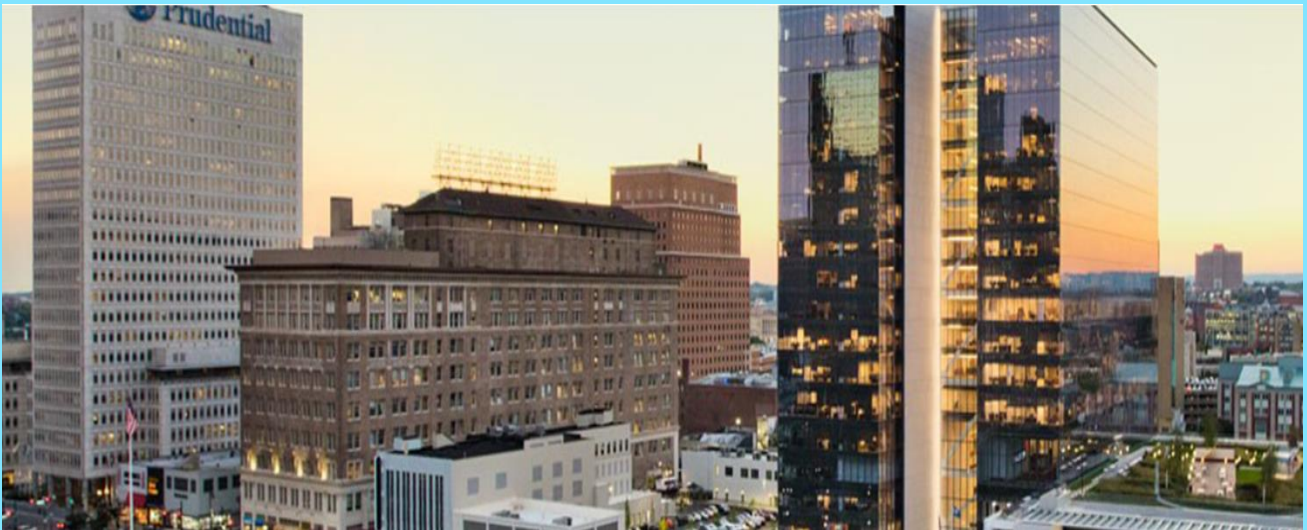


NEWARK ANCHOR COLLABORATIVE:
Promoting Racial Equity and Equitable Growth

May 2022



Executive Summary

The Newark Anchor Collaborative (NAC) is a unique cross-sector collaboration of anchor institutions committed to equitable economic growth with a racial equity lens. Anchors in the collaborative represent a wide range of sectors including arts and culture, higher education, healthcare, and private corporations. NAC is housed at the Newark Alliance, a nonprofit comprised of Newark's major corporations and anchor institutions dedicated to fostering inclusive economic growth in Newark.

Newark, New Jersey is a major urban city with a predominantly Black and Latinx population. Newark has experienced both the consequences of systemic discrimination (housing inequities, high poverty rates, etc.) and the emergence of substantial capital investment, particularly in the downtown area. The city has many established anchor institutions as well as a substantial network of community-based organizations, and a history of long-standing activism. NAC emerged in this context recognizing the need to develop equitable solutions by aligning its efforts with local government and coordinating the efforts of local anchors who are committed to remaining in Newark over the long run.

In 2017, Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark announced his decision to launch the Newark 2020 initiative known as Hire-Buy-Live (HBL). NAC supported the efforts to achieve the goals of Newark 2020. While NAC was officially formed shortly after the campaign was launched, its founding members had been meeting for several years prior to the initiative to explore opportunities around equitable hiring and procurement in Newark. In fact, the research and thought leadership from these founding members, such as the Prudential Foundation and Rutgers University, among

others, fueled broader conversations among the anchor leaders about how to address challenges related to hiring, procurement, and encouraging employees to live locally. As the group shared the outcomes of the work with the mayor's office, the mayor pushed for the creation of the Newark 2020 campaign. In late 2017, under the leadership of the Co-Chairs Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark, and Shané Harris, Vice President of Corporate Giving at Prudential and Executive Director of The Prudential Foundation at the time, NAC began to officially take shape.

The Newark 2020 initiative or HBL was designed to:

- **Increase hiring in Newark by securing jobs for 2020 Newark residents by the year 2020.**
- **Increase procurement and buying from local businesses in Newark, with anchors committing to increase their local spending by 20% within Newark over several years.**
- **Promote a “live local” campaign that encouraged employees from the anchor institutions to live locally by offering financial incentives, with a goal to attract 1200 new residents to the program incentive area within 5 years.**

From its inception in 2017 to today NAC has grown from an initial group of seven anchors to a collaborative of seventeen anchors. This growth over time is a testament to NAC's leadership and the vision of its Co-Chairs, which galvanized institutions in Newark across sectors.

The Newark Alliance's and NAC's significant accomplishments to date include:

- **Hiring 2020 Newark residents by early 2020.**
- **Spending \$74.3 million with local businesses, \$10.6 million of that with women and minority-owned businesses between June 2019 to June 2020.**
- **Attracting 118 new residents and retaining 72 existing residents by the end of 2019, which is estimated to have generated an economic impact of \$1.3 million per year in the program incentive area.**
- **Establishing a racial equity signature program and creating a Racial Equity Workgroup to provide peer-learning opportunities around institutional strategies.**
- **Developing a Racial Equity Framework to help members benchmark and assess their progress and advance collective commitments.**

NAC continues to be Co-Chaired by Nancy Cantor, and Shané Harris, who is now the Vice President of Social Responsibility and Partnerships at Prudential, and President of The Prudential Foundation. The Prudential Foundation also serves as the primary philanthropic contributor to NAC.

In 2019, NAC members identified racial equity as a signature program for the collaborative recognizing that racial inequities are apparent in hiring, procurement, and housing within Newark. To meet the goals of HBL, equitable growth, and racial equity, NAC operates as a think tank and a community of practice designed to strengthen anchor impact. The focus is on both advancing institutional change within anchors and

influencing external community impact in Newark. The quarterly member meetings serve as a forum for sharing resources, ideas, and promising practices. Further exploration of ideas that emerge in quarterly meetings is undertaken in Working Group meetings. Currently, there are four Working Groups: *Hire Local, Buy Local, Live Local, and Racial Equity*.

Through mutual learning and exchange, NAC members help each other advance institutional and collective HBL goals and become more racially equitable institutions both internally and externally. In interviews, NAC members noted the extent to which the learning exchanges propel them forward in their own organizational work on issues around hiring, procurement, and racial equity. Members also emphasized the value of being in a community of practice with institutions from a wide range of sectors, which exposes them to new thought leadership and creates synergy among the institutions.

The value of NAC's cross-sector focus coupled with its commitment to equitable growth and racial equity was further reinforced with the emergence of COVID-19 and the national reckoning on racial justice that began after the horrific killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. In responding to COVID-19, NAC members have leveraged their position and resources to develop new initiatives and collaborate across sectors to address the challenges. Additionally, having already begun to have more explicit conversations about racial equity prior to 2020, NAC was well-positioned to push further on these discussions amidst the backdrop of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color and the racial reckoning. It also created the space for anchors to engage in open and honest conversations about systemic racism within their institutions and how institutions are reflecting the community, whether at the board level, in staffing, programming, procurement, or investment decisions.

In early 2021, NAC underwent a strategic planning process that further reinforced each members' commitment to the three pillars of NAC, namely peer-to-peer learning, HBL local strategies, and equitable growth. As part of its new strategic direction moving forward NAC will create a shared pledge that anchors can mobilize around with an emphasis on racial equity.

Successes and Lessons Learned

NAC members highlighted several critical factors that have contributed to the success of NAC.

- Dedicated leadership along with resources and specific measurable, realistic, and time-dependent goals is crucial.
- Identifying an entity to coordinate and support the implementation of the vision is vital.
- Broadening the definition of what constitutes an anchor was an important step taken by the Co-Chairs.
- The availability of strong data and research on socio-economic factors within Newark provided the impetus for NAC to forge ahead and make its case for greater racial equity.

- The infrastructure of NAC and the creation of a peer learning community, which has allowed for the sharing of both successes and challenges among members has been critical.
- Requiring the participation of CEOs and senior-level staff with decision-making power at the main table has also proven an effective strategy.

Future Directions

Areas where NAC plans to focus going forward include:

- Communicating and sharing the story of NAC's success both within Newark and more broadly.
- Diversifying its funding structure.
- Identifying and developing a shared pledge around racial equity and equitable growth.
- Continuing to evolve as a thought leader and think tank.



Introduction

The Newark Anchor Collaborative (NAC) is a unique cross-sector collaboration of anchor institutions¹ who are committed to equitable growth in Newark with an emphasis on racial equity. Anchors in the collaborative² represent a wide range of sectors including arts and culture, higher education, healthcare, and private corporations. NAC is housed at the Newark Alliance, a nonprofit comprised of Newark's major corporations and anchor institutions dedicated to fostering inclusive economic growth in Newark. Through innovative partnerships with key stakeholders, the Alliance develops, leads, and incubates major citywide initiatives, including NAC.

Newark, New Jersey is a major urban center that is over 350 years old and built on a history of migration and immigration with a predominantly Black and Latinx population. Newark has faced both the consequences of systemic discrimination (redlining, school segregation, high poverty rates, and more) and the emergence of substantial capital investment particularly in the downtown area, amidst the long-standing presence of multiple anchor institutions. These anchors include corporations, education and medical institutions, and arts organizations. Coupled with this is the positive geography of its location as a transportation hub in the metro New York/New Jersey region (New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, 2017). NAC emerged in this context recognizing the need to strengthen the local economy and develop equitable solutions by aligning its efforts with local government and coordinating the efforts of local anchors who are committed to remaining in Newark over the long run. Many of these anchor institutions are among Newark's most significant employers with a

vested interest in the city's future. Their economic, physical, human, and other forms of capital can be leveraged, through collaboration, to help solve Newark's most pressing challenges.

In 2017, Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark announced his decision to launch the Newark 2020 initiative (Rizzo, 2017). This initiative, familiarly known as Hire-Buy-Live (HBL), was designed to increase hiring in Newark by securing jobs for 2020 Newark residents by the year 2020. The reason that this was an important focus of the campaign was that at the time only 18% of all jobs in Newark, were held by Newarkers (New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, 2017). Another part of this initiative was to promote procurement and buying from local businesses in Newark with anchors committing to increase their local spending by 20% within Newark, though this was a longer-term goal. A final component was to promote a "live local" campaign that encouraged employees from the anchor institutions to live locally by offering financial incentives for rentals and home improvement grants to homeowners. The goal was to attract 1,200 new residents in the program incentive area within 5 years. This last leg of the Newark 2020 Initiative stemmed from the fact that many people who were employed within Newark were living outside the city. Incentivizing employees to live locally can stabilize neighborhoods and promote economic growth by increasing the tax base and creating greater demand for local businesses.

NAC, which officially formed shortly after the campaign was launched, supported the efforts to achieve the goals of Newark 2020. Several anchor members had been meeting prior to the launch of Newark 2020 to explore opportunities around equitable hiring and procurement in Newark, and as a result, Mayor Ras Baraka reached out to

¹ [The Anchor Institutions Task Force \(AITF\)](#) defines an anchor institution as enduring organizations that are rooted in their localities and are community-centric agents of change.

² Current NAC Members include Audible, Broadridge Financial, Essex County College, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield, Mars Inc., Newark Museum of Art, New Jersey Institute of Technology, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark Public Library, Newark Symphony Hall, Prudential, PSEG, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences, Rutgers University-Newark, RWJBarnabus Health, United Airlines, and University Hospital.

Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark about launching Newark 2020. Subsequently, Shané Harris, Vice President of Corporate Giving at Prudential and Executive Director of The Prudential Foundation at the time, reached out to Nancy about the idea to create an anchor collaborative to drive anchor strategies. As a result, Cantor and Harris became the Co-Chairs of NAC and NAC began to take shape and form.

From its inception in 2017 to today NAC has grown from an initial group of seven anchors to a collaborative of 17 anchors. This growth over time is a testament to NAC's leadership and the vision of its Co-Chairs, which galvanized institutions in Newark across sectors to commit to a focus on equitable growth and racial equity. This has resulted in the Newark Alliance's and NAC's significant accomplishments to date which include:

- **Hiring 2020 Newark residents by early 2020.**
- **Spending \$74.3 million with local businesses, \$10.6 million of that with women and minority-owned businesses between June 2019 to June 2020.**
- **Attracting 118 new residents and retaining 72 existing residents by the end of 2019, which is estimated to have generated an economic impact of \$1.3 million per year in the program incentive area.**
- **Establishing a racial equity signature program and creating a Racial Equity Workgroup to provide peer-learning opportunities around institutional strategies.**
- **Developing a Racial Equity Framework to help members benchmark and assess their progress and advance collective commitments.**

NAC's journey to accomplish these goals was fueled by many factors, particularly the history and socio-cultural context of Newark.

Historical and Socio-Cultural Context

The city of Newark in Essex County, founded in 1666, is the largest city in New Jersey and in the 1800s, became a major economic driver for the state due to its large port and manufacturing and insurance industries (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021). However, following the Great Depression and World War II, as African Americans moved from the South to cities such as Newark during the Great Migration, many white residents fled to the suburbs, with the federal government subsidizing the growth of the suburbs as a way to create residential segregation. Additionally, "Redlining" prevented Black residents from moving out to the suburbs and dissuaded white residents from moving into the city. In Newark, this resulted in a diminishing tax base (O'Dea, 2019).

After increasing tensions between the Black community and Newark police and a rumor that a Black cab driver had been killed inside a police precinct in 1967, five days of unrest and what many referred to as a rebellion was ignited in Newark that prompted additional residents, particularly white residents, to flee the city for the suburbs (O'Dea, 2019; Rojas & Atkinson, 2017). As a result, Newark experienced a dramatic population shift – in 1940, African Americans accounted for about 11 percent of the population, but accounted for 54 percent of the population by 1970, only 30 years later (O'Dea, 2019). In this short time, Newark went from an industrial centerpiece to a struggling urban city with a declining population and high poverty rates. However, at the same time, Newark became a center of Black culture and the arts. The poet Imamu Amiri Baraka, a Newark native and considered to be the father of the Black Arts Movement, was influential in creating several institutions that made Newark a leader in Black arts, cultural nationalism, and political organizing (Rizzo and Strub, 2021).

By the 1980s, most of the middle-class population had left Newark, and by 2003, 30 percent of the population was living below the poverty line while unemployment was at 12 percent (PBS, 2005). By 2015, the poverty rate in Newark was twice the national average and the unemployment rate in the city was 70 percent higher than the national average and 60 percent higher than the average in New Jersey (New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, 2017). There are also significant racial disparities in these metrics – people of color have the highest unemployment rates in the city and Black residents a rate double that of white residents. Residents of Newark also hold only an exceedingly small percentage of the jobs in the city (18%) in comparison to other similar cities like New Orleans (46%) and Baltimore (33%), and people of color hold only 40 percent of the available jobs in Newark despite representing 75 percent of the city's population. Additionally, there are more than 2,000 vacant or abandoned properties in a city considered to be relatively small at 24 square miles in size, and even smaller when one considers that the port and airport occupy a large portion of that property (Yi, 2017).

Despite these economic metrics, Newark remains an important economic center in New Jersey in recent years with a thriving business community including major corporations such as Prudential, and the largest student concentration in the state with 50,000 students and faculty at five colleges and universities (Newark Alliance, 2021a). The city is a global transportation hub and is considered premier art and cultural center with venues including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the Prudential Center, and the Newark Museum, among others. Major corporations and anchor institutions serve as the city's largest employers and have invested significantly in real estate across the city of Newark (Zeuli et al., 2014).

Equally important is the strength of Newark's substantial network of community-based organizations³, as well as the long-standing activism in the city that emerged, particularly after the rebellion, and has remained a positive force. All these factors are considered assets that the city of Newark can leverage to create greater, more inclusive economic opportunities and reduce inequities.

Formation of NAC

While NAC was officially formed after the work of the mayor's Newark 2020 Initiative began, NAC's founding members had been meeting for several years prior to the initiative.

In 2005, the Prudential Foundation began examining local procurement by exploring the small business landscape in Newark. Several years later in 2011, the Brookings Institution worked with Dr. Kevin Lyons, an Associate Professor of Supply Chain Archaeology at Rutgers University School of Business, to study the strength of the "economic engine" and manufacturing in Newark, which would increase the city's competitiveness (Mistry, 2013). The study identified 400 current manufacturers and found that most were small businesses in Newark in contrast to the larger manufacturing companies that had existed before. As a result, there was an interest in exploring how to direct purchasing power collectively towards these local manufacturers. However, recognizing that there are more than just manufacturing businesses in Newark, Lyons also undertook research with his students to explore small businesses outside of the manufacturing sector. He then researched and developed an inventory of what each anchor purchased regularly. Building on this research, the Prudential Foundation subsequently

³ Newark Community Development Network is a collaborative of community development corporations (CDCs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs): https://www.nonprofitlist.org/det/56100_newark-community-development-network

commissioned a study to assess the economic opportunity around procurement in Newark and the role anchor institutions could play. The report from this study, undertaken by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) analyzed procurement data of six anchor institutions in Newark and interviewed 70 individuals from organizations supporting small business development. The findings of the ICIC study reinforced that Newark was prepared with large anchor institutions that could drive local economic growth by directing a larger share of procurement opportunities to local businesses (Zeuli et al., 2014). By increasing procurement from local businesses to ten percent, anchor institutions could flood local businesses in Newark with an additional \$33 million.

The findings from the previous research and the ICIC study provided an impetus for the formation of the NAC in many ways. Several anchors, who had participated in the study, began meeting to discuss the results. Fortuitously at that time, several of the large anchor institutions in Newark began to undergo leadership changes, which led to the emergence of several like-minded leaders.

Around the same time, two additional pieces of research strengthened the case for an anchor collaborative. A report by the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice found that local Newark residents only held 18% of jobs in Newark and proposed that Newark follow in the footsteps of major cities like Baltimore, New Orleans, and Philadelphia and establish an anchor institution coalition with a sustainable governance structure to commit to a common set of strategies (New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, 2017). Additionally, the Prudential Foundation had funded a study to examine the extent to which anchor employees lived in Newark and found that a very small percentage of employees resided in the city.

This research and thought leadership began fueling broader conversations among the anchor leaders as they grappled with how to address challenges related to hiring, procurement, and encouraging employees to live locally. As the group shared the outcomes of the work with the mayor's office, which was a strategic partner, the mayor pushed for the creation of the Newark 2020 campaign. Later in 2017, the comprehensive planning process to develop a strategic plan for NAC began, led by the Newark Alliance and the Co-Chairs Nancy Cantor and Shané Harris. The primary goal was to focus on strengthening the local economy through hiring, while increasing local procurement, and encouraging employees of anchor institutions to live in the city of Newark were secondary goals.

It was Harris who spurred the formation of NAC by reaching out to Cantor about the idea to create an anchor collaborative and it was Cantor who was the "thought leader" behind the vision for creating a community of practice of anchors that would serve as a learning collaborative. Harris then engaged in individual outreach and conversations with anchor CEOs to secure their buy-in and commitment to undertaking the work. The Prudential Foundation was also instrumental in providing financial support to ensure the creation, development, and continuation of NAC.

From its inception to 2021, the NAC has grown from an initial membership of seven anchors – Audible, New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJ PAC), Prudential Financial, RWJBarnabas Health Services, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), Rutgers School of Biomedical and Health Sciences, and Rutgers University-Newark – to 17 members (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Newark Anchor Collaborative Member Organizations



NAC's ability to grow from seven anchors to 17 was a result of the convincing messaging of Cantor and Harris and the pairing of that messaging with compelling data. This was a very deliberate strategy. When approaching new anchors to join NAC, the Co-Chairs highlighted data from the research that had been undertaken to emphasize the importance of the Newark 2020 Initiative. In addition to explaining how NAC would be organized, the Co-Chairs of NAC communicated a sense of urgency regarding the collective movement to help Newark become more equitable, and the anchors responded in kind. As one of the newer anchor participants stated:

I was intrigued that there was a collaborative that happened to be of anchor institutions and that it was composed of different institutions. ... nonprofit and for-profit and it was pretty diverse in the group of people around the table. ... That's what attracted me and then, as we kept having discussions, I went "Wow, this group is...active," this wasn't just a network. ... Here was a collaboration that was actually made up of the leading institutions, companies in the city, and their concern was how do we make this city more attractive, relevant, vibrant, and meaningful?

The Structure of NAC

NAC is composed of 17 anchor institutions representing a wide range of cross-sector institutions from nonprofit organizations to private corporations. NAC continues to be Co-Chaired by Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark, and Shané Harris, who is now Vice President of Social Responsibility and Partnerships, and President of the Prudential Foundation. The Prudential Foundation also continues to serve as the primary philanthropic contributor to NAC.

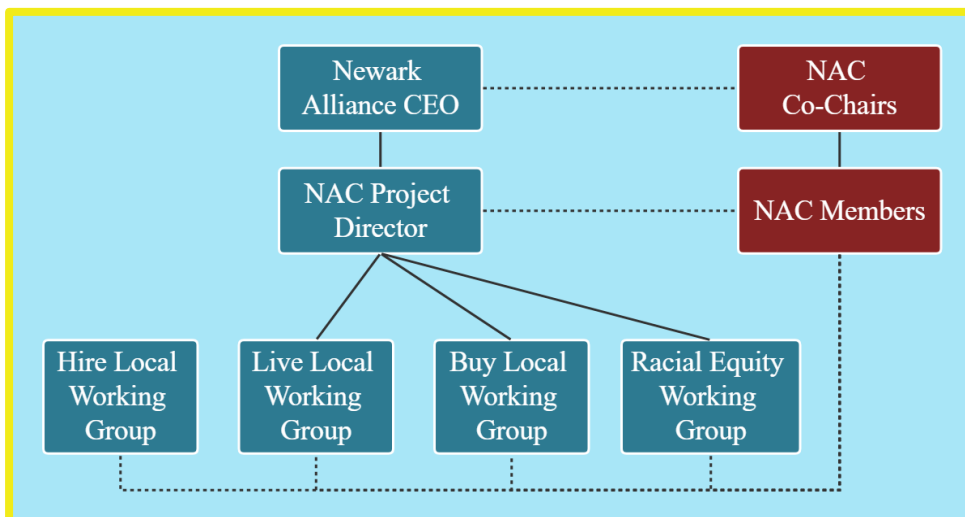
NAC is housed at the Newark Alliance, and members of NAC are members of the Newark Alliance. The Co-Chairs are regularly in contact with the CEO of the Newark Alliance, Evan Weiss, and the Director of NAC, Sibusisiwe Malaba, the individual responsible for managing the daily work of NAC. Additionally, a consulting firm, Marga, Inc., led by Dr. David Maurrasse, acts as a Learning Partner providing research support around anchor community partnerships and guidance around the programming, structure, and strategic direction of NAC. The Co-Chairs of NAC, the CEO of the Newark Alliance, the Director of NAC, and the President of Marga Inc., serve as the Executive Committee and meet periodically to discuss overall progress and set quarterly agendas. Quarterly strategy sessions to further explore strategic priorities are also

undertaken by the Executive Committee. Funding to support the work of NAC is provided by the Prudential Foundation.

NAC is composed of a “main table” of anchor institution members represented by the CEO or other high-level executives (or designees) who meet on a quarterly basis. The current “main table” is comprised of the 17 anchor institutions, though new members are always encouraged to join. Prior to Covid-19, the meetings took place in person, but as a result of the pandemic, the meetings are held virtually.

Aside from the “main table” NAC has established Working Groups that can undertake the further exploration of ideas that emerge during quarterly meetings. The Working Groups are designed to implement goals that are set at the “main table” meetings and encourage broader participation from anchor institution employees beyond senior-level staff. Currently, there are four Working Groups: Hire Local, Buy Local, Live Local, and Racial Equity. Some Working Groups meet quarterly, while others meet as needed and are coordinated by a Program Director. The Program Directors for Hire Local and Live Local are Newark Alliance employees, while the Buy Local Program Director is Lyons. The Racial Equity working group is coordinated by Marga Inc. and the NAC Director.

Figure 2 – Newark Anchor Collaborative Structure



NAC Strategy and Approach

While HBL is a key component for NAC, members have committed to advancing different dimensions of this program based on their own expertise and resources. As a result, the level of engagement around the three work areas varies but there is a shared commitment. Additionally, in 2019, NAC members identified a focus on racial equity as an integral part of programming given that racial inequities are apparent in hiring, procurement, and housing within Newark. COVID-19 and the national racial reckoning further reinforced the importance of NAC's racial equity focus.

To meet the goals of HBL, equitable growth, and racial equity, NAC operates as a think tank and a community of practice designed to strengthen anchor impact. The focus is on both advancing institutional change within anchors and influencing external community impact in Newark. The quarterly meetings of the "main table" serve as a forum for sharing resources, sparking innovation, solving problems, and developing strategy and collective commitments. Through mutual learning and exchange, NAC members can share promising practices, help each other advance institutional and collective HBL goals, and become more racially equitable institutions both internally and externally.

As Cantor and Harris noted, NAC's approach has always been a mix between addressing the community impact and public-facing issues as well as internal practices that allow each institution to be a better anchor, particularly around racial equity, and equitable growth. Throughout the interviews facilitated for this case study, NAC members commented on the extent to which the learning exchanges propel them forward in their own organizational work on issues around hiring, procurement, and racial equity. One anchor member noted that NAC has allowed him to think differently about how an arts institution should engage with the community

and that it has provided an opportunity to form new collaborations. Members also emphasized the value of being in a community of practice with institutions from a wide range of sectors, which exposes them to new thought leadership and creates synergy among the institutions. As one member noted:

For me what works well about NAC is the complement of institutions and voices around the table. I think it's really important that we not be siloed in our respective sectors, but that we deliberately cross-pollinate and share ideas and issues across multiple sectors because we can look at the issue with fresh eyes. That will lead to more collaborative problem-solving...and to meaningful change and transformation.

By hearing case studies from different institutions about how they have approached racial equity in terms of hiring and advancement, internal culture, procurement, and programming, members have received concrete examples and tools that they can apply within their institutions. In addition to case studies on specific topics, the learning exchanges also enable NAC members to share about areas in which they are struggling and to hear from other members about how they have approached these issues. NAC members reported that this open forum allows for strong relationships to form among members where trust features prominently, and members can collaborate and work together collectively. It has also allowed for ad-hoc collaborations between members that might not normally have emerged. For example, as one anchor member noted when her staff was expressing concern about COVID testing and vaccines she was able to reach out to the President of University Hospital, Dr. Elnahal, who provided a masterclass on vaccines for her staff.

NAC's Key Initiatives and Outcomes

Hire Local



The emergence of collaborative initiatives involving multiple anchor institutions in a locality or region has been a notable development in the anchor movement over the years. Many locally engaged anchor institutions recognize that they can have a greater impact by leveraging their resources and collaborating in cross-sector partnerships. Recognizing the power of developing and implementing shared initiatives that can advance local economies, several anchor collaboratives have emerged in cities such as Rochester, Cleveland, Albuquerque, and Baltimore, among others. The majority of these initiatives include hospitals, higher education, and other nonprofit entities. However, one of the factors that makes NAC unique is the number and breadth of anchors represented in the collaborative from cultural institutions to hospitals to major corporations to education institutions. Additionally, NAC is unique in that the anchors include both non-profit and private corporations. Engaging such a large and diverse group of anchors was possible because NAC embraced a broader definition of anchor partners and included those institutions that were taking on the characteristics of anchors in the community. As Harris and Cantor identified, the criteria for anchors to be included in NAC was a willingness to make a commitment to Newark and the goals of HBL, and a willingness to have more senior-level leaders engaged in the collaborative.

Another unique aspect of NAC is its commitment to equitable growth and racial equity and to addressing these issues from both an internal and external perspective. While NAC is composed of senior-level leaders, the Co-Chairs recognize that leadership alone cannot create lasting change if a racial equity lens is not embedded within institutional practice. This in turn leads to greater community impact. This vision has guided NAC from its inception and influences its strategy and approach.

“Hiring locally” refers to businesses and institutions prioritizing the hiring of people that live in the community and seeks to address two important challenges facing many American cities – poverty and unemployment (The Atlantic, 2021). There is a distinct need for hiring locally in Newark – a lack of access to employment in the city has produced a poverty rate that is about twice the national average, according to the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (2017). Those employed inside the city are typically concentrated in lower-paying jobs that qualify them as asset-limited, income-constrained, and without enough income to afford basic needs or funds to cover any emergency situations. Disparities in employment in Newark are not fueled by the residents themselves – Newark residents have higher average labor force participation and are competitive job candidates, and a majority of the jobs in Newark do not require advanced education. Rather systemic racism and resulting barriers have limited opportunities, particularly for residents of color. Therefore, strategies to hire local residents into middle-skills jobs with career pathways are needed to address these disparities.

The initial goal of *Hire Local* was to hire 2,020 Newark residents into anchor institutions by the year 2020, and this goal was achieved. Most anchor members took on some portion of this. For some NAC member organizations, however, alternatives to these hiring approaches were

necessary as they work in highly specialized and skilled technical fields.

To achieve the Hire goal, NAC organized its efforts around local hiring by developing a two-fold strategy, one part focused on employers and the other on candidates. For the employer-facing strategy, NAC created a Human Resource roundtable, including Chief Human Resource Officers, hiring managers, Human Resource Managers, and diversity inclusion officers from the corporations to discuss setting benchmarks for hiring locally. The goal was for each anchor to look at their internal numbers and see how to increase local hires within the next two years. NAC worked with employers to set parameters regarding how many Newark residents they would commit to employing. To keep the momentum going, NAC met with HR representatives monthly and had post-check-ins with each of the hiring managers. These roundtables were instituted to identify best practices on hiring locally and to ensure that the talent slates remained diverse. Through this process of working with employers, NAC identified systemic barriers that existed and worked individually with each of the employers to remove or at least minimize those barriers. Addressing barriers took on a range of forms from training strategies to prepare residents of Newark for different roles to referring residents to support services such as job coaching and training to help with the interview process.

To tackle the candidate side of the strategy, NAC employed a grassroots model to spread the word. NAC created what they called a “community hub network” or a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) that had workforce development as a focus of their platform. A total of five community hubs were created throughout Newark. NAC developed contracts with the hubs and the staff at each hub was responsible for triaging and connecting candidates to employment opportunities. To

ensure everyone remained committed to the goal, NAC held weekly meetings with the hubs. NAC also hired account managers whose primary role was to serve as the bridge between the community hub organizations and the employers. This limited the number of different organizations with which employers had to interface and streamlined the process. On a weekly basis, account managers would go through the list of candidates searching for work and see whether they were applying for jobs, or whether they needed further assistance.

While NAC met its Hire Local goal, the emergence of COVID impacted the ability of anchors to continue hiring, with many anchors having to furlough or lay off staff. NAC is currently in the process of identifying more explicit racially equitable strategies around hiring such as supporting the creation of diverse talent pipelines through collaborations among the anchors.

Buy Local



“Buying locally” is a broad term typically used to describe efforts by major businesses, anchor institutions, and public agencies to engage in local procurement and purchasing practices that support small, locally owned businesses who in turn invest in the local economy (Rice, 2012). Locally owned businesses in many cities employ numerous people, invest in their local neighborhoods, and provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs to build wealth and therefore foster job creation and increase tax revenue in these cities.

Early on, PolicyLink⁴ identified Newark as a city with a strong foundation to launch a buy-local initiative as many of the larger corporations already had local procurement policies and there was a strong network of organizations coordinating efforts city-wide.

To ensure that local businesses in Newark were being given access to procurement opportunities that had typically been afforded to businesses outside of Newark, NAC collaborated with Lyons.

As noted earlier, prior to the early days of NAC, the Brookings Institution worked with Lyons to study the manufacturing sector in Newark. Subsequently, Lyons and his students engaged in a project to investigate the larger universe of small businesses in Newark as well as to create an inventory of what each anchor institution purchased regularly. Through this research, it was apparent that by matching what anchors purchase with what small businesses supply it would be possible to encourage greater local procurement, and thus Lyons was asked to use his research and data to enhance the Buy Local work.

Member organizations committed to increasing local spending by 20 percent within Newark, though this goal is currently being redetermined and the work is still evolving. However, there have been successes with this component of the initiative by NAC member organizations and early indicators show that local sourcing increased substantially in the first year of the initiative from three to nine percent (Cantor, et al, 2019).

In 2021, the Newark Alliance, with funding from the Prudential Foundation, engaged U3 Advisors to conduct a procurement study and create an action plan for each individual anchor that

participated in the study to increase their local spend. While the study did not examine subcontracting, which many Newark anchors have used to increase their local and diverse procurement, it found that the total local spend from June 2019 to June 2020 among the 11 anchors who participated amounted to \$74.3 million and of that total, the local spend with women and minority-owned businesses was \$10.6 million. In comparing NAC to purchasing collaboratives in other cities, the study found that 14% of its spend is with minority and women-owned businesses, which is comparable to other more mature collaboratives with local and diverse procurement programs. This demonstrates that NAC has made a concerted effort to engage with local and diverse businesses and provides a solid foundation of local diverse suppliers on which NAC could build. Moving forward, NAC intends to use the research by U3 Advisors, along with Lyon's research on supplier capacity to identify a new collective goal that members can commit to in order to continue to increase local and diverse procurement and to explore linkages to local hiring.

Live Local



In addition to working on hiring and buying locally, NAC members have focused on the *Live Local* component. In the last decade, many hospitals and universities have recognized the

⁴ PolicyLink (2012). Buy Newark: A Guide to Promoting Economic Inclusion Through Local Purchasing. Retrieved from: <https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/buy-newark-adopting-a-comprehensive-buy-local-strategy-for-the-city-of-newark>

importance of investing in real estate and housing in the cities in which they are located and have created attractive opportunities for employees to live close to their workplace (Harris, 2021). As early as the 1990s, the University of Pennsylvania invested in the West Philadelphia Initiative to create and preserve housing options near its campus. In 2009, the Greater University Circle Initiative in Cleveland started incentivizing employees of anchor institutions to live in the Greater University Circle Neighborhoods (Lee, 2020).

Though major corporations have been bringing people to Newark to work for years, only about eight percent of those employees live within the city of Newark (Next City, 2020). Many NAC members are now encouraging their employees to not only work in the city of Newark but also to live and to shop there (Cantor, et al, 2019). The *Live Local* Program, stewarded by the Newark Alliance, offers financial incentives from anchor institutions to eligible participants, including employees of NAC member institutions, to rent or renovate homes in the Program Incentive Area for an initial one-year period (Newark Alliance, 2021b). This component is partially about encouraging new individuals to become residents of Newark as well as keeping existing residents within Newark. Within five years, the program is hoping to have generated at least 1,200 new residents within the program incentive area. Additionally, some NAC member organizations have their own, smaller-scale versions of a “live local” incentive like Audible with an incentive program of \$500 monthly housing installments for employees who live in Newark (Newark Regional Business Partnership, 2018).

As of the end of 2019, the Live Local program had attracted 118 new residents and retained 72 existing residents and it was estimated that the program was generating an economic impact of \$1.3 million per year in the program incentive area. Additionally, the smaller-scale Audible

subsidy was found to have increased the number of Audible employees living in the city of Newark by about 40 percent (Newark Regional Businesses Partnership, 2018).

However, with the emergence of COVID-19, which revealed the inadequacies of existing housing, particularly for communities of color, NAC is beginning to explore a new strategic direction around promoting equitable real estate development. Given low homeownership rates among people of color and a severe lack of affordable housing within Newark, promoting equitable growth will require an intentional focus on housing. Affordable housing is an area that the mayor and several anchors, including Rutgers' Center on Law, Inequality and Metropolitan Equity (CLiME), and local community-based organizations are committed to addressing in Newark. The mayor's Equitable Growth Advisory Commission is a key player in this work and is collaborating with Deputy Mayor Ladd as well as several other anchor partners and the Newark Community Development Network. NAC will explore opportunities to partner in this work.

Racial Equity



In 2019, prior to the murder of George Floyd and the reignited racial justice movement, NAC began having more explicit conversations about racial equity recognizing that while HBL did not explicitly focus on racial equity, the goals of NAC could not be accomplished without significant attention to racial equity. Racial equity was

identified as a signature program for NAC and became the key topic of discussion at subsequent NAC meetings, along with the provision of racial equity tools and resources. In a NAC meeting in February of 2020 Cantor stated:

The architecture of segregation has been built over centuries and reinforced in policies and practices. There is a need to uncover those practices that go unnoticed and recommit to transformation. NAC can take this on in a real way. Racial equity is intersectional and has to define the anchor work.

As a result of these previous discussions, NAC was well-positioned to harness the racial reckoning in 2020 to push deeper on these issues with its members. NAC created a Racial Equity Workgroup (REW) in the summer of 2020 recognizing that anchors are at different phases of their racial equity and inclusion work and could benefit from shared learning and intentional collaboration among professionals who are responsible for executing equity and inclusion efforts within their institutions. The purpose of the Workgroup was to create an informal community of practice for equity and inclusion leaders to delve deeper into a peer-to-peer exchange of institutional strategies, which can build anchor capacity. Further, the goal is to bring this learning to the broader NAC table to inform the racial equity signature program. Simultaneously, NAC quarterly meetings of the “main table” have provided a forum for mutual support and learning by providing an opportunity for members such as University Hospital, the Newark Museum, PSEG, and Prudential to provide case study examples of how they are approaching racial equity and inclusion both internally and externally. This has allowed members to dive more deeply into specific

strategies and frameworks that have been employed by various anchors to advance racial equity.

From these meetings, the idea of creating a racial equity framework to help institutions assess and benchmark their progress emerged.

Subsequently, Marga Inc. drew on the themes and discussions at these meetings along with a review of other frameworks to develop a NAC Racial Equity Framework.⁵ This framework examines areas such as Equitable Hiring, Recruitment & Retention, Internal Culture, Structure & Communication, and Community Drivers and Core Business & Services along with related subcategories. NAC intends to use this framework to help assess where individual anchors are in their racial equity journey as well as where NAC is as a collective in order to identify shared commitments around racial equity that could be advanced.

The Impact of Covid-19 on NAC



A history of pervasive inequity and high population density have shaped how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted Newark residents. The most populous city in New Jersey reported its first confirmed case of coronavirus on March 14, 2020 (Panico, 2020). Since then, the pandemic has inflicted a heavy toll on life in Newark.

⁵ Marga Inc. and NAC (2021). Racial Equity Framework.

Essex County accounted for 8.8% of total cases of Covid-19 and 11.3% of Covid-related deaths in New Jersey over the first 19 months of the pandemic (The New York Times, 2021). Newark has experienced the brunt of the disease burden on account of multiple factors. A highly concentrated population in Newark is a major contributor to New Jersey's standing as the most population-dense state in the country. The course of the pandemic has demonstrated how the virus thrives in crowded places, especially where people might be gathering in large numbers in indoor spaces. Furthermore, systemic racism and the resulting inequities in housing, health, and employment have driven the disproportionate impact on communities of color in Newark. Given NAC's focus on equity issues, it has been imperative for its member organizations to address the impact of the pandemic in Newark and to leverage their position and resources in order to develop new initiatives to respond to the challenges that have emerged. From providing treatment on the front lines to creating Covid-19 funds to benefit various constituents, purchasing PPE, distributing food, engaging in contact tracing efforts, and educating the community about vaccines, anchors were and continue to be actively involved in meeting the varied needs of the city.

NAC members have been forced to adapt their HBL approach to the realities of Covid-19. For example, in the early days of the pandemic, office closures and social distancing disrupted much of the work around *Live Local*. Due to a halt in in-person lease signings, which were a requirement for program participation, the list of candidates for housing got longer. Furthermore, limited property showings slowed the process for all parties involved. New home occupants encountered numerous barriers to securing housing despite the widespread availability of units. Considering these challenges, NAC adjusted the program to better meet the needs of community members. People typically had a

45-day window to sign a lease to be eligible for the assistance program. NAC extended this deadline to give people more time. Social distancing necessitated greater flexibility among the anchors in their efforts to support people as they secured housing. Like many other cities in the country, Newark has seen a spike in housing insecurity amid the pandemic. This adds to the urgency around identifying other interventions aimed at improving housing security in Newark.

Partial shutdowns rattled the economic fabric of Newark as they have around the world. The city was rather vulnerable to the economic shock on account of its unique business landscape—the majority of the 13,500 businesses operating in Newark are relatively small with 62% of them employing fewer than five people and 70% reporting less than \$1 million in annual revenue (Zeuli et al., 2014). Such enterprises were intended to be the primary beneficiaries of relief funding mobilized as part of the American Rescue Plan Act passed at the beginning of 2021. However, prior to the arrival of those dollars, employers found themselves scrambling to navigate the widespread economic shutdown instigated by the onset of the pandemic. Transitioning to a virtual working environment impacted all businesses, and anchors had to shift their approach to administering the *Hire Local* initiative. The Program Director of *Hire Local*, Della Walker, launched an emergency staffing effort aimed at linking work candidates to opportunities in the health field where there was an urgent need. Several anchors supported this effort by circulating employment and training opportunities to identify workers to fill the new roles.

The Covid-19 pandemic also hurt many of the anchors themselves. Most anchors across the board lost revenue, as well as staff. For university anchors, decreases in enrollment and lost revenue were combined with the challenge of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable

students who faced food and financial insecurities along with digital divides in access to learning. For arts institutions, the lack of in-person events led to lost revenue and the need to create virtual programming options. Several corporate anchors, such as United Airlines were forced to furlough or lay-off staff, while others had to consolidate corporate real estate in Newark. The hospital anchors were particularly hard hit during the onset of the pandemic as they struggled to address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black and brown communities, and lost staff due to the virus. In a compelling way, Covid-19 underscored that the most vulnerable community members are at greatest risk of contracting the virus due to systemic racism which has created inequities in access to education, jobs, housing, and healthcare among other social determinants of health.

As a whole NAC was also affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. On a basic level, it took some time for each organization to transition from in-person to remote work. However, NAC continued to meet virtually and in fact, most members felt there was greater participation in the NAC meetings as it was easier for anchor members to engage virtually. This positive unintended consequence notwithstanding, NAC members did note that the pandemic disrupted the progress that NAC was making towards the goals of inclusive economic growth in Newark both in terms of local hiring and in terms of advancing procurement efforts. As Cantor noted, “the disaggregation of work and people working remotely is an impediment to the collective effort of supporting downtown businesses and neighborhoods.”

While not being able to support local businesses in Newark with physical dollars due to remote work arrangements, NAC members identified

other ways to contribute during the pandemic. Audible, launched an initiative called Newark Working Kitchens (NWK), which focused on supporting Newark restaurants around its neighborhood by purchasing meals in bulk and having the meals delivered to those most in need in Newark. In addition to investing \$1.5 million in the initiative, they pushed for additional funding at the city, county, and state levels.

NAC members also continue to serve on various boards and working groups that advise on reopening at the city and state levels. Additionally, The Newark Alliance spearheaded a contact-tracing initiative in partnership with the City of Newark in which the anchors played a supportive role by mobilizing volunteers and employees to help.

Increased communication has proven to be a major asset to the anchors as they work to address the consequences of the pandemic. It has made possible more extensive coordination and contributed to improved data sharing across NAC. Despite widespread office closures or restrictions on in-person gathering indoors, NAC members have been in more frequent contact with one another as demanded by the Covid reality. Virtual convenings throughout 2020 and 2021 have provided a forum for representatives to exchange ideas, voice challenges, brainstorm new solutions, and process the weight of the pandemic as well as the ongoing racial reckoning in the country.

The Impact of the Racial Reckoning on NAC



In the wake of the horrific killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd, NAC's work on racial equity took on new meaning. The call for racial justice that emerged nationally, reinforced for the anchors the importance of addressing racial equity as an integral part of equitable growth. As noted earlier, NAC had already begun to have more explicit conversations about racial equity prior to the national reckoning recognizing that HBL and promoting equitable growth required an intentional focus on racial equity.

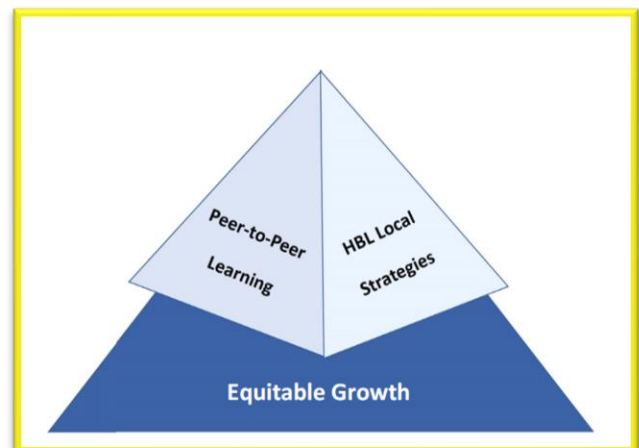
However, the intensifying racial justice movement made these discussions easier in many ways as members did not need to advocate as strongly for the importance of local hiring and procurement in Newark, a city that is predominantly Black and Brown. It also created the space for anchors to engage in open and honest conversations about systemic racism within their institutions. As Harris noted, the national conversation around racial equity demonstrated how organizations were falling short in addressing these issues at the institutional level and allowed for a focus on embedding a racial equity lens into institutional practice. For NAC, this lens means ensuring that racial equity and inclusion exist at all levels of an institution. It has also allowed for conversations around how institutions are reflecting the community, whether at the board level, in staffing, programming, procurement, or

investment decisions. Through sharing frameworks and assessments, NAC members are exploring how to apply a racial equity lens internally to have a greater community impact externally. As one NAC member noted:

...Internal culture, to me, if that is working, and we're being fair, and we're being just, and we're being inclusive, then the external stuff that we produce, art, the programs, the type of exhibitions, it's going to be relevant to our community. And if we're being relevant to the community, now we're making a contribution to the overall community, not just the individuals, but the overall community.

In early 2021, NAC underwent a strategic planning process that further reinforced each members' commitment to the three pillars of NAC, namely peer-to-peer learning, HBL local strategies, and equitable growth (see Figure 3 below). As part of its new strategic direction moving forward NAC will approach each of these pillars with an explicit racial equity focus. Part of this work will include the creation of a shared pledge that anchors can mobilize around, similar to Newark 2020, with an emphasis on racial equity.

Figure 3- Strategic Planning Recommendations



Successes and Lessons Learned

NAC members highlighted several critical factors that have contributed to the success of NAC.

- **Dedicated leadership along with resources and specific measurable, realistic, and time-dependent goals is crucial.** One NAC member noted that while collaboratives can form organically, they cannot fully actualize without the dedicated resources of people shepherding the process. Related to this NAC members credited the work of Co-Chairs, Cantor and Harris noting that without the relationship building and “table setting” expertise of these leaders, NAC would not have had the reach it was able to have. The fact that members have remained engaged for over 4 years and that the collaborative has grown during that time is a testament to the visionary leadership and stewardship of Harris and Cantor.
- **Identifying an entity to coordinate and support the implementation of the vision is vital.** Having an entity such as the Newark Alliance to actualize and coordinate the vision of the Co-Chairs and NAC members more broadly, along with the strategic guidance of Marga, has been invaluable.
- **Broadening the definition of what constitutes an anchor was an important step taken by the Co-Chairs.** Being too exclusive or exclusionary at the beginning would have limited NAC’s reach and the inclusion of multiple perspectives.
- **The availability of strong data and research on socio-economic factors within Newark provided the impetus for NAC to forge ahead and make its case for greater racial equity.** This combined with a shared sense of commitment to Newark and to genuine two-way engagement with the city on the part of anchors has been an important aspect of NAC’s success.

- **The infrastructure of NAC and the creation of a peer learning community, which has allowed for the sharing of both successes and challenges among members has been critical.** One lesson that the Co-Chairs learned early on was to provide sufficient time for discussion and sharing as opposed to primarily organizing presentations. This flexible interchange has allowed members to genuinely learn from each other and collaborate with one another, which has resulted in the formation of strong relationships between and among the anchors.
- **Requiring the participation of CEOs and senior-level staff with decision-making power at the main table has also proven an effective strategy.** Having champions from the start at the C-suite level who were aligned with the mayor’s campaign, ensured that there was buy-in at the highest level. Further, as Harris highlighted, having CEOs grapple with these issues is a distinct benefit both in terms of advancing internal institutional change and influencing institutions to do more.

In terms of lessons learned related to HBL Program Directors suggested:

- **Having a systematized data collection system earlier in the process would have been particularly helpful.** Given that employers report data very differently, having an agreed-upon set of metrics along with a dedicated data analyst to collect and systematize the data from the start would have been beneficial.
- **Emphasizing all parts of HBL equally, rather than primarily focusing on hiring, would have been a more effective strategy.** Given that localized procurement has a direct connection to hiring, which in turn impacts living locally, integrating the language around all three pieces more effectively would have helped to strengthen the initiative further.

- **Ensuring that all the working groups were led by program directors who were not based at an anchor institution would have been beneficial.** While the Hire and Live Working Groups were led by program directors who were Newark Alliance employees, this was not the case with the Buy Local Working Group. In retrospect, having a director for *Buy Local* who was not based at an anchor institution would have allowed for a neutral convenor to drive the work as opposed to an anchor partner.

Future Directions

One area that NAC plans to focus on going forward is communications and sharing the story of NAC's success both within Newark and more broadly. While NAC achieved many of its goals, this has not been communicated widely due to the onset of the pandemic. NAC members expressed the need to interface in national conversations on these issues and to share its story with the broader field.

Secondly, while the Prudential Foundation has served as a strong funding partner it also engages as an anchor, and playing this dual role can create some sensitivity around anchors operating as equal partners. NAC's leadership recognizes the importance of diversifying its funding, and Harris noted that in the future NAC will need to evaluate whether anchors are "putting enough skin in the game." While the Co-Chairs were reluctant to set criteria around a financial contribution recognizing that each anchor brings different talents to the table that are not always financial, sustaining the collaborative in the long haul will require broader support. While currently, having each anchor share its thought leadership, sweat equity, and commitment to a broader social impact is sufficient this will need to be re-evaluated in the future.

As part of its strategic planning process, NAC members also identified a desire to develop a joint statement or shared pledge around racial equity and equitable growth in order to mobilize members going forward. Cantor noted that NAC hopes to align with projects that are happening around the city and to identify how anchors could expand or amplify the impact. For example, in the area of equitable real estate development, NAC would like to explore what role anchors could play in land bank initiatives. Similarly, related to *Buy Local*, the U3 study indicated that one area of improvement was around the local share of addressable spend among the anchors. NAC hopes to identify a new goal around procurement in order to increase the local share of addressable spend and to ensure that women and minority-owned businesses are an explicit focus.

Finally, NAC members hope to see NAC continue to evolve as a thought leader and think tank within Newark, that could elevate best practices across sectors and support institutional change.

Overall, NAC is a compelling example of an anchor institution partnership, which brings together several enduring local organizations representing various fields and sectors. The NAC story demonstrates how the resources of anchor institutions can be leveraged to collectively increase employment and procurement opportunities, attract new residents, and explicitly confront persistent racial inequities. Initiatives such as NAC can create a mutually transformative space through which anchor institutions can both contribute to strengthening their localities and shifting their internal policies, practices, and priorities.

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