Newark Nonprofit Leadership Resilience Fund Expands $405K Investment

Year One report details nonprofit-majority governance and new Resilience in Practice series for Newark's nonprofit sector.



Vesta Godwin Clark, CEO, St. James Social Services Corporation, NNLRF Governance Committee Member, welcomes community leaders and their Board Chairs to the BoardSource training.

NEWARK, NJ, UNITED STATES, October 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Newark nonprofit leaders are helping decide how philanthropic resources are invested in strengthening the organizations they lead. The Newark Nonprofit Leadership Resilience Fund (NNLRF) is releasing its Year One report, The Fund That Newark Built, and expanding its capacity-strengthening investments across Newark's nonprofit sector.

From Early Work to a Newark-Built Fund

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>
> *Khaatim Sherrer El, Clinton Hill Community Action*

The work that ultimately led to NNLRF began in late 2023. In March 2025, the decision was made to create a dedicated fund focused on nonprofit leadership and organizational resilience in Newark. In March 2026, BoardSource facilitated six listening sessions with 46 Newark nonprofit leaders—28 executive directors and CEOs and 18 board members—to identify priorities and help shape the Fund's first major investment.

Those conversations identified board governance as an initial priority and reinforced the need for sustained support beyond one-time training. NNLRF then launched a $285,000 Board Transformation Community of Practice with 12 Newark nonprofit organizations and an additional $120,000 catalytic implementation grant pool. The initiative combines BoardSource governance training,

consulting and cohort learning through the Nonprofit Professionals of Color Collective, and board development through Leadership Newark.

NNLRF was built with Newark's nonprofit sector rather than around a predetermined menu of programs. Five nonprofit leaders hold the majority of seats on its nine-member Governance Committee and share authority over strategy, selection and investment priorities.

"Shared governance means nonprofit leaders are not simply being asked for input after decisions are made. They are helping determine what the Fund invests in and how those investments respond to what organizations are experiencing. That shifts the relationship between philanthropy and the sector and keeps us accountable to what Newark nonprofit leaders say they need," said Sharnita C. Johnson, Vice President of Strategy, Impact and Communications, Victoria Foundation, and a member of the NNLRF Governance Committee.

According to the Center for Effective Philanthropy's (CEP) State of Nonprofits 2026: What Funders Need to Know, 66 percent of nonprofit CEOs surveyed expressed concerns about their organization's financial stability.

Resilience in Practice

Building on its first-year work, NNLRF is launching Resilience in Practice, a three-part capacity-strengthening series for Newark's nonprofit ecosystem. The first intensive, Financial Resilience, will take place Friday, November 13, 2026, and will be delivered in partnership with BDO. The half-day, in-person session is planned for approximately 75–100 nonprofit participants. The registration fee is $25 per participant.

The series will continue with People and Organizational Resilience on March 19, 2027, and Strategic Resilience and Adaptability on June 4, 2027.

"What matters is that nonprofit leaders are not only being invited into the conversation; we have a role in deciding what happens next and how. The Fund is creating space to work through the real challenges organizations are facing and connect that learning to resources, relationships and action," said Khaatim Sherrer El, CEO, Clinton Hill Community Action, and a member of the NNLRF Governance Committee.

NNLRF is supported by the Community Foundation of New Jersey, Prudential Foundation, Schumann Fund for New Jersey, The Henry S. & Agnes M. Truzack Foundation, and Victoria Foundation.

Read the NNLRF Year One report, https://www.nnlrf.org/reports/year-one-partner-report.pdf

Register for the November 13 Financial Resilience Intensive: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/resilience-in-practice-financial-management-in-uncertain-times-

tickets-2002564461211?aff=oddtdtcreator — $25 per participant

Learn more about NNLRF, upcoming programs and resources, and join the mailing list: www.nnlrf.org

About the Newark Nonprofit Leadership Resilience Fund

The Newark Nonprofit Leadership Resilience Fund is a jointly governed fund focused on strengthening nonprofit leadership and organizational capacity in Newark. It brings nonprofit leaders and philanthropic partners together to identify priorities and invest in sustained support. Willow Bees Group serves as Fund administrator.

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