

# NURTURE NJ

## General Frequently Asked Questions

### Why does Nurture NJ exist?

Despite our incredible and innovative healthcare system, New Jersey's maternal mortality rates are among the worst in the nation. According to America's Health Rankings, New Jersey ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation for maternal deaths. The state also suffers one of the widest racial disparities for both maternal and infant mortality. For women and babies of color, the statistics are even more dire. A Black mother in New Jersey is seven times more likely to die than a white mother due to pregnancy complications, and a Black baby is three times more likely to die than a white baby in its first year of life.

### How did Nurture NJ start?

On Maternal Health Awareness Day 2019, First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy launched Nurture NJ, a statewide initiative to reduce maternal mortality by 50% over five years and eliminate racial disparities in birth outcomes. The campaign, devoted to serving every mother, every baby, and every family, includes a multi-pronged, multi-agency approach to improve maternal and infant health among New Jersey's women and children.

Nurture NJ focuses on improving collaboration and programming among departments, agencies, and collaborators to achieve its goal of making New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the country to deliver and raise a baby. The initiatives include:

- A comprehensive, statewide Strategic Plan to reduce maternal mortality by 50% over five years and eliminate racial disparities in birth outcomes.
- An annual Black Maternal and Infant Health Leadership Summit
- The First Lady's Family Festival event series
- Quarterly state interdepartmental maternal and infant health meetings

### What role does the Strategic Plan play in Nurture NJ?

Funded by The Nicholson Foundation and the Community Health Acceleration Partnership, the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan is the culmination of over a year of in-person and virtual meetings with over 100 critical stakeholders, including New Jersey state departments and agencies, health systems, physicians, doulas, community organizations, and mothers and families. The strategic planning team consisted of national public health experts who collectively held over 125 years of experience and represented the great diversity of thought needed to address New Jersey's maternal and infant health crisis. The team drew on extensive maternal health research and data to examine the structural barriers and systemic racism that contributes to the maternal and infant health crisis.

The plan was developed after a statewide assessment of existing infrastructures to support improvements in maternal and infant health, an examination of community investments,

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clinical and social factors, private sector engagement, and policy development. Additionally, the team examined national best practices for improving maternal and infant health and eliminating disparities to identify areas where state activities could better align with scientific evidence.

## **What are the components of the Strategic Plan and how can I access them?**

The Strategic Plan consists of 3 major documents: (1) The Nurture NJ Strategic Plan; (2) the Nurture NJ Year One Plan and Playbook resources and tools to assist in the initial stages of plan implementation; and (3) the Nurture NJ Companion Document, background papers that provide references and justification for the plan proposals.

All three documents and more can be accessed at <https://nurturenj.nj.gov/>

## **Who is involved with Nurture NJ?**

First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy initiated Nurture NJ, enlisting 18 state agencies as part of a multi-agency task force that collaborates to implement Nurture NJ at the state level. Partners include community-based organizations, healthcare organizations, philanthropy, and private sector groups.

## **Who can be involved with Nurture NJ?**

Anyone can get involved in Nurture NJ. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to become involved.

## **Is there a formal process to play a part in making New Jersey the safest and most equitable place to deliver and raise a baby?**

Individuals and organizations can sign the pledge for Nurture NJ (<https://nurturenj.nj.gov/my-commitment/>). By signing the pledge, you will receive the latest information about Nurture NJ and how you can help.

## **What if I think that my organization has already achieved equity?**

Achieving equity is a continuous process that requires constant self-examination and assessment. Every organization needs to renew this effort to ensure we are truly making long-term sustainable changes towards a safer, more equitable future for all New Jerseyans, especially our mothers and babies. Here are 3 steps that your organization can take:

1. ***Make health equity a leader-driven priority.*** This step may sound simple, but senior management must not only articulate the vision, but also act on it by building it into all high-level decision-making.

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2. **Develop structures and processes that support equity.** To advance equity, organizations must dedicate financial and information resources accordingly, as well as set up a governance structure that oversees and manages this work across the organization.
3. **Take specific actions that address the social determinants of health.** An organization must first identify the health disparities that exist in its community, learn about the precise needs and assets of the people who face the disparities, and then come up with concrete actions that aim to close the gaps.

## Who is considered a collaborator?

Everyone interested in addressing the issues and identifying resolutions to make New Jersey the safest state in the nation to for Black, brown, and other women to deliver a baby is a collaborator. Interested individuals, institutions, organizations, and agencies are collaborators. Mothers and others who historically have been most harmed by the problem and those who would benefit most by an equitable resolution are also collaborators. Collaborators include:

- Community organizations
- Government agencies and institutions
  - federal, state, and local
- Philanthropic organizations
- State agencies include, but are not limited to, the New Jersey Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Economic Development Authority and Department of Transportation
- Private and public agencies and institutions, e.g., hospitals, clinics, universities
- Businesses

## How do I know what actions I am supposed to participate in?

The Nurture NJ Strategic Plan's actions are broken down by specific collaborators or sector groups (i.e., Academia, Health Sector, Funders, Business, etc.). Once you identify what sector you or your organization fits into, just navigate to that portion of the action plan.

## Who should I work with to accomplish the work?

This initiative is a cross-sectoral collaboration, meaning anyone who is similarly committed to Nurture NJ and its goals is a partner. However, you can reference the Nurture NJ Strategic Plan's recommended actions by sector to see who potential partners for different actions could be.

## I have some ideas for Nurture NJ, whom do I contact?

Please email all questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions to [nurturenj@nj.gov](mailto:nurturenj@nj.gov).

All other questions can be directed to [nurturenj@nj.gov](mailto:nurturenj@nj.gov)