



State of the City Report April 2023

**Newark Leading.
And Proud of It.**

A stylized signature in white ink.

Mayor Ras J. Baraka



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City of Newark
Ras J. Baraka, Mayor

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- C. Lawrence Crump, *Council Member-at-Large*
- Carlos M. Gonzalez, *Council Member-at-Large*
- Dupré L. Kelly, *Council Member, West Ward*
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- Anibal Ramos, Jr., *Council Member, North Ward*
- Louise Scott-Rountree, *Council Member-at-Large*
- Michael J. Silva, *Council Member, East Ward*



Mayor's Message

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the 2023 Newark State of the City Address: **Newark Leading. And Proud Of It.**

Our city is defining the methods, programs, and successes that our nation's cities need to address their most serious issues: public safety, affordable housing, homelessness, education, equitable growth, employment, jobs, technology growth, and lead service line replacement.

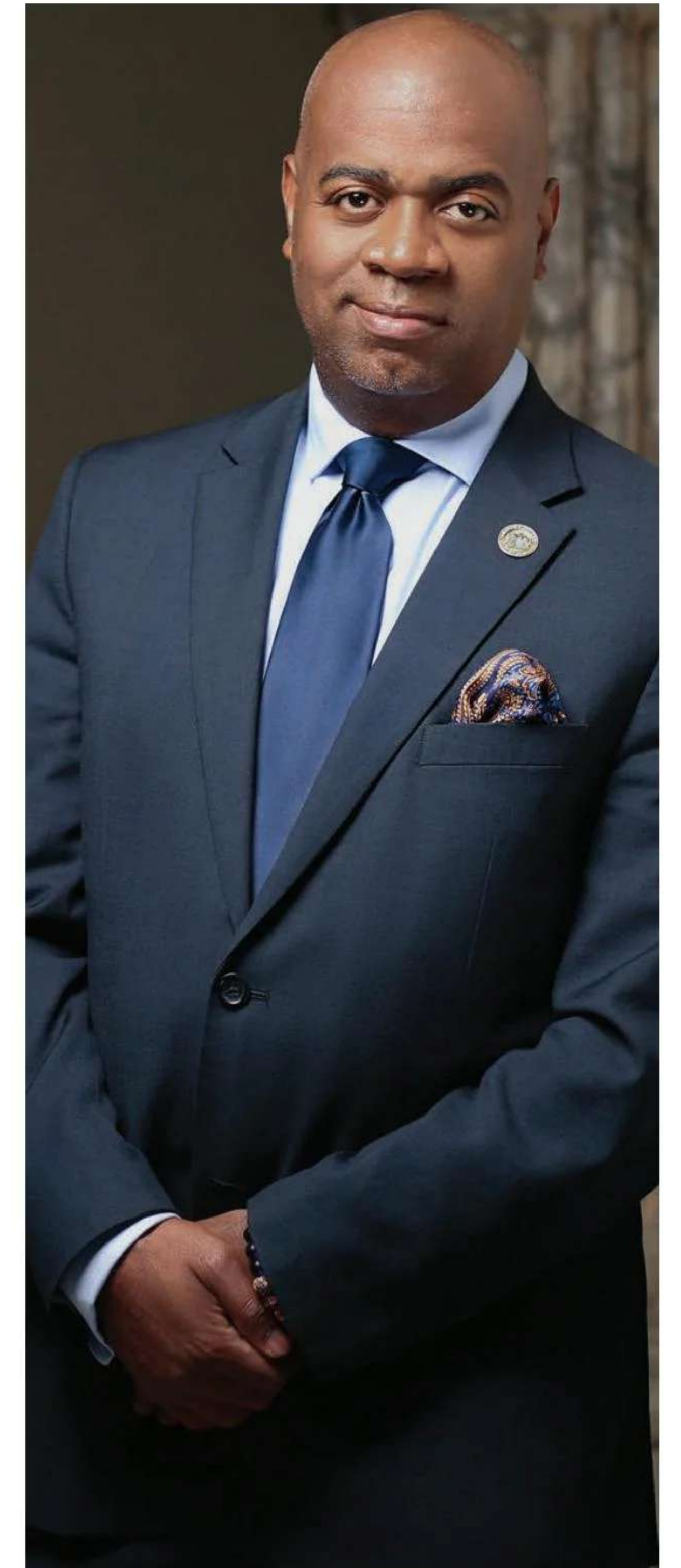
These are major issues by themselves. However, we have built strong partnerships and collaborations to address them holistically, uniting the entire city. For example, we have long regarded violence and crime as a public health issue, and we have created an ecosystem where public safety is not just in the hands of police, but includes the community as a central force in building the solution. We are seeing the results of that approach in reduced crime statistics, and greater unity between Public Safety and community through innovative programs.

Through our strengthened Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance, we continue to provide residents with affordable housing. We worked with community partners to help residents without addresses gain temporary and permanent homes, as well as medical assistance and job counseling. We invested in small businesses to create jobs, careers, and prosperity. We became a national model by completing the Lead Service Replacement Project in the first quarter of 2022, replacing more than 23,000 lines, at no cost to our taxpayers.

All of these achievements are exemplars for our nation. This report will show you how we accomplished them. It will show you what we are doing to continue to keep Newark in the lead. It will show you the immense pride we have in our beloved city. Most of all, it will show you how we are moving Newark forward.

All the best!

Ras J. Baraka
Mayor





Community Walk

Leading in Reimagining Public Safety

In Mayor Baraka's role as the public safety and crime prevention chair of the National League of Cities and co-chair of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, he led the compilation of a report on recommendations and best practices to increase community relations and public safety throughout the state. In Newark, Mayor Baraka continues to view public safety as a public health issue. Through that lens, the city combines various entities — policy, community engagement, police and fire operations, the Law Department and the Newark Municipal Court—to work together to ensure the public's safety.

Community Policing Activity

In 2022, commanders from each of the Newark Police Division's six precincts held monthly community meetings to allow community members to voice their concerns and ask questions regarding issues occurring in their neighborhoods.

The Police Division also held more than a dozen other community events to include:

- › **Community Walk** with Mayor Baraka, the Newark City Council, and the Newark Police Division's law enforcement partners
- › **Public Safety Citizen/Clergy Academy Workshop Graduation** at Mount Pleasant Church
- › **G.R.E.A.T. Graduation** at McKinley Middle School
- › **Community Roll Call** at Bergen Street and Mapes Avenue
- › **Community Meet and Greet** for new officers at Donald M. Payne Sr. School of Technology
- › **National Night Out Against Crime** at Weequahic Park

8 Social Workers Embedded in Precincts

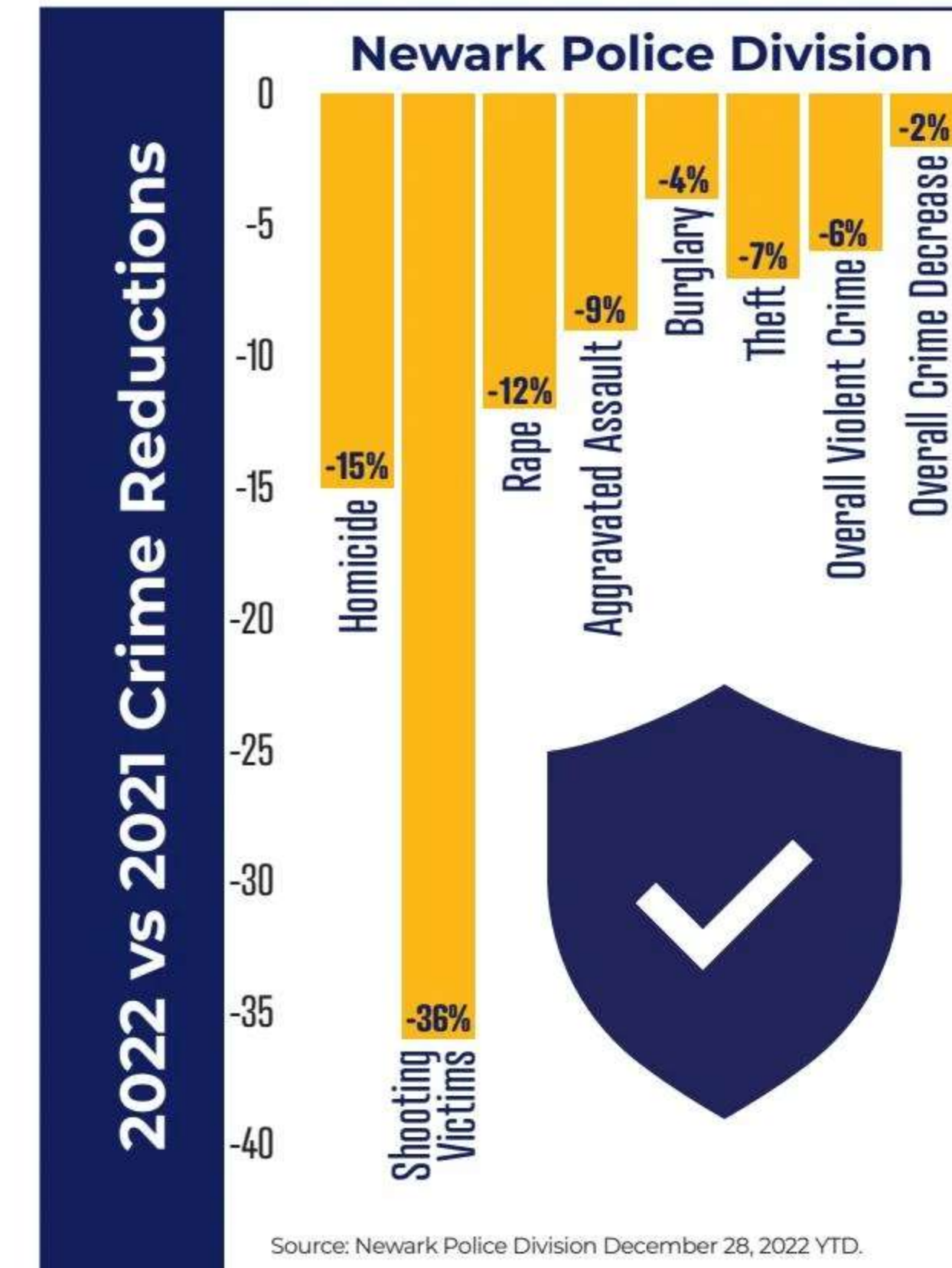
Full-time social workers were placed by the Office of Violence Prevention in the Newark Police Precincts.

The social workers' role is to follow up with crime victims to offer social services, and assist with victim compensation claims, as well as other social services (counseling, employment, housing, food/clothing, assistance in applying for government support)



CRIME REDUCED IN ALMOST EVERY CATEGORY

The city reported year-end reductions in almost every crime category in 2022 from the previous year, ending in an overall 6% reduction in violent crime.



Innovative Public Safety Techniques

Office of Violence Prevention & Trauma Recovery provides services in crisis intervention, trauma recovery, and prevention to include:

- › Mediations
- › Trauma to Trust Training
- › Counseling Resources

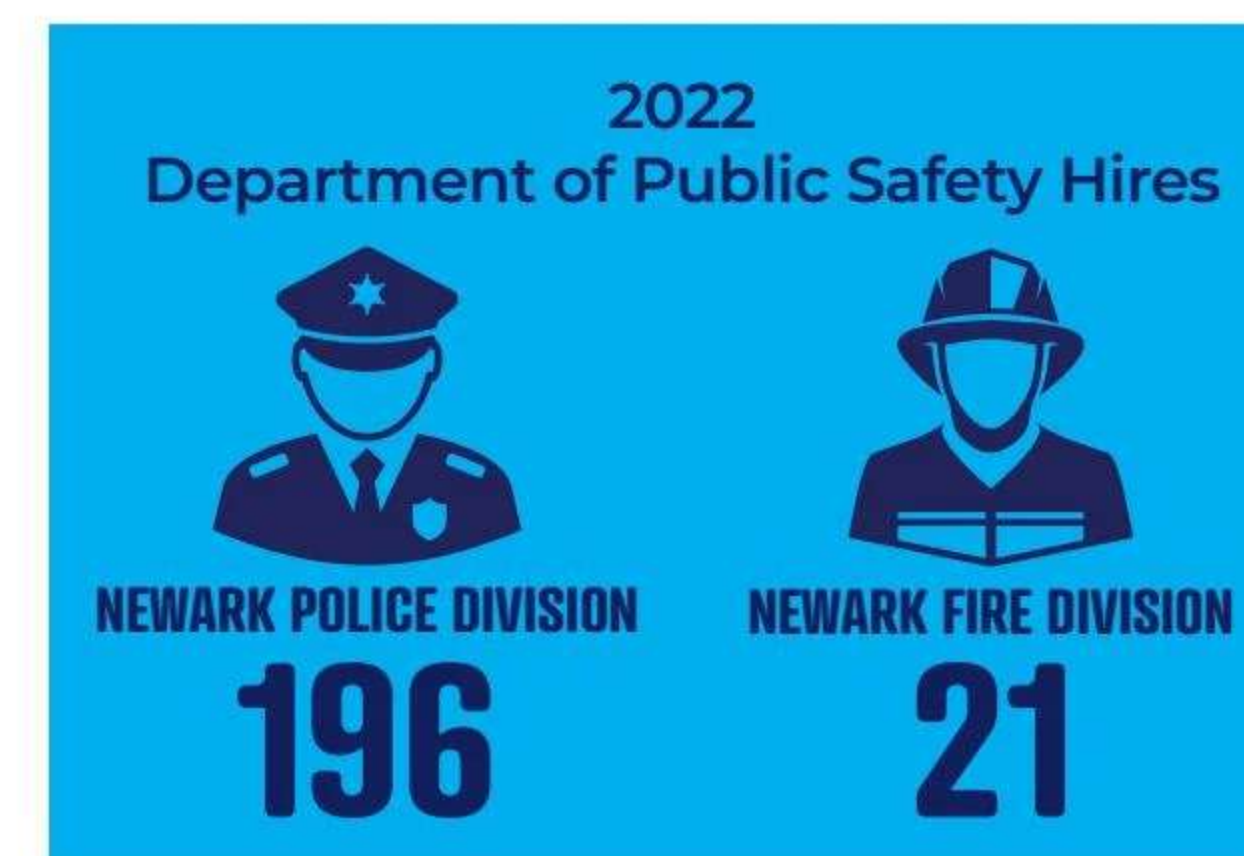
Brick City Peace Collective is a collaborative of community-based organizations to reduce violence through activities such as:

- › 24 Hours of Peace
- › Father and Son Sundays
- › Guaranteed Education Pilot



Crime Reduction Strategies

- › **Increased staff in Robbery Unit** and Major Crimes Unit
- › **Maintained the addition of five detectives** on the Shooting Response Team
- › **Enhanced the Crime Suppression Units** in the East and North wards by adding both uniformed officers and plainclothes detectives to patrol these areas
- › **Partnered with the Essex County Sheriff's Office** to assist in robbery reduction
- › **Collaborated with the Violent Crime Initiative (VCI)** with the U.S. Attorney's Office, which led to charging 14 individuals with criminal complaints for participating in a drug trafficking organization that operated in and around the Oscar Miles Village housing complex in Newark





Senior's All-White Affair

Leading in Empowering Residents

The Department of Recreation focused last year on improving city facilities, providing new and innovative activities, ensuring children continue to enjoy nutritious meals while out of school, and providing activities for seniors to help them thrive.



Ridgewood Park Playground

Improved Recreation and Parks

› Completed the renovation of the JFK Recreation Center

› Developed programs for visually-impaired residents at city pools

› Completed Phase 3 at Jesse Allen Park including replacing the natural turf field with a more durable artificial one; and resurfaced the basketball, tennis and volleyball courts

- › Installed safety netting at the Bo Porter baseball field
- › Replaced the playground at Ridgewood Park with modern equipment, proper safety surface, and added a separate sensory play equipment section for children with autism and special needs
- › Offered a Learn to Swim program for the autism community in collaboration with Nassan's Place
- › **54,259 residents served at city pools** in the summer of 2022

LEADING IN EDUCATION

› **Newark Mayor's Scholars @ NJIT** This program awarded three Newark graduates with a merit award to cover the cost of four-year housing and on-campus room expenses.

› **THE HUBB** The HUBB Arts & Trauma Center is a "safe space" for youth to receive mental health services, and learn valuable skills to help end the cycle of violence.



› **Rutgers Newark RU-N to the TOP** is Newark's financial aid program that guarantees no tuition costs or mandatory fees for eligible Newark residents. Despite COVID, there is a 64% increase in students from Newark attending Rutgers.

› **Guaranteed Education** This pilot program offered a debt-free education at Saint Elizabeth's University to 40 at-risk students. This program is funded through a \$1 million grant from St. Elizabeth University's Educational Opportunity Fund program.



Summer Fun in the City

During the Summer 2022 season, the City of Newark, along with its partners in the Newark Fire Department, the Housing Authority, and the New Jersey Devils, were able to serve more than 4,200 families. The focus of the summer season was to enrich the experience of the city's youth, and provide recreational activities for families and seniors.

2022 Summer Fun Events	Attendance
Pop Up Events	1,366
Military Park Movie Night	372
Community Movie Night	595
Snatch Yo' Free Play	539
Caribbean Vibes	289
Gospel Event at Lincoln Park	821
Reading Under the Stars	1,025
Center of HOPE Camps	266

More Activities for Seniors

- › Introduced the Alvin Ailey Aging 10-week dancing program choreographed by professional dancers from the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater of New York
- › Increased senior wellness checks and updated the database with new telephone numbers and emergency contacts
- › Partnered with Aetna to host a Wellness Day in each of the **50 senior buildings** once a month

› Resumed popular senior activities after a pause due to COVID, including:

- Trips to the Columbus Flea Market in Amish Country
- Senior's All-White Affair at Military Park
- Senior casino and bingo nights
- Trips to the Sight & Sound theater

› Celebrated Senior residents over the age of 90 at the **Unsung Heroes** event



Leading in Affordable Housing

Four Newark families were able to use their Section 8 rental vouchers to purchase homes. The city presented them with the key to their first homes through the Newark Land Bank Section 8 Homeownership Conversion Program, which is supported by a **\$125,000 grant from Wells Fargo**, a **\$1.2 million construction loan** from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and a **\$500,000 investment** from the Victoria Foundation. Homes were renovated with help from YouthBuild.

Other housing highlights include:

- › **Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance Strengthened** - On July 26, 2022, the City of Newark amended the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (IZO) by requiring that all IZO units remain affordable for 30 years, and requiring



Unveiling of "The Path Home" Strategic Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Newark

developers of 15 units or more (previously 30 or more) to set aside 20% of their units to be affordable for low- and-moderate-income families.

- › **NewarkHousingSearch.com** makes it easier for residents to find affordable housing. Units listed on the locator platform are a combination of private-market properties, federal-funded projects and Newark Housing Authority sites.
- › **Vacant Property Enforcement** - Property owners are penalized for leaving their properties vacant for a long time, blighting neighborhoods.



Live Newark Update

The Live Newark program consists of the Home Façade Improvement (HFI) Program and the Home Closing Cost (HCC) Program. The zero interest loans under the programs are forgiven if the resident continues to live in the city and occupy the residence for five years after loan closing.

In 2022, Live Newark:

- › **closed 17 grants for a total of \$166,080** awarded to first-time homebuyers under the HCC program.
- › **closed 47 grants of up to \$20,000 each** under the HFI program. **21 of the grants went to seniors** in the city.

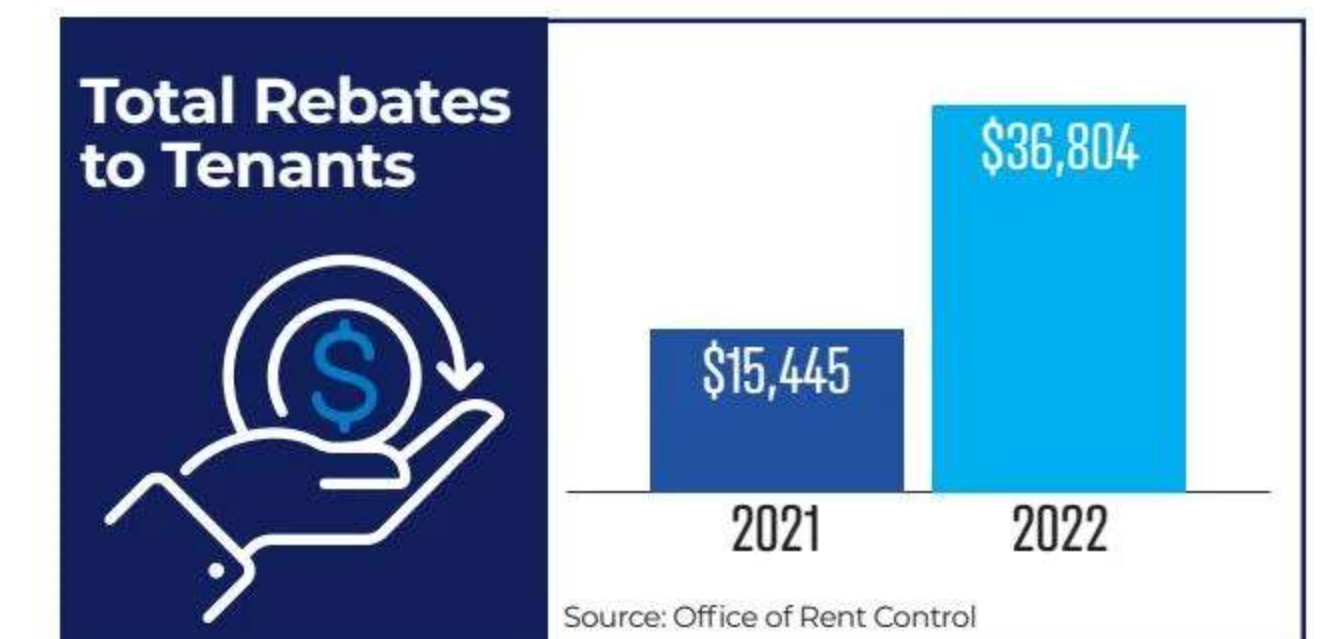
Office of Homeless Services (OHS) Highlights:

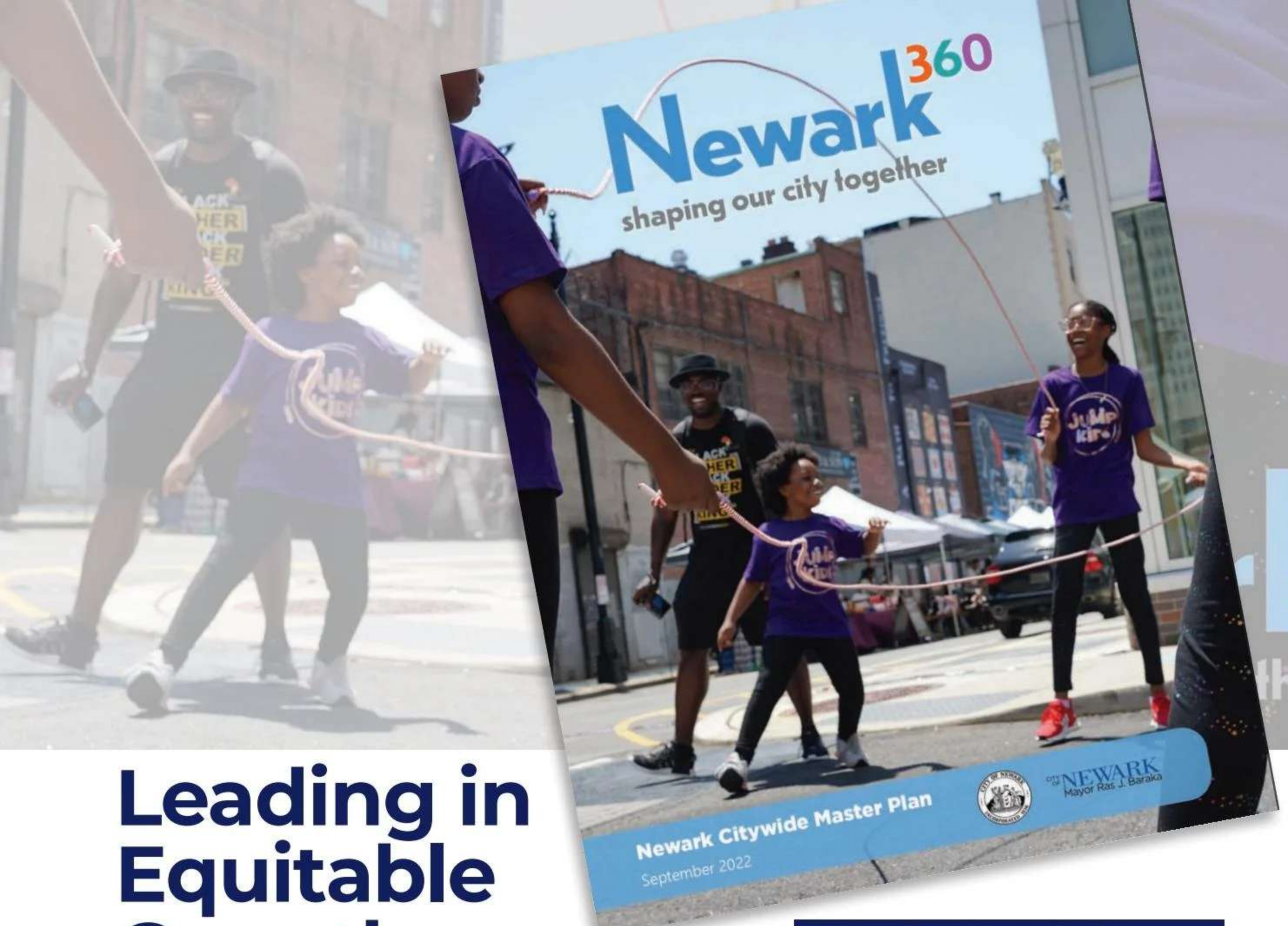


- › **132** homeless residents moved into permanent housing through a partnership with the Newark Housing Authority
- › Opened a **166-bed transitional shelter**
- › **Housed 1,656 individuals** at emergency shelters
- › Engagement of unsheltered residents up **37%** in 2022
- › Prevented homelessness for **326 residents**
- › Acknowledged by Secretary Marcia Fudge for rehousing 539 previously homeless residents in 2022
- › **Transitioned 11 residents** from Newark Hope Village I into their own apartments
- › Partnered with NJIT's School of Architecture to design Resilient Hope the third part of Hope Village, providing temporary homes **for 25 residents**
- › Developed a **strategic plan addressing temporary and permanent housing**, employment and health support with more than 100 partners to end chronic homelessness in the city

Increasing Tenant Services

The Office of Tenant Legal Services (OTLS) has steadily increased the number of cases it has been handling. In 2022 OTLS handled more than triple the number of cases it handled in 2019, the year of its inception.





The Newark360 master plan booklet

Leading in Equitable Growth

The Newark360 master plan was approved in September 2022, officially becoming the blueprint that will shape the equitable development of Newark for the next ten years. The Newark360 plan was supported with grant funds from the Victoria Foundation and support from Bloomberg Associates and Audible, Inc.

- The plan provides key actions to:
- › better connect Newarkers to their neighborhoods and job centers
 - › create more affordable housing
 - › strengthen Newark's historical and cultural fabric
 - › address environmental injustices



The N.J. Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-NJ) recognized the Newark360 master plan with a 2022 Planning Excellence Award.



Newark Movement for Economic Equity, the city's guarantee income pilot program, celebrated its first full year of operation with more than **\$3.5 million directed to 430 residents** facing economic struggles and address economic insecurity.

EMPLOYMENT & JOBS

- › Newark's unemployment rate fell below 5% for the first time in more than 20 years in September 2022.
- › In Spring 2022, more than **21,500 Newark residents** received help with career counseling, vocational and technical training and supportive services.
- › Newark's Workforce on Wheels (WoW) Mobile Unit offers information on programs, employment opportunities and training to residents in all five wards. The unit visited **205 community outreach events**, assisting **5,125 residents** with access to free training programs and jobs.
- › The Summer Youth Employment program enrolled **3,339 participants**, and provided **50 youth** the opportunity to complete a Virtual Reality World Building Program.



Summer Youth Employment Program

- › Lionsgate Movie Studios was approved by the Planning Board in December. The film studio's move to Newark promises to bring additional revenue, educational programs and internships for students to the city. It is anticipated to create more than **600 new long-term jobs**, with priority for positions going to residents of Newark, and generate more than \$800 million of annual economic impact for Newark and New Jersey.

Investing in Newark's Small Businesses



- In 2022, Invest Newark:
- › held eight training sessions that were attended by a total of **457 small business owners**. The sessions offered MWBE certification courses and also focused on strengthening new businesses and emerging and growing businesses.
 - › approved almost **\$600,000 in loans** to Newark businesses.
 - › held its **second Restaurant Week**, increasing patronage and garnering state-wide attention for more than **40 restaurants** throughout the city.



Rendering of proposed Lionsgate Newark Studio





jerseydigs.com

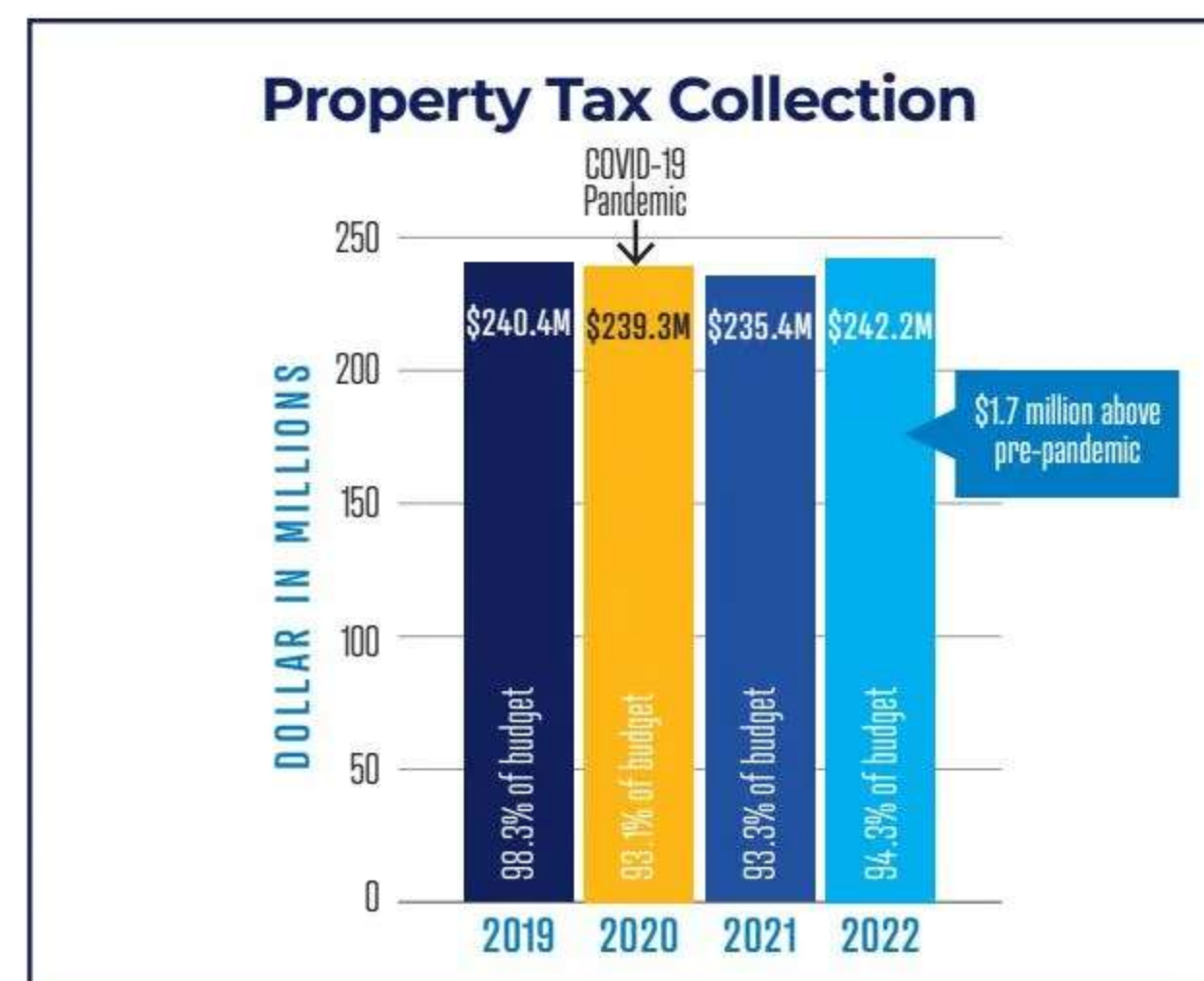
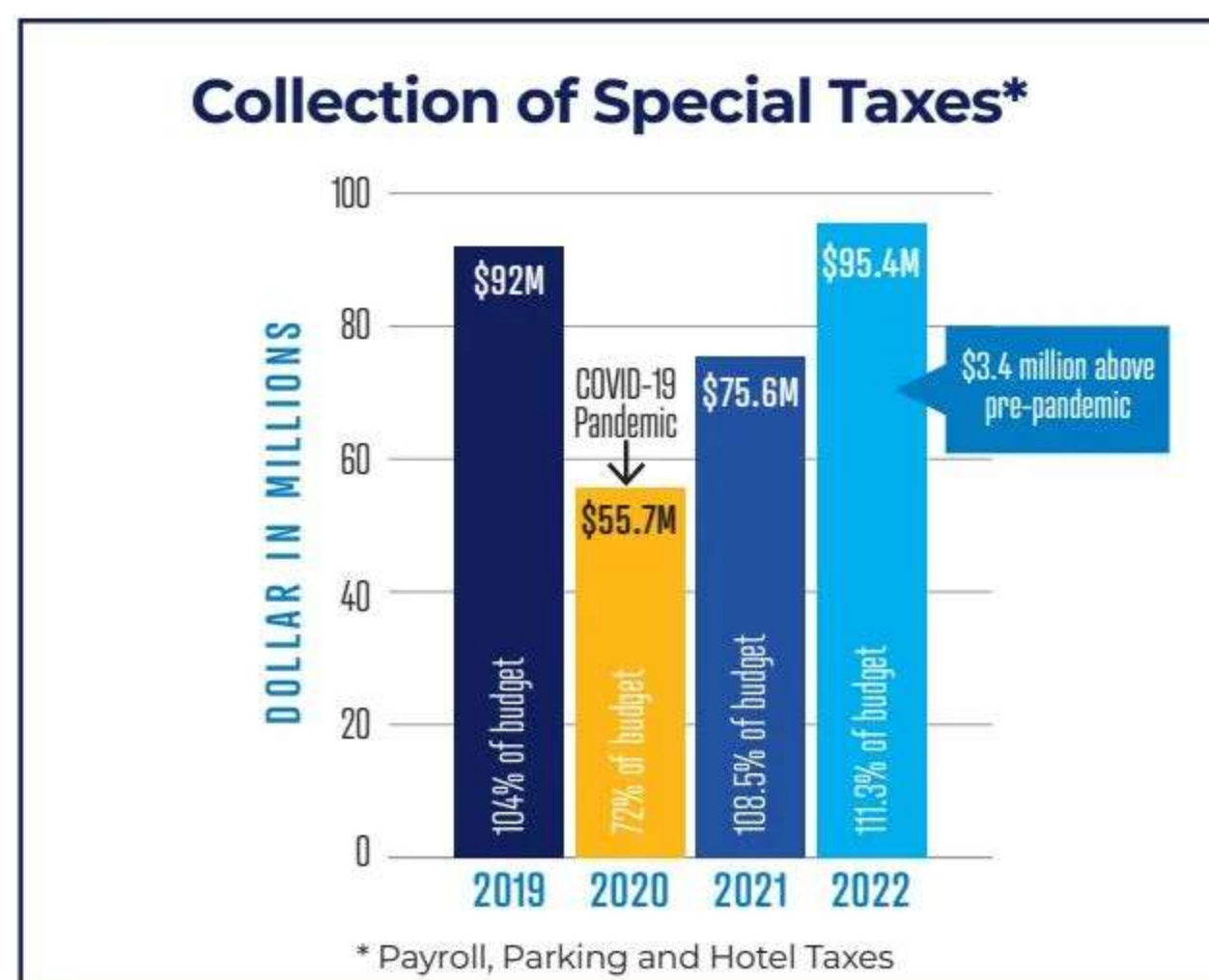
Leading in Progress

\$110 MILLION in bonds sold for **Mulberry Pedestrian Bridge.**

The city was able to secure an average interest rate of 5.83% over the 14-year period of the bonds. The pedestrian bridge will connect the East and Central Wards with Penn Station Newark and the Prudential Center arena.

As evidenced by improved revenues, the Department of Finance is witnessing the return to pre-pandemic activity throughout the city despite employee shrinkage due to increased

retirements and voluntary separations over the past four years. The dedication and hard work of the department's staff have yielded collections above budget and above pre-pandemic amounts.



LEADING IN LEAD SERVICE REPLACEMENT

Newark became a national model as it completed the Lead Service Line Replacement Project in the first quarter of 2022 with **an overall total of 23,1837 lines replaced.** In 2022, the Department of Water and Sewer:

- › completed the South and Adams Street Drainage Improvement Project at **\$4.5 million.**
- › relaunched the Newark Watershed Science and Leadership Academy in September 2022.
- › Installed approximately **2,225 new fire hydrants.**

- › began Promise Pay to help residents enter into affordable payment plans. There are more than 1,000 current plans monitored as of the end of 2022.

Health Progress

Morbidities related to cancer, obesity, and diabetes were some of the underlying health conditions that exacerbated the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and recovery. Thus, preventive care is critical to realizing a culture of health in the city. To this end, screening rates for key health indicators like BMI (body mass index), cervical and colorectal cancer have more than doubled since 2020.

The **Mary Eliza Mahoney Health Center** has gradually rebounded since 2020, and has more than doubled the number of patients served in 2022.

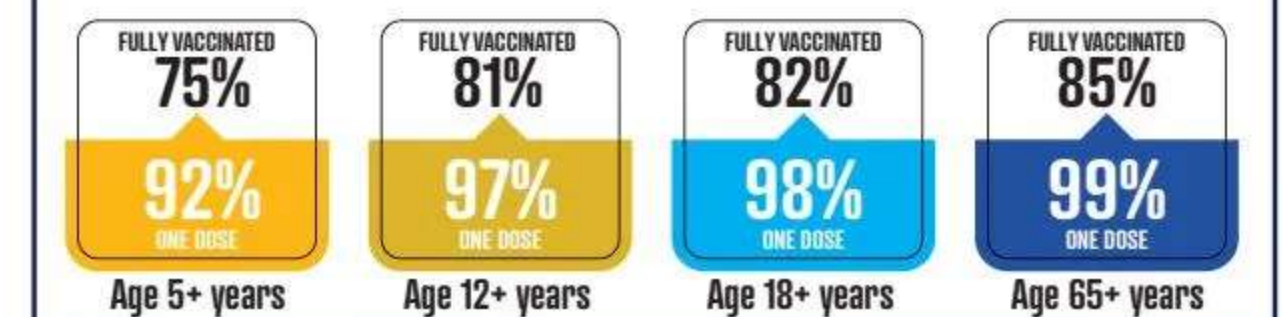
Increased Patients Served



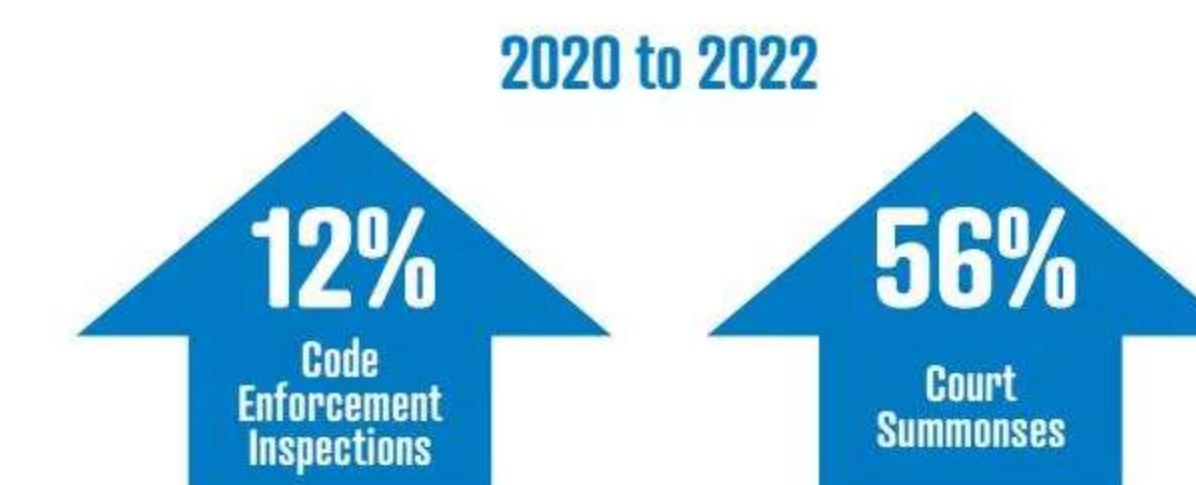
Leading in Vaccinations

Thanks to the city's vaccination efforts, the COVID-19 mortality rate dropped to just 1% in 2021 and remained at just 1% in 2022. To ensure access to vaccinations for all residents, the Health Department provides in-home vaccinations to homebound residents. In 2022, more than 86 residents received their COVID-19 vaccines within the safety of their homes.

82% of Newark residents are considered fully vaccinated; and 98% of adults have received at least one dose



Code Enforcement and Sanitation Progress



Code Enforcement began their efforts on the **Façade and Building Maintenance** pilot, which focuses on providing incentives to building owners in the downtown area to focus on keeping up their properties for aesthetic and structural safety aspects.

In 2022, sanitation inspectors:

- › eliminated hard copy summonses and began using computerized summonses.
- › began enforcing a citywide effort to enforce the garbage container ordinance at all buildings with 10 units or more.



Leading in Collaboration

The city used 2022 to further its commitment to residents by working with both public and private entities and organizations to further the goals of the administration and the community. A pinnacle project was the completion of the **Harriet Tubman Monument at Harriet Tubman Square**, which was supported with **more than \$1 million in funds** through partnerships with the Mellon Foundation, Newark Museum, Audible, Inc., Newark Public Library, Rutgers University-Newark, and the City Parks Foundation.

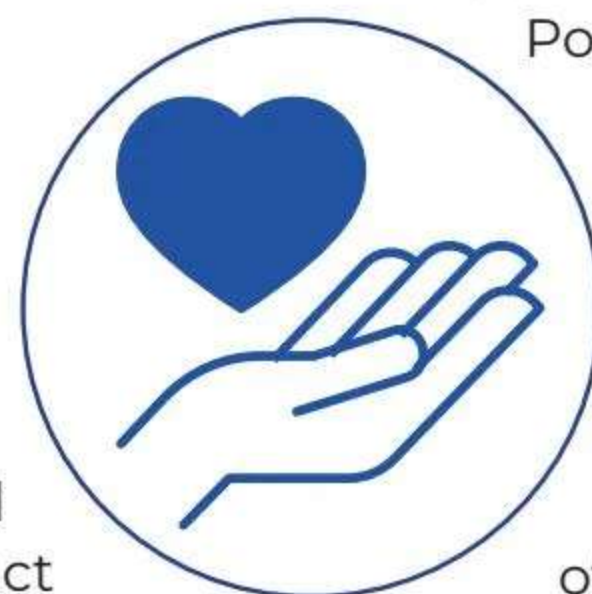


Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, Queen Latifah, architect Nina Cooke John, Audible founder Don Katz and others cut the ribbon to unveil the Harriet Tubman monument in 2023.

› **The Newark Community Impact Fund grant** for the Mayor’s First Annual Roadmap to Educational Equity Conference at NJIT, and the National Black Political Convention.

Major partnerships include:

- › **The Ford Foundation grant** to support early planning and programming **for the Newark Community Museum**. The museum—housed at the former First Police Precinct will also house the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery.



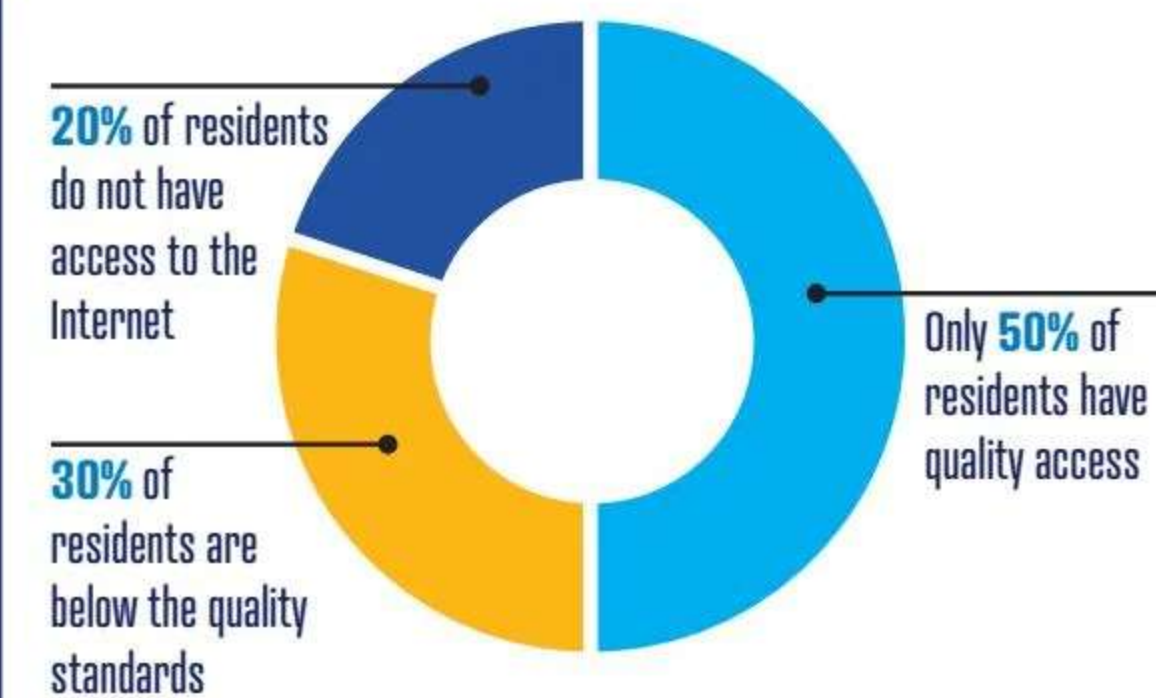
- › **The New Jersey Children’s Foundation grant** for the city-wide principal and school leaders dinner at Panasonic.
- › **Victoria and Prudential Foundations grant** for the Office of Tenant Legal Services and **Newark People’s Assembly, which held 57 community meetings**.

LEADING IN TECHNOLOGY

The city applied for the **Middle Mile Grant (MMG)** that provides funding for the build-out of a fiber infrastructure **to provide Broadband access to all residents**. This funding would reduce the cost of connecting unserved areas in the city. Funding awards will be announced in the first quarter of year 2023 and disbursed in the second quarter.

Feasibility Study Results

The Office of Information Technology and Invest Newark has engaged in a feasibility study. The data shows:



These findings and the data that supports them, will enable the City of Newark to access grant funding so that access can be extended to all residents.

The Office of Information Technology:

- › installed **air quality sensors** throughout the city in an effort to conduct research as to the quality of the air that residents breathe.
- › improved the **Newark Connect Citizen’s Dashboard** application so that residents can provide direct feedback to the Mayor’s agencies about issues that affect their daily life.

- › increased the city’s **Newark Fiber network by 30 percent**, connecting businesses, affordable housing developments, and recreation centers to high-speed internet

Newark Public Safety Department:

- › began development of a new **Department of Public Safety website** that encompasses the Department of Public Safety; Newark Police Division; Newark Fire Division; Office of Emergency Management; and Homeland Security and Preparedness.



- › implemented **Fusus Surveillance Software** that allows businesses and residents to share their privately-owned surveillance footage with Newark police to create virtual neighborhood watch groups.



- › expanded **drone coverage** to include the Newark Fire Division and Office of Emergency Management.
- › implemented **Automatic License Plate Readers** to capture both the vehicle and registered information to reduce vehicle related crimes.

NEWARK AND PROUD OF IT

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CITY
OF **NEWARK**
Mayor Ras J. Baraka

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