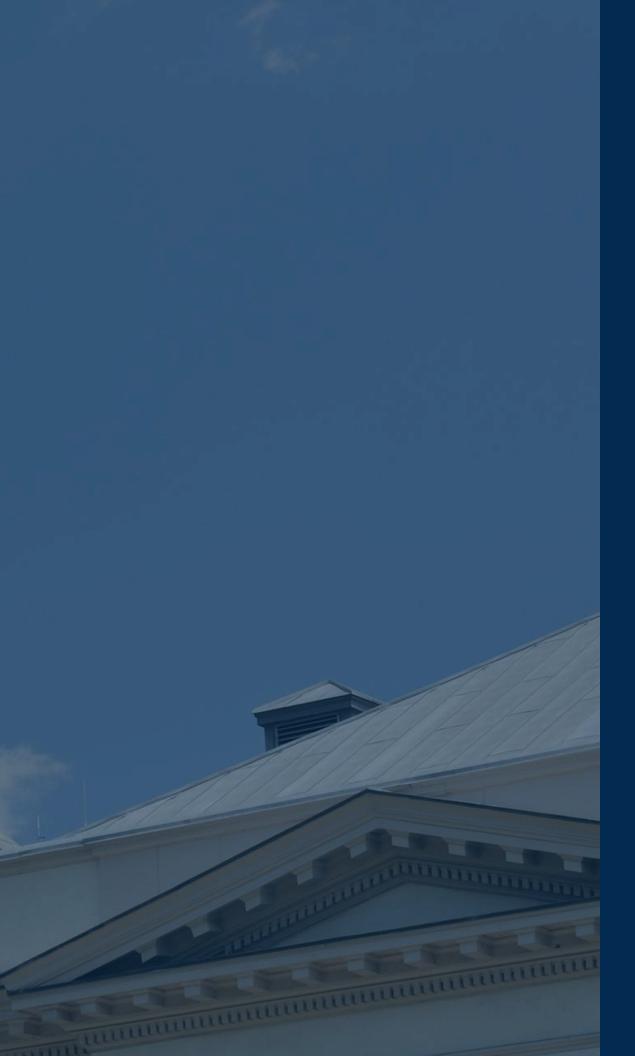
Gibbons is honored to be recognized with an Equity Partner Award from the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey and is proud to support the AACCNJ.

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COMPANY OVERVI





EST. JUNE 2007



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John T. Bailey was born and raised in Danville, Virginia. He attended public schools in Princeton, New Jersey and graduated from South Brunswick High School in Monmouth Junction, New Jersey. After graduation, Bailey attended Wagner College on an athletic scholarship. John Bailey entered the 1971 ABA Special Circumstances Basketball Draft and was assigned to the Virginia Squires. In 1973 was a community organizer and eventually became the Executive Director of the Princeton Youth Center.

In 1976, John moved his family to Denver where he became the head of the CU student government and played a significant role in a number of other national and local campaigns as a political consultant. In addition, he knows firsthand the world of a small business owner. For several years John was the President and owner of a small sportswear business and currently owns The Bailey Consulting Network, a community consulting business emphasizing organizational outreach development for corporate, political, and community programs. John also knows youth. His commitment and guidance to Joint Effort Youth Foundation, (a youth development sports and education program) he founded for Colorado and Denver metro youth, is known throughout the state and nation for its positive impact on young people and studentathletes. John has assisted over 3,000 young people secure scholarships and/or financial support to college.

Over the past 40 years, his outstanding community service involvement has included volunteering for the YMCA, numerous city programs and recreation centers (Glenarm, St. Charles, Skyland, Montbello, Cook Park, La Alma, Ford Warren Library, Five Points Business Association, Groff/Tanner Community Office, Urban League, Daddy Bruce, Regular Fellows Social Club, etc). In addition, he has been devoted to scores of youth programs and activities as well as supporting the efforts of many other neighborhood groups, churches, sororities, fraternities, and organizations which provide direct services to youth, seniors, and families in metro Denver's diverse communities.

John has been very influential in the Denver community and has a knack for asking the hard questions. His hard work-no nonsense attitude, his problems solving and organizational skills as well as his sense of humor have gained him high respect from all sectors of the Denver and national communities. In1991, John was instrumental in President George Bush's community development, anti-gang/anti-drug program known as Weed and Seed. In 1993, he served as one of President Clinton's liaisons for community relations and as a result was a key architect in helping communities across the country, including Denver, develop strategies to combat gang violence and juvenile drug use, as well as creating Safe Havens for community programs and citizens.

John Bailey is the Principal for the Bailey Consulting Network, a grassroots company providing corporate-community engagement, community development strategies as well as political campaign support. He is also the guiding force of the Colorado Black Round Table (CBRT), one of Colorado's major Black Community Organizations whose purpose and mission is to provide advocacy, information and programs for African American Colorado citizens. In addition, John is the Lead Convener of the Black Economic Opportunities Council(BEOC), whose mission is to bring corporate Colorado and the Black Business community together and the Director of the Black Cannabis Equity Initiative, which focuses on social equity in the Colorado cannabis landscape.



Ras J. Baraka is the 40th Mayor of the City of Newark. A native of Newark, whose family has lived in the City for more than 80 years, Mayor Baraka's progressive approach to governing has won him accolades from grassroots organizations to the White House. With a forward-thinking agenda that reduced crime to its lowest levels in five decades, addressed affordability while maintaining steady growth, lowered unemployment, returned local control of schools after more than two decades, and replaced all 23,000 known lead service lines in less than three years at no cost to residents, Baraka has defied expectations since taking office in 2014.

Mayor Baraka's futurist agenda has included the implementation of a groundbreaking partnership called Hire. Buy. Live. Newark, a program that marks the first time that any US city has sought to transform its economy by combining employment, procurement, and residential strategies.

As part of his commitment to strengthen Newark's position in the expanded technology space, the City launched LinkNWK (pronounced Link Newark). This communications network of sidewalk kiosks provides Newark residents and visitors with free, gigabit Wi-Fi, mobile device charging, phone calls to anywhere in the U.S., access to municipal services, maps and directions, and real-time local information on city streets at no cost to taxpayers or users. Additionally, broadband and Wi-Fi have been extended to city parks and recreation centers, and the City seeks to ensure that every resident has access to free or very low-cost broadband to bridge the digital divide.

Mayor Baraka is recognized nationally as a thought leader in the space of urban revitalization, and his commitment to reducing crime in Newark, reimagining public safety, tackling the city's housing crisis, and developing innovative and community-driven approaches to eliminating income inequality has solidified his status as one of the country's most progressive elected officials.

While serving as the Mayor of Newark, he also presides as the President of NJ Urban Mayors Association; Executive Board Member for NJ League of Municipalities; Co-Chair, National League of Cities Reimagining Public Safety Task Force; U.S. Conference of Mayors- Vice Chair for Ports, Transportation and Communications Committee; and Member, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Local Government Advisory Committee.

Mayor Baraka was educated in the Newark Public Schools. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and History from Howard University in Washington, D.C. and a Master's Degree in Education Supervision from St. Peter's University in Jersey City. His father, the late Amiri Baraka, was a legendary poet and playwright. His mother, Amina Baraka, is herself a renowned poet. Doting husband and father, Mayor Baraka is a published author who recently released the audible memoir "The Book of Baraka" and is well-regarded in the entertainment industry for his appearance on the Grammy-award winning album, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" in his authentic role as an educator, and for his EP "What We Want."





Jon Bramnick is an experienced lawyer, professor and dedicated public servant. While serving in the State Assembly Bramnick was elected by his colleagues to serve five terms as the Republican Leader, making him the highest-ranking member of the Republican Caucus in the Assembly. He has served in the State Senate representing the 21st legislative district since 2022 and was re-elected in 2023 by 7% in a district that voted for President Joe Biden by 17 points.

As a member of the legislature, he has fought to lower the cost of living, make our communities safer, and to end the construction of thousands of court mandated housing units in communities around the state.

Jon's public service began over 30 years ago when he was elected to the Plainfield City Council. He was an assistant professor of business law at Rider University and an adjunct professor of business law at Rutgers University.

Senator Bramnick also founded the law firm of Bramnick, Rodriguez, Grabas & Woodruff, based in Scotch Plains which started as a one man firm and has grown to more than 20 attorneys and over 30 support staff.

Senator Bramnick holds a B.A. in political science from Syracuse University, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He also holds a J.D. from Hofstra University's School of Law. He resides in Westfield with his wife Patricia and has two grown children, Brent and Abigail. As Governor, Jon will end the one party rule that has taken over Trenton, leading to an unending stream of mandates, tax hikes and extreme policy, restoring balance in New Jersey.



A life-long Jersey guy, Jack was born in Somerville and raised in the Borough of Raritan, where his grandparents immigrated 100 years ago.

He earned a degree in Accounting from Seton Hall, where he also got his MBA. Jack is also a Certified Public Accountant (inactive).

Jack is a successful entrepreneur and small business owner twice over, having founded two successful Main Street businesses right here in New Jersey.

But of all the titles he's earned, he's most proud to be called "Dad." He's the father of four children, now all adults, each already accomplished in their fields.

Jack has always believed in giving back to the community that has given him so much. In the public arena, he has served at every level of government, including the Raritan Borough Council, the Somerset County Freeholder Board, and the State Assembly - each time winning tough races, and then voluntarily term-limiting himself.

In 2021, Jack ran for governor and re-energized the state's Republican Party, defying media predictions and coming within a few points of knocking off the sitting incumbent governor.

Along the way, he led the ticket to historic victories up and down the state, with Republicans picking up seven seats in the state legislature, including beating the Senate President. In helping down-ballot Republicans also win hundreds of local and county races, New Jersey Republicans had their best Election Day in 30 years.

Since then, Jack hasn't stopped. He has continued to speak out on the challenges facing New Jerseyans, crisscrossing the state, supporting candidates, and promoting common-sense solutions to kitchen table problems.





Meet Senator Edward R. Durr, Jr. Husband of Lynn, father of three (Heather, Melissa, Edward III) and grandfather of six (Christopher Jr, Leila, Paige, Alexander, Sophia, Caleb). Senator Durr was born July 18, 1963 and was raised in Gloucester City. He has lived in New Jersey all of his life. A commercial truck driver for the last 30 years, he has most recently hauled for the Raymour &; Flanigan furniture chain. He is a Christian, bluecollar, hard-working, trusting, loyal, and patriotic American and New Jerseyan. Amongst other things, he believes in fiscal responsibility, governmental transparency and lower taxes. A NJ State CCP holder, Senator Durr is also a staunch supporter of our 2nd Amendment right to keep and bear arms. He is not a polished politician who is looking for a career in government; on the contrary, he would like to see the government returned to the hands of the people.



In May 2014, Steven Fulop was elected the 49th Mayor of Jersey City. During his time as Mayor, Steven has shown what smart, progressive leadership can accomplish – opening a new chapter for Jersey City. Under his leadership, Jersey City became the 1st city in New Jersey – and the 6th city in the United States – to ensure paid sick leave. Mayor Steven Fulop has led the city to record economic development, benefiting families of all income levels – all without raising taxes.

He's pioneered new ideas for helping prisoners re-enter society, passed legislation to protect small businesses, encouraged more businesses to open shop, made Jersey City one of the greenest towns in the nation, and he's undertaken sweeping public safety reform with the JCPD now seen as a model for diversity across the nation.

Steven grew up in a Jewish family in Edison, New Jersey, the son of Romanian immigrants. His mother is the daughter of Holocaust survivors and worked in an immigration services office helping others gain citizenship. His father owned a delicatessen in Newark, where Steven worked behind the counter as a teenager.

Steven graduated from Binghamton University in 1999 and spent time abroad studying at Oxford University in the UK. After college, he joined an investment banking firm.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Steven was working in lower Manhattan when he saw the first plane strike the Twin Towers. A few weeks later, he put his career on hold and joined the United States Marine Corps. Steven's Reserve Unit deployed to Iraq in January 2003. There, Steven served as part of the 6th Engineer Support Battalion. He traveled into Baghdad during the early weeks of the war. In 2006, Steven completed his service to the Marine Corps Reserve with the rank of Corporal.

After his service in Iraq, Steven returned to the private sector while completing his Masters in Business Administration at the New York University Stern School of Business and his Masters in Public Administration at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs.

Steven first tried his hand at politics by running for Congress in 2004. He lost. The next year, Steven ran for the Jersey City Council - against the machine - and won. He served as a councilman for eight years before becoming Mayor. He did so by building a grassroots movement in Jersey City - a formula that he is using for his 2025 run for Governor.

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Josh Gottheimer represents New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District in the northern part of the state, which includes parts of Bergen, Passaic, and Sussex counties. In Congress, Josh serves on two Committees, including the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where he is the Ranking Member of the National Security Agency and Cyber Subcommittee and is a member of the Defense Intelligence and Overhead Architecture Subcommittee. Josh also serves on the House Financial Services Committee, where he is a member of the Subcommittee on National Security, Illicit Finance, and International Financial Institutions, the Subcommittee on Digital Assets, Financial Technology, and Artificial Intelligence, the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, and the Task Force on Monetary Policy, Treasury Market Resilience, and Economic Prosperity.

Josh helped launch the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus in 2017 and served as Co-Chair during the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th Congress. He currently serves as Vice-Chair, where he continues to promote commonsense over extremism and works across party lines on key issues, including lowering taxes, protecting our environment, making healthcare more affordable, protecting America's national security, and improving infrastructure to help the American people.

Josh also serves as Co-Chair of the bipartisan SALT Caucus and the Law Enforcement Caucus, and is a member of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, the Blue Dog Coalition, and the New Democrat Coalition.



Bill Spadea is an entrepreneur, media personality, father, husband and vocal advocate for working- and middle-class families. Spadea is the top morning drive talk show host in New Jersey on 101.5 FM. For seven years he hosted a successful show on FOX TV, "Chasing News with Bill Spadea". He's done a little bit of everything over his 25-plus year career, serving as a political strategist, analyst, candidate for office and business executive. He also regularly hosts music festivals and comedy shows in the New York/New Jersey area.

Before getting into media, he served as an executive in the real estate industry for 18 years, coaching, recruiting and selling. He is currently a licensed broker in several states, including New Jersey, Washington and Massachusetts, working with a national real estate company. Following the show on FoxTV, Spadea launched and continues to manage budget and production for a film company which sold their latest movie "Psycho Storm Chaser" to LifetimeTV.

He took on a three-term Democratic House incumbent in New Jersey's 12th Congressional District in 2004. Highlights of the campaign included a 200-mile walk through all 44 towns in the district, knocking on 16,000-plus doors and beating expectations as the top Republican challenger in New Jersey.

Most recently, Spadea founded and formerly served as the head of the "Common Sense Club" which advocates and mobilizes people to support policies which help small businesses and families through smart, fiscally responsible management in government, education that does away with radical political agendas which characterize many public schools today, and support for civil, economic and medical liberty.

He graduated from Boston University with a B.A. in history in 1991. Upon graduation he enlisted in the Marines and received an honorable discharge from the United States Marine Corps Reserves after serving eight years. Bill has been married 29 years to his wife Jodi and resides in Princeton, NJ. Their son, Michael, is an honors student at San Diego State University. Their daughter Elizabeth graduated from the University of the Arts in London and has launched a successful career as a producer and brand manager in the UK.





Before Sean Spiller was a candidate for Governor, he served as the Mayor of Montclair, served our community as a public school teacher, rose to the rank of President of the New Jersey Education Association, and is most importantly a husband and dad who gets to walk his kids to school each morning.

Sean's parents immigrated with their family to America and instilled in him the importance of education. Sean took his parents' dedication to education to heart, graduating from Montville public schools, captaining the Rutgers University hockey team, and earning a master's degree from Ramapo College. In fact, he was so dedicated to education that he decided to become an educator himself to impact kids every day.

But Sean's impact extends far beyond his students. As the President of one of the largest unions in New Jersey, there have been countless times where Sean has fought for policies to ensure that people are able to support their families.

As the Mayor of Montclair, Sean has been a champion for smart, green development, helped reduce the town's tax burden while implementing a debt-reduction plan, addressed the high cost of housing, and has helped make the school system even stronger.

As New Jersey's Governor, Sean will continue investing in public education, make New Jersey a more affordable place to live, and ensure that the economy works for the working class."



To Steve Sweeney, hard work, public service, and a devotion to one's community – especially those most vulnerable – aren't abstract ideas; they are deep convictions.

Born in Camden and raised in Pennsauken, and with a background as an ironworker, Steve learned what it means to put in a hard day's work. Tough days on the job shaped Steve into the fighter he would become for organized labor, workers' rights, and working families. But he was called to serve New Jerseyans after battling through challenges when his daughter was born with Down Syndrome.

Steve became a champion for people with disabilities and everyone in his community, serving on the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders from 1997 to 2010 and as State Senator from 2002 to 2021.

As Senator, Steve authored New Jersey's Paid Family Leave program, working to ensure parents have the resources they need to take time with their children – something he values deeply after spending nearly two months in the hospital with his newborn daughter.

Elected Senate President in 2009, Steve delivered property tax relief, pension system reforms, and minimum wage increases to help New Jerseyans make ends meet. He also advanced education reform, including for special-needs students, strengthened law enforcement's ability to protect children from sex offenders, and sponsored legislation to provide equal pay for women and equal marriage rights for the LGBTQ+ community.

Steve believes New Jersey is worth fighting for. He entered public office over two decades ago to make a difference in the lives of all New Jerseyans, and has a record of delivering results for our families. But the fight isn't over. That's why Steve is asking for your support in his campaign for governor.

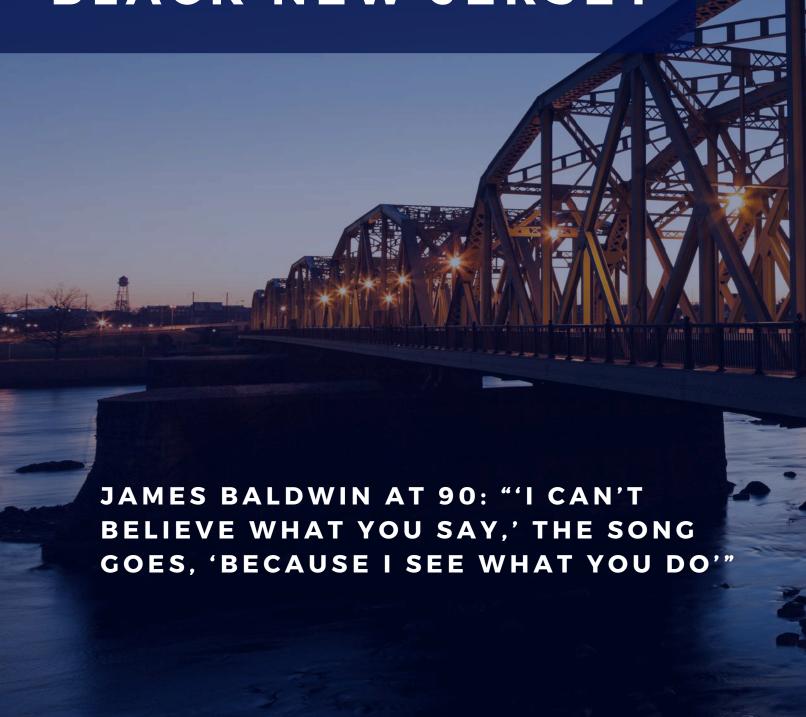
Steve Sweeney is a dedicated public servant with over 20 years in public office, including over a decade serving all New Jerseyans as president of the New Jersey State Senate. Steve began his career of public service on the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1997 and was Freeholder Director from 1998 until 2010. As the Freeholder Director, he spearheaded innovative programs, saving taxpayers \$30 million.

From 2001 to 2021, Steve represented New Jersey's third legislative district, which includes parts of Gloucester and Cumberland counties and all of Salem County. He was elected Senate President in 2009 and led the Democratic caucus for over a decade and delivered results for New Jerseyans.

As Senator, Steve fought for working families, fiscal responsibility, and for everyone who, like his daughter, needed a champion in government. He sponsored laws to raise the minimum wage, crafted the Paid Family Leave program, and delivered property tax relief. He also sponsored legislation to establish marriage equality, provide equal pay for women, and to create a "Sexual Assault Bill of Rights" for victims of assault. Steve's career of public service has earned him the reputation of a principled leader focused on improving the lives of all New Jerseyans.









T H E D A T A

EST. JUNE 2007



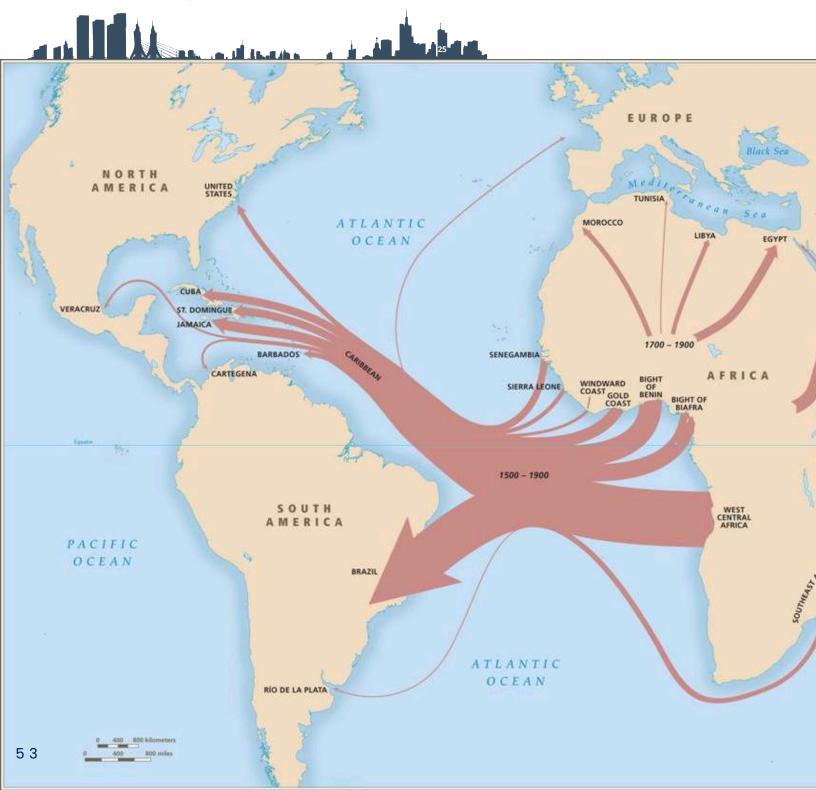




AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, 1500-1900

Around 12.5 million men, women, and children were taken from Africa and 10.7 million arrived in the Americas.

Captured individuals from Africa traveled along various routes to destinations around the globe. This map highlights the trans-Atlantic journeys of these captives, offering a comparative perspective..



While data on ocean-based trade is more comprehensive than records for the trans-Saharan, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf pathways, estimates suggest that from the fall of the Roman Empire through 1900, an equivalent number of captives were transported across the Atlantic as were taken along all other routes combined.





CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

- 1441: First documented African slaves taken to Portugal.
- 1482: Portuguese establish trading posts along the West African coast.
- 1518: Spain ships the first enslaved Africans directly to the Americas.
- 1619: The first enslaved Africans arrive in Virginia, initiating slavery in British North America.
- 1620s: Caribbean plantation economies and slave markets are established.
- 1640-1807: The transatlantic slave trade reaches its peak, transporting millions.
- 1700s: Major slave markets develop in the Caribbean and South America.
- 1776: The American Revolution raises debates over slavery in the U.S.
- 1807: Britain passes the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, ending its participation in the trade.
- 1808: The U.S. Congress bans the importation of enslaved people.
- 1833: Britain enacts the Slavery Abolition Act, ending slavery in most of its empire.
- 1865: The U.S. abolishes slavery with the 13th Amendment following the Civil War.

scan to view interactive map on slavevoyages.org



The African diaspora refers to the movement of people of African descent from their homeland to other parts of the world, particularly the Americas. It began during the transatlantic slave trade and has continued through migration and voluntary movement. The African diaspora has had a profound impact on the cultures, histories, and economies of the countries and regions where African people have settled.



Notable DROP-OFF POINTS:

North America:

Charleston (1670s), New Orleans (1718)

Caribbean:

Port-au-Prince, Haiti (late 1600s); Kingston, Jamaica (1692).

South America:

Salvador, Brazil (1549); Cartagena, Colombia (1533).

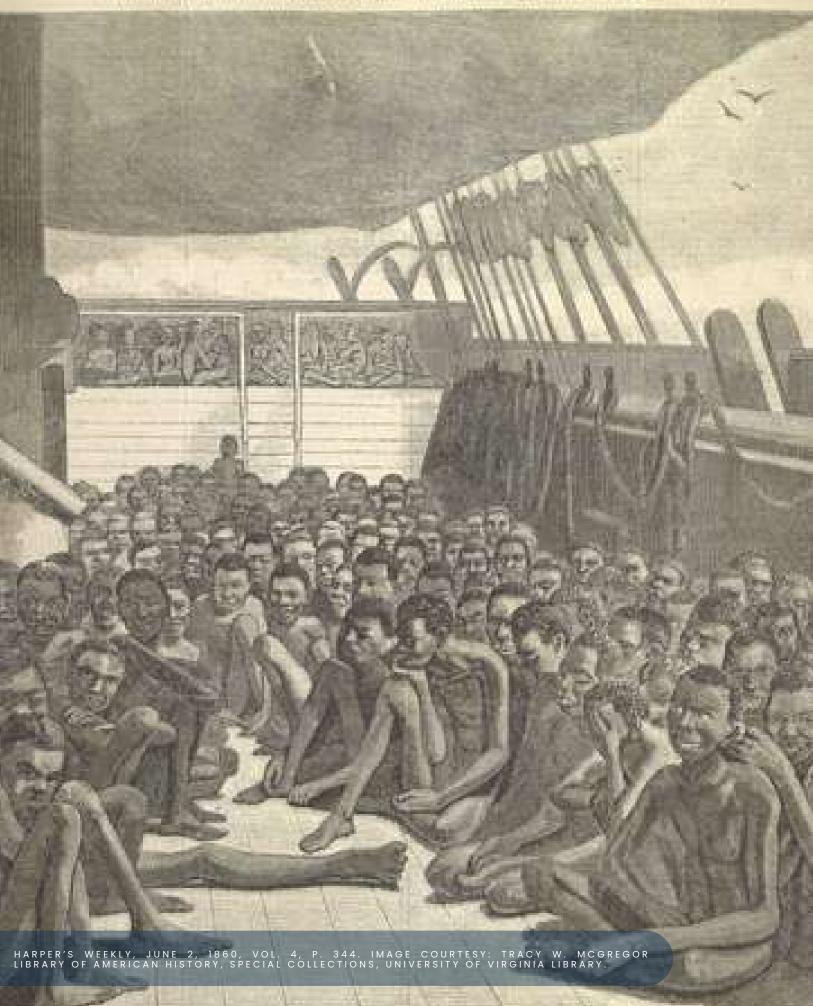
ADDITIONAL CONTEXT:

- The transatlantic slave trade spanned from 1500 to 1866.
- An estimated 12.5 million Africans were forcibly transported.
- Enslaved people came from groups like the Yoruba, Akan, and Kongo

In 1860, the bark Wildfire left New York, traveled to the Congo River to embark enslaved individuals, and planned to sell them in Cuba. However, American anti-slavery patrols intercepted the vessel and redirected it to Key West, Florida. Ultimately, the captives were sent to Liberia. An illustration depicting the enslaved individuals on the Wildfire's deck, originally published in Harper's Weekly on June 2, 1860, was reproduced from a daguerreotype. The image is provided courtesy of the Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History at the University of Virginia Library. Permission is required for reproduction.



THE AFRICANS OF THE SLAVE MARK - WILDVIRE - [Flow on our Community.]





SOCIO-ECONOMIC STANDING OF **NEW JERSEY'S BLACK RESIDENTS:**

Racial inequity plays a significant role in shaping the economic landscape for Black residents in New Jersey, as reflected in the 2025 demographic data. Despite Black residents making up a substantial portion of the state's population—1.2 million people—structural barriers continue to limit economic mobility and business growth. While there are 88,000 Black-owned businesses, an overwhelming 93% are sole proprietorships, often lacking access to the capital, resources, and networks needed to scale.

1.2 million

88,000

black businesses

93%
Black Business Owners



BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP





This disparity is further highlighted by the staggering wealth gap, with the median net worth of **Black** households at just \$17,000 compared to \$322,000 for white households. Systemic factors such as discriminatory lending practices, limited generational wealth, and unequal access to high-paying jobs contribute to these inequities. As a result, Black communities in New Jersey experience the highest poverty rates and the highest unemployment rates in the state, reinforcing a cycle of economic disenfranchisement that demands targeted policy interventions and equitable investment.

13/3.3m

contracts \$3.3 Million

Black owned businesses received 13 of the contracts awarded in one category for 3.3 million dollars

250/277m

contracts \$277 Million

White women owned businesses received 250 contracts for \$277 million dollars 2500/10b

contracts \$10 Billion

White male owned businesses received 2500 contracts for 10 billion dollars

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS THE **SAME GDP AS RUSSIA, AND BRAZIL**.

Black spending power reached \$1.6 trillion in 2021 and is projected to hit \$1.8 trillion by 2026, highlighting its immense economic influence. Yet, despite this growth, the racial wealth gap persists due to systemic barriers like limited access to capital and wage disparities.



IN 2021, BLACK SPENDING POWER REACHED **\$1.6 TRILLION**. BLACK CONSUMER BUYING POWER IS PROJECTED TO REACH **\$1.8 TRILLION BY 2026.**

Black spending power reached \$1.6 trillion in 2021 and is projected to hit \$1.8 trillion by 2026, highlighting its immense economic influence. Yet, despite this growth, the racial wealth gap persists due to systemic barriers like limited access to capital and wage disparities. Much of this spending circulates outside Black-owned businesses, limiting wealth accumulation. Redirecting even a fraction toward Black enterprises could foster generational wealth and economic empowerment, emphasizing the need for policies that support equitable opportunities.

DISPARITY STUDY CHRONOLOGY

The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) responded to the 2024 New Jersey Disparity Study with a robust series of initiatives to address inequities in public contracting for Minority-and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs). Key actions included:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

TOWN HALLS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Hosted multiple town halls, including virtual sessions and in-person events, featuring Dr. Denise Anderson (DA&A) and moderated by John E. Harmon, Sr.
- Discussions with influential figures like Mayor Ras Baraka and Ryan P. Haygood, Esq.
- Topics included public procurement disparities, NJ's Project Labor Agreements, and solutions for equitable contracting.

MAJOR CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

- Participation in events like the "State of Black NJ Economic Summit" and the "Juneteenth Black Business Expo."
- Delivered remarks and presentations highlighting disparity findings.
- Led discussions on procurement equity at conferences such as the NJ League of Municipalities and the Governor's Conference on Housing & Economic Development.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES

- Conducted a three-day virtual town hall series in May 2024 focused on the Murphy Administration's response to the disparity study.
- Disseminated promotional materials and petitions at events, promoting community involvement.

ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION

TESTIMONIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provided testimony to the Senate Committee in March and May 2024 opposing disparities in public procurement.
- Requested a moratorium on non-emergency public procurement contracts exceeding \$5 million.

POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- Engaged with policymakers, including outreach to legislators like Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter, Senate President Scutari, and Speaker Coughlin.
- Advocated for the inclusion of MWBEs in legislative packages and procurement reforms.





COLLABORATIONS

Worked with notable individuals and organizations, including Councilman Larry Crump, Congressman Payne, and Stedman Graham, to broaden support for addressing disparities.

PETITION CAMPAIGN

Launched an ongoing petition campaign to garner support for reforms, featuring QRcode signage at all AACCNJ events.

scan to read petition



MEDIA AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

PRESS AND OP-EDS

- Issued numerous press releases and eblasts outlining the disparity study findings and AACCNJ's initiatives.
- Published an op-ed by John E. Harmon, Sr., titled "Do Right By Us," highlighting the urgency of addressing procurement inequities.

STRATEGIC MEDIA OUTREACH

- Targeted media campaigns to Black and mainstream audiences, leveraging outlets like NJ Biz and Urban News Journal for op-ed coverage.
- Ran district-specific ads to amplify messages about the disparity study.

DISPARITY STUDY IN THE PRESS & MEDIA

NJROI.COM Disparity study to show minority groups awarded government contracts at astonishingly low levels





njbiz.com Legislation to address Disparity Study advances in Trenton





John Harmon's Statement on the findings of the County of Essex Disparity Study Trenton, NJ – October 16, 2024





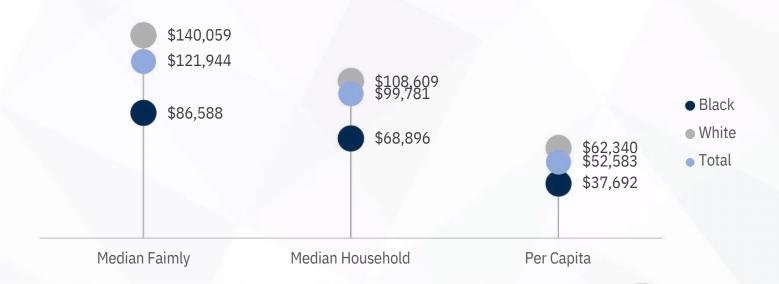
Statement from President Joe Biden on Project Labor Agreements Final Rule





M E D I A N INCOME

The data reveals a significant income gap between Black and White populations in New Jersey. The median family income for Black households is \$68,896, whereas for White households, it is \$108,609. This discrepancy suggests that Black families, on average, have significantly fewer financial resources than their White counterparts.



Median Income (\$) in the past 12 months (in 2023 Inflation Adjusted Dollars: NJ)

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Yar Estimates

Fall 2009 - Ending Jim Crow Life Insurance Rates - Mary L. Heen

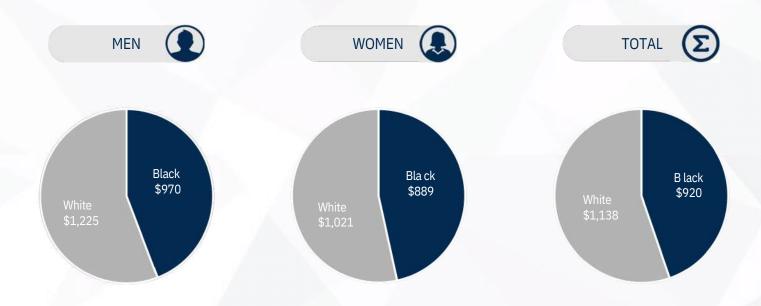






When examining per capita income, the contrast becomes even more evident. Black individuals report a per capita income of \$37,692, far lower than the \$62,340 reported for White individuals. This disparity indicates that Black individuals may have less financial stability, which can limit their ability to invest in education, homeownership, and business ventures, further perpetuating economic inequalities.

Median usual weekly earnings -in constant (base current year) dollars of full-time
 US, 2023 annual averages, not seasonally adjusted

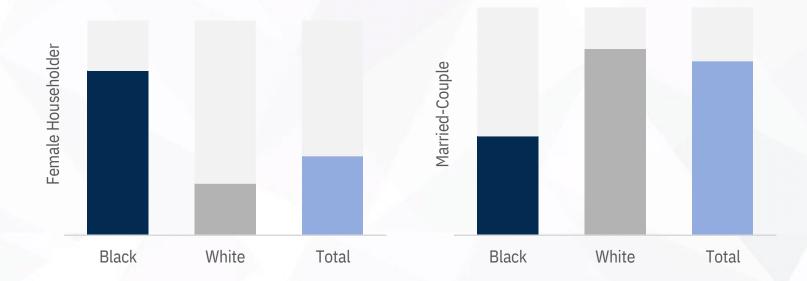


The gender-based earnings breakdown also highlights disparities. Black men earn a median weekly income of \$889, whereas White men earn \$1,225. Black women earn \$920, compared to White women's \$1,138. These figures suggest that both racial and gender-based wage gaps persist, contributing to economic disadvantages for Black workers.



HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Household Types by Race (%): NJ 2023



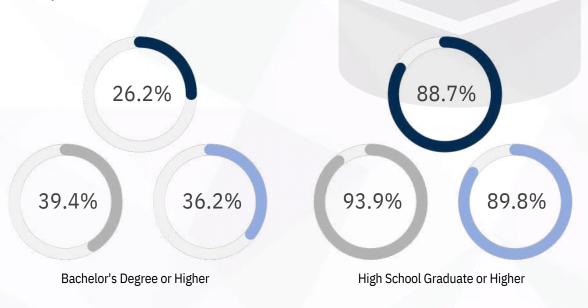
The report highlights significant differences in household structures by race. Among Black households, 40.2% are led by a single female head, compared to just 16.1% of White households. Conversely, 64.0% of White households are married-couple families, while only 39.1% of Black households fit this structure.

EDUCATION BY RACE





Education by Race: United States 2023

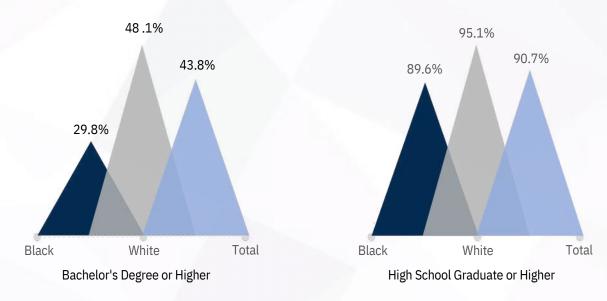


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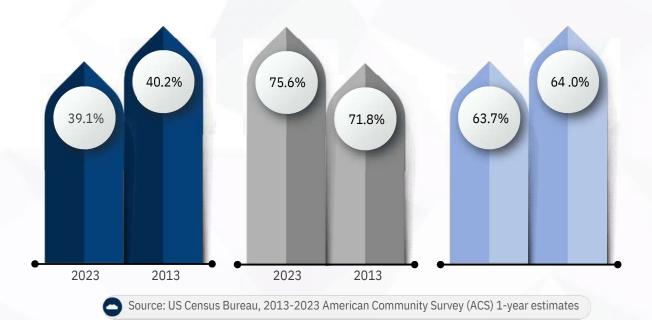
Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

Education levels show a clear racial divide. Nationally, 26.2% of Black individuals have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 39.4% of White individuals. In New Jersey, the gap is even wider—29.8% of Black residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, while 48.1% of White residents do.

Education by Race: NJ 2023







A LEGACY OF DISCRIMINATION

McKinsey Institute for Black Economic Mobility

The housing crisis for Black Americans is grounded in a history of exclusion, segregation, and discriminatory practices affecting access not just to homeownership but also to rental housing. For example, early zoning laws starting in 1910 segregated Black communities. While the Supreme Court outlawed racial zoning in 1917,1 racial covenants in deeds, which weren't ruled unenforceable until 19482; Federal Housing Administration policies that worked to deny many Black Americans access to federally backed mortgages and devalued Black-owned properties and nearby neighborhoods3; and violence against Black families who tried to integrate into White communities continued the trends that racial zoning established long beyond the early 20th century.

Even with the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, barriers persisted. Practices such as appraisal bias and lending discrimination continued. Today, Black households still confront lending disparities. Data shows that from 2018 to 2020, Black mortgage applicants were 2.9 percentage points more likely to be denied than White applicants, even when borrower characteristics were the same.

Meanwhile, Black renters are often shown fewer apartments and offered fewer incentives to rent.5 Additionally, zoning restrictions and other land use policies often limit affordable rental options, and Black families are disproportionately likely to be pushed toward higher-cost or lower-quality housing options. Investments to making housing more affordable in the United States could benefit all--and result in gains for Black families

McKinsey Institute for Black
Economic Mobility
Investing in housing: Unlocking
economic mobility for Black
families and all Americans
February 11, 2025 | Report



McKinsey Institute for Black
Economic Mobility

The state of Black residents: The relevance of place to racial equity and outcomes
February 1, 2024 | Report



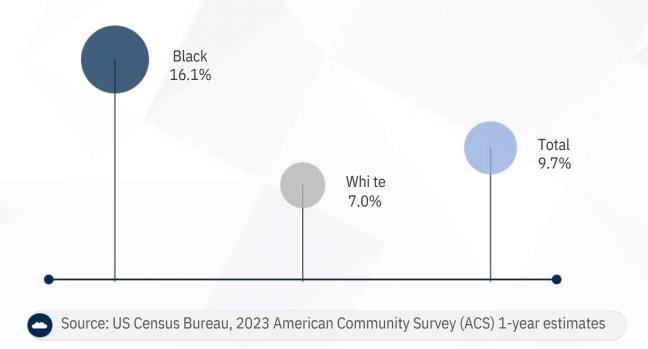


IDEBAR FROM MCKINSEY



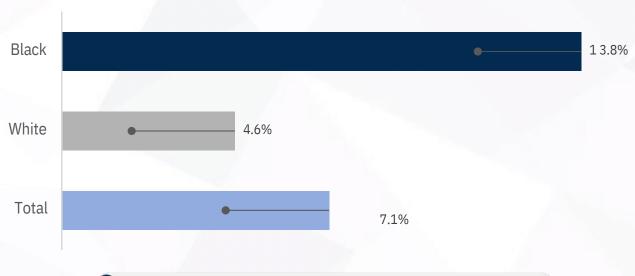


Persons Below Poverty: NJ



The poverty rate among Black individuals in New Jersey is alarmingly high at 16.1%, which is more than double the poverty rate for White individuals (7.0%). When broken down by families, 13.8% of Black families are below the poverty line compared to only 4.6% of White families.

Families Below Poverty: NJ



THE STATE OF BLACK NEW JERSEY 2025 ECONOMIC SUMMIT

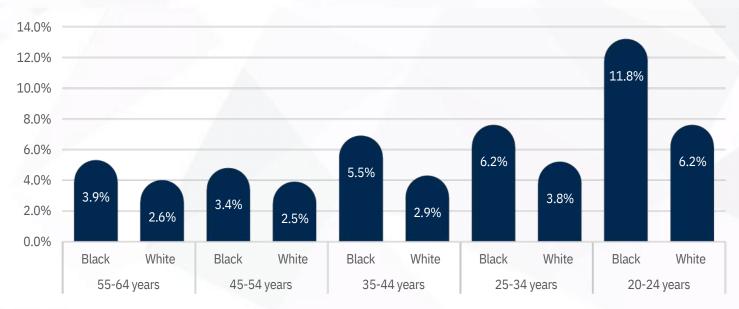
ACCOUNTABILITY, OPPORTUNITY & EQUITY

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Unemployment rates for Black individuals are consistently higher across all age groups. Among young adults aged 20-24, the Black unemployment rate is 11.8%, nearly double the 6.2% for White individuals. Even among older age groups, the gap persists. For instance, in the 35-44 age group, Black individuals face an unemployment rate of 6.2% compared to 3.8% for White individuals.

These trends suggest systemic barriers to employment for Black individuals, including racial discrimination in hiring, disparities in access to high-quality education, and limited job opportunities in predominantly Black communities.

Unemployment Rate, by Race in US, 2024 Annual Averages

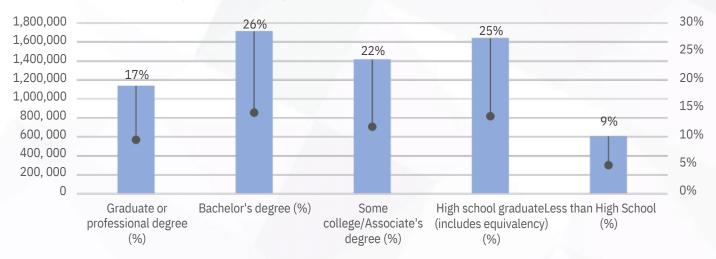


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

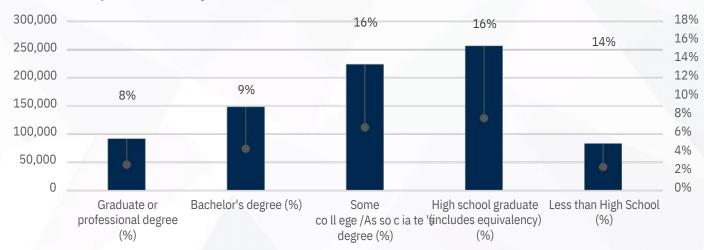
TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT



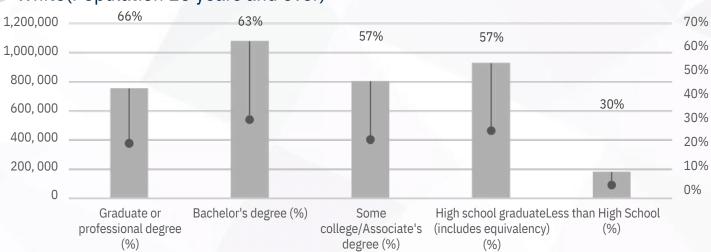
Total All Races (Population 25 years and over)



Black(Population 25 years and over)



White(Population 25 years and over)



BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY, OPPORTUNITY & EQUITY

Burlington County



Essex County



Mercer County

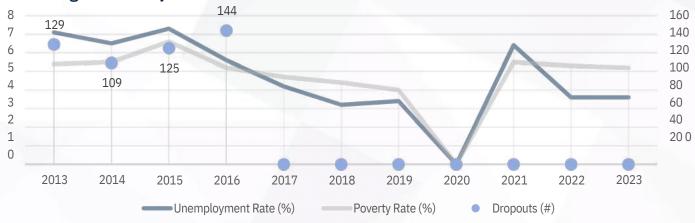


- Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates
- Source: New Jersey Department of Education (Dropouts not updated past 2015-2016 school year)

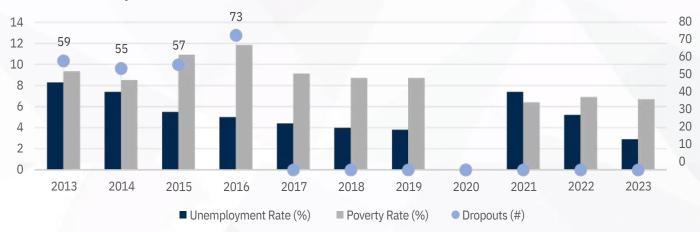
WHITE UNEMPLOYMENT







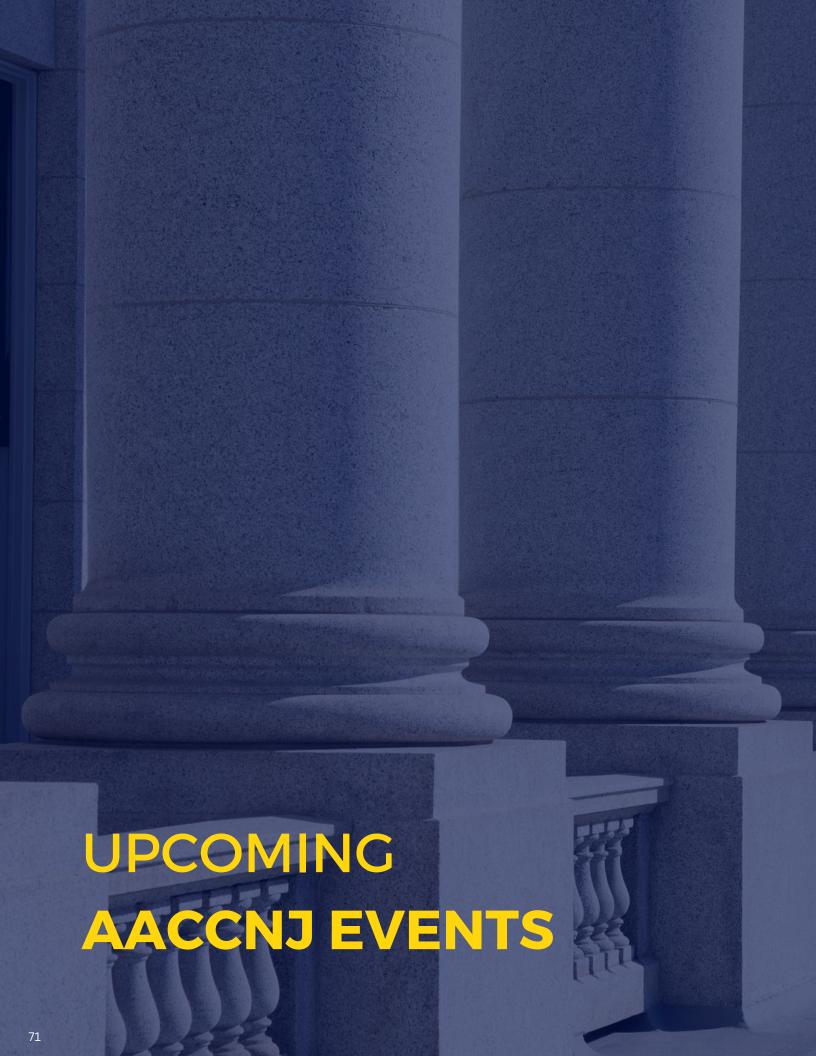
Essex County



Mercer County



- Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates
- Source: New Jersey Department of Education (Dropouts not updated past 2015-2016 school year)





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African American
NEW JERSEY

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Johnson and Johnson

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Chief Diversity & Inclusion
Officer, New Jersey Economic
Development Authority

DR. DIONNE LEDFORD
Executive Director and
Superintendent Roseville
Community Charter School

BARBARA GEORGE JOHNSON, MPH, J.D. John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean, Vice President External Affairs & Urban Policy, Kean University

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SAVE THE DATE

21 MONDAY
JULY, 2025

7:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.





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*Includes:

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When a member completes the form their membership status must be current and in good standing in order to take advantage of our Pro Bono program.

Available to AACCNJ members with annual revenues of \$500,000 or less.

EST. JUNE 2007



The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey has been incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code and provides advocacy and support for businesses throughout the State of New Jersey.

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