

Foundation for Social Connection Launches NY Cohort to Advance Community Connection and Resilience

Eight communities will receive tailored guidance to develop social connection initiatives for improved well-being outcomes.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Foundation for Social Connection](#) (F4SC) is proud to announce the selection of eight community organizations to participate in its inaugural New York [Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities](#) cohort. This represents a significant expansion of F4SC's technical assistance program, empowering local leaders to build cross-sector partnerships, align their work around shared social connection goals, and leverage evidence-based tools to drive measurable impact.

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*Jillian Racoosin Kornmeier,
MPH*

New York presents a unique opportunity for F4SC's expansion. The state encompasses dense urban centers, mid-sized cities, and deeply rural communities — each

navigating social connection challenges within a unified policy ecosystem. More importantly, New York has emerged as a national leader in recognizing social connection as a public health imperative, having created a loneliness ambassador in 2023. By convening eight organizations across New York's diverse geographies, this cohort can build durable, in-state relationships while generating shared evidence to shape statewide practice.

“These extraordinary organizations understand social connection is not incidental to their work — it is central to it,” said Jillian Racoosin Kornmeier, Executive Director of the Foundation for Social Connection. “We are thrilled to convene this diverse group of leaders from across New York State and support them as they use the Action Guide to turn their vision for more connected communities into action.”

Selected organizations include:

The Opportunity Hub (Brooklyn): A settlement house rooted in Spring Creek Towers/Starrett City and one of NYC's largest affordable housing complexes with over 60% staff from the communities served. They center BIPOC and justice-involved individuals in co-designed programming addressing physical isolation, scarce third spaces, and digital divides across multigenerational families.

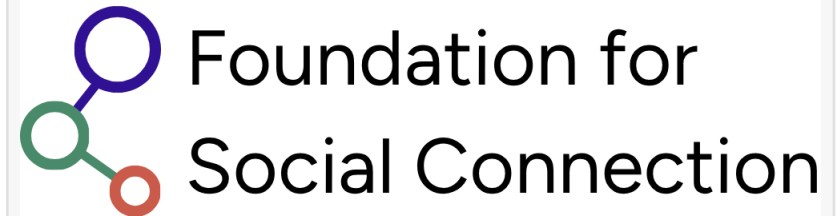
Urban Health Plan (Bronx): A federally qualified health center operating 11 health centers and 11 school-based practices across Hunts Point and Longwood, where the poverty rate reaches 35.6% — nearly double the NYC average. Rooted in bilingual organizing and resident co-design, the organization leads a 20+ member community coalition.

Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus (Albany): The primary refugee and immigrant resettlement organization in the Capital Region, serving 350+ English learners, 77 youth, and 240 jobseekers annually with staff speaking 12+ languages. They lead biweekly roundtables convening immigration providers, public schools, and city leadership across its 19-year presence in Pine Hills.

Common Ground Health (Rochester): A regional health planning agency convening 12+ community coalitions across Monroe County, where 1 in 4 older adults report persistent loneliness and childhood poverty ranks second-highest among comparable U.S. cities. They also host the African American, Latino, Indigenous Health Coalitions and Senior Adult Community Engagement Coalition.

Center for Justice Innovation (Syracuse): A community justice organization with deep trust on the Near Westside — a predominantly Latino and Black neighborhood with food desert conditions and high housing instability. The Center leads the Take Back the Streets Coalition (30+ agencies) and Kitchen Table Talks, informal community dinners with facilitated dialogue operating since 2016.

Clinton County Health Department (Plattsburgh Clinton County): A public health department serving nearly 79,000 residents across a large rural geography. The department leads the Action for Health (AFH) Consortium, a 40+ member coalition advancing policy, systems, and



environmental change, with a focus on older adults, newcomers, low-income residents, and individuals in recovery.

Oswego County Opportunities (Oswego County): An anti-poverty organization operating the Rural Health Network of Oswego County and a backbone convener for 50+ partners serving ~118,000 residents. With 1 in 5 residents age 60+, the organization engages 180+ professionals annually and emphasizes listening before acting across committees, workgroups, and countywide convenings.

YMCA of the Twin Tiers (Olean): A 140-year-old community hub serving Cattaraugus County's ~77,000 residents, including Seneca Nation Allegany and Cattaraugus Territories. The organization bridges school districts, health and human services, faith-based organizations, and county departments to address geographic isolation, limited transportation, and aging demographics that drive disconnection.

Throughout 2026, cohort participants will engage in a structured process using F4SC's Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities — an interactive tool designed to help local leaders assess community connectedness, analyze local data, engage residents and partners, develop coordinated action plans, and measure outcomes. Each organization will receive tailored technical assistance, hands-on coaching, investment to implement strategies, and opportunities for peer learning and collaboration.

F4SC looks forward to sharing ongoing progress and celebrating the achievements that emerge from this cohort.

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