

NEW JERSEY  
**COMMUNITY**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
CORPORATION



**Creating Opportunities to Transform Lives**

# About Us

## New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC)

NJCDC is a non-profit community development and social service agency located in the City of Paterson, New Jersey. Our mission is to serve as a vibrant and pioneering force in revitalizing neighborhoods through affordable housing, positive youth development, educational initiatives, and vital support services for children, adults, and families. *In short, we create opportunities to transform lives.*



### MESSAGE FROM NJCDC FOUNDER AND CEO



**Bob Guarasci**  
NJCDC Founder and CEO

When I founded NJCDC in 1994, my concept was just an idea on paper. But behind that idea was a powerful belief that good people can join together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors.

NJCDC's home is the city of Paterson, New Jersey's third largest city. It is a city of diverse contrasts—dense and urban, yet home to the powerful Great Falls; rich in American history, yet inhabited by shifting populations; vibrant and growing, yet distressed and threatened by decline; a mere 12 miles from downtown Manhattan, yet in many ways unknown and unseen.

NJCDC intends to be at the center of Paterson's revitalization. We're building affordable housing, opening charter schools, and running school-based teen centers. We're also providing job training, fostering youth leadership, and promoting public policy innovation.

Our work is neighborhood-based, enabling local residents to become active participants in shaping their own future.

We serve over a thousand individuals, children, and families each day, as we strive to stand as a state and national model capable of transformational community change.

My colleagues and I are enthusiastic at the prospect of many more years of offering high-quality and impactful programs and services. We intend to continue serving as a forceful agent for change—and we look forward to continued assistance from our friends and supporters to help us make a positive difference in the lives of those who benefit from our work.

### ECONOMICALLY EFFICIENT

In these challenging economic times, it is important to note that 90 cents of every dollar donated to NJCDC goes directly to our programs. We pride ourselves on providing services efficiently through programs that build self reliance, not dependency.



Paterson Family Center students at play



NJCDC volunteers creating a community garden

### PARTNERING WITH NJCDC

NJCDC provides corporations an opportunity to communicate their corporate social responsibility values through support for any or all of our programs.

# Community Development

## Revitalizing Paterson

At NJCDC, we are connecting the dots between neighborhood revitalization, positive youth development and education, affordable and supportive housing, the preservation of the Great Falls Historic District, creative economic development, and public-policy innovation. For us, linking all of these elements together is the true definition of community development and sustainable revitalization.

### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: Greater Spruce Street Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

Paterson is the birth place of the American Industrial Revolution. At NJCDC, we are building off this powerful legacy by implementing a strategic and comprehensive plan for the sustainable revitalization of Paterson's Historic District and the area surrounding the majestic Great Falls. Linking our residents, business owners, com-

munity activists, institutions, civic leaders and others at the neighborhood level will enable real revitalization to occur.

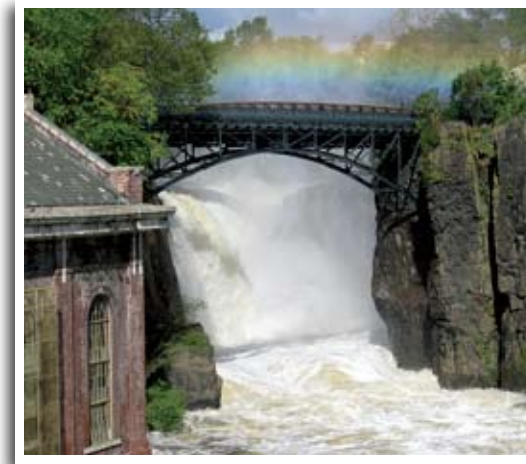
We believe Paterson holds both a rich history and a promising future. A significant development was when President Barack Obama signed the "Omnibus Public

Land Management Act of 2009" permanently preserving the 35 acres surrounding Paterson's Great Falls as a new unit of the National Park Service— The Great Falls National Historical Park.



## OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS OF REVITALIZATION

- Empowered Citizens
- Greener Local Economy
- Balanced Streets
- Lifelong Learning
- Housing Opportunities
- Restored Productivity
- Strengthened Identity
- Engaging Parks and Play Space



Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park

### LEVERAGING THE GREAT FALLS

The recent creation of **The Great Falls National Historical Park** as part of the National Park Service offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Paterson. NJCDC has been working to maximize the benefits of this opportunity by linking it to our own neighborhood planning and revitalization efforts for the area. Our goal is to connect the new national park to the needs of the historic district and the City of Paterson more broadly. NJCDC seeks to ensure that these efforts are integrated by creating new recreational opportunities, community programming that benefits residents through employment and other means, piloting renewable energy projects, and spurring public and private investment.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION: MAKING THE PAST OUR FUTURE

One example of neighborhood revitalization is the creation of our Independence House transitional living facility for homeless youth. This project adaptively reused and restored the former Rogers Locomotive Works Administration Building, originally constructed in 1881, into a home for ten young men in need of safe, decent, and affordable housing. Independence House offers each of the residents his own room as well as common areas including a kitchen, recreation area, and a laundry room.



Historic building constructed during the 19th century



After NJCDC's renovation in 2003

### PARTNERING WITH NJCDC

Support for the Greater Spruce Street Neighborhood Plan can come through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC), which provides businesses with a 100 percent tax credit against various New Jersey state taxes for funds provided to nonprofit entities like NJCDC carrying out comprehensive revitalization plans.

# Affordable & Supportive Housing

## Successful Housing Development

A core aspect of NJCDC's work is building affordable and supportive housing in and around the city of Paterson. We serve homeless youth, youth "aging-out" of the foster care system upon turning 18, the homeless mentally ill, and individuals with developmental disabilities. We also construct affordable housing for individuals who have low-income or very low-income. We've built over 100 units and have plans for much more construction in the future.

## TURNING HOUSES INTO HOMES

Our goal is to offer people a beautiful and service-rich environment to call home. We provide assistance in navigating the everyday challenges of life while instilling hope,

confidence, and the optimism necessary to lay the foundation for meaningful community integration. Such programs not only

provide opportunities to transform individual lives, but serve as catalysts to help rebuild neighborhoods.



New Hawthorne Heights residents celebrate the grand opening of their new 12-unit apartment building

## OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### Affordable/Supportive Housing Projects in Operation

- **William Waldman Independence House**, 10 units for youth aging-out of the foster care system located in the former administration building of the Rogers Locomotive Works.
- **Marion Street Apartments**, 9 units for homeless youth and young adults, some formerly in the foster care system.
- **Hawthorne Heights Apartments**, 12 units located in the borough of Hawthorne for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- **Birch Arms Apartments**, 15 units for people who are homeless with a mental illness.

### Supportive Housing Projects in Development

- **Spruce Terrace Apartments**, the development of 8 units of permanent housing for individuals who are homeless with a mental illness.
- **Elm Street Apartments**, the development of 20 units of supportive housing for homeless young adults and grandparents raising grandchildren.
- **Congdon Mill**, the development of 66 units of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families.



Future Spruce Terrace Apartments



Future Elm Street Apartments

### OUR RESIDENTS

Upon moving in, our housing facilities quickly become "home" for our many residents. By offering a wide variety of supportive services, we are able to provide even more opportunities to help individuals transform their lives.

### PARTNERING WITH NJCDC

NJCDC is eager to link corporate and individual volunteers with our special needs residents. For the homeless we serve, the donation of household items is always helpful. For our residents with developmental disabilities or mental illness, sponsoring activities or volunteering time for companionship is welcome. For our homeless and aging-out youth, building mentoring relationships can have a critical impact on quality of life.

# Education

## Creating Lifelong Learners

Despite sometimes heroic efforts, most of Paterson's neighborhood schools continue to struggle. NJCDC is committed to founding and operating high quality educational programs and schools in Paterson, where over 80% of all students are living at or below poverty. We believe that the heart of any exceptional school is great teaching. And we know that great teaching—and by extension great learning—happens when it is supported by an exciting curriculum that promotes a lifelong love of learning, by dedicated and caring administrators, by engaged and active parents, and by knowledgeable and accessible community partners. When done right, NJCDC contends that this is a winning formula for student and community success.

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

At NJCDC, we believe there is a strong connection between school quality and neighborhood quality. Good schools can attract families to a neighborhood and boost property values, while poorly performing schools can exacerbate the cycle of disinvestment and decline. But despite the obvious synergies between schools

and neighborhoods, educators and community development practitioners often work in isolation from one another.

NJCDC's educational vision offers a promise for change by intentionally linking these two worlds. In Paterson, over 80% of public-school students qualify for free or reduced lunches—

meaning they come from some of the poorest families in the state. This economic indicator, combined with unacceptable drop-out rates in area high schools, demonstrates the reason NJCDC is so committed to providing exceptional educational opportunities.



Our AmeriCorps members serve in a number of neighborhood schools as part of our "Community Schools" educational initiative.

## OUR SUCCESSES IN EDUCATION:

### AmeriCorps National Service Program

- NJCDC has created the **Paterson Community Schools Corps (PCSC)**, where our AmeriCorps members are working to transform Paterson neighborhood schools into "full-service community schools" by opening early, closing late, opening on weekends and during the summer.

### Paterson Family Center

- The Paterson Family Center is a comprehensive preschool with full-day services for 105 three and four year-old children and is recognized as a model preschool in Paterson.
- The Center provides certified teachers and classroom assistants in each classroom, family support workers, computers in every class and after-care programming for working parents.

### Community Charter School Of Paterson

- Founded by NJCDC in 2008 for 500 children in grades K-4, the school focuses on providing an attentive, nurturing educational environment and a strong connection to the community at-large.
- Features a school culture that is centered on promoting student achievement through high quality instruction and bringing best practices in early childhood education to our classrooms.
- Serving as a "community school" that opens early, closes late, and is open on weekends and during the summer as a welcoming place for everyone who comes through the front door.

### Garrett Morgan Academy

- Founded by NJCDC in 2000, Garrett Morgan is an innovative high school operated in partnership with the Paterson Public Schools and enriched by partnerships with entities such as State Farm Insurance, BMW, and Rutgers University.
- Serves 100 students in grades 9-12 with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math.
- In a city where more than half of all high school students drop-out, Garrett Morgan has a near 100% graduation and college acceptance rate.
- Garrett Morgan Academy was recently certified as a "Project Lead the Way" School for Engineering. Students who complete this curriculum receive three college credits upon high school graduation.



Garrett Morgan Academy students have access to the latest technology



AmeriCorps member helps a student at school

## PARTNERING WITH NJCDC

NJCDC embraces opportunities to partner with corporations, whose belief in educational innovation is a major aspect of their corporate social responsibility platform. We focus on programs such as mentoring, career days, college application assistance, financial literacy and entrepreneurial competitions.

# Positive Youth Development

## Building Human Foundations

Our youth development programs are rooted in the belief that young people can overcome extraordinary odds and succeed in life. We focus on creating a head start, a safe haven, connections with caring adults, opportunities to lead, and sometimes a much-needed second chance.

## A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

NJCDC believes in positive youth development, an approach that helps young people leverage their strengths to overcome challenges and barriers to success. In keeping with this philosophy, we provide young people with safe and supportive environments, we foster relationships with caring adults, we promote healthy lifestyles, and

we sponsor activities that build character at the same time they build skills. We favor programs that are evidence-based and outcome oriented.

We serve hundreds of young people in our programs each day, including the very young, elementary and middle school students, high school students, as well as drop-outs. We con-

nect with young people before school, during school, after school, on weekends and during the summer. Our programs offer a comprehensive approach to help youth obtain the skills necessary for living successful and productive lives—and to become the future leaders of their community.



Great Falls YouthBuild participant receives vocational construction training

## YOUTH PROGRAMS THAT REALLY WORK:

### Career Education Programs

- Our **Great Falls YouthBuild** program is an intensive, 10-month program designed to provide a “second chance” to young adults who never completed high school. Participants can obtain their GED or high school diploma, learn construction and vocational competence, build affordable housing, and improve the local community. These youth are also learning the technical skills to be successful in the burgeoning “green-collar” sector.

### After-School Programs

- We offer a variety of school-based and community-based after-school programs and activities. Our approach is comprehensive, balancing tutoring and homework assistance with the right mix of recreational and cultural enrichment activities. We often invite guests from the community to assist us, such as local artists, and include parents as often as possible.

### Teen Centers

- Our Teen Centers provide students with year-round academic support, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, life skills, health education, employment services, recreational activities, as well as a fun place to hang out.
- Our **School-Based Youth Services Programs (SBYSP)** Teen Centers are located in three area high schools and serve thousands of students each year. Our centers recognize that teens need to deal with issues they face outside the classroom before they can succeed inside the classroom, and we have highly trained staff on hand to provide ongoing support and guidance.
- The **Great Falls Teen Center** is located in Paterson’s Great Falls Historic District and is open year-round. Its mission is to help teens avoid drugs, gangs and unhealthy behaviors through an array of workshops and activities that instill young people with “protective factors” such as resilience, self-esteem and problem-solving.

### Youth Leadership Opportunities

- The **Great Falls Youth Corps** is a new partnership with the National Park Service and NJCDC, designed to actively engage youth in the creation of America’s newest national park: the Great Falls National Historical Park.
- The **Paterson Youth Council** is comprised of 25-35 dynamic young residents between the ages of 15 and 18 who take part in a year-long leadership development program and speak out on issues of concern to Paterson youth.



Paterson Youth Council member urges citizens to vote



Our after-school programs balance education with fun activities

## PARTNERING WITH NJCDC

We are particularly interested in working with corporations and other groups who may wish to help sponsor our youth development activities, ranging from robotic competitions to trips to our nation’s capital. And in a city with tens of thousands of young people, we are eager to work with groups wishing to help bring a comprehensive youth development center to Paterson.



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