

MAYOR RAS J. BARAKA'S 10TH

# STATE *of the* CITY

NEWARK  
AND PROUD OF IT  
*A look at the last decade of change*

2024 Report



Mayor Ras J. Baraka

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# Mayor's Message

March 12, 2024

Dear Friends:

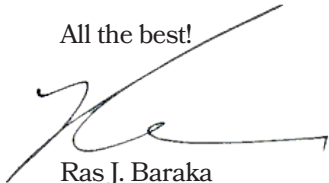
On behalf of the people of the City of Newark, I welcome you to my **10th Annual State-of-the-City** address.

In the last decade, our administration has united with many external and internal partners in the private, public, and non-profit sector—and most importantly, our own residents—to bring about groundbreaking and pioneering positive changes in our city.

We have passed ordinances that require developers to set aside affordable housing, removed lead pipes throughout Newark, and reformed public safety to treat it as a public health issue, which has in turn reduced violent crime by more than 60 percent. We have put \$2 billion in development in the pipeline, reduced chronic homelessness by 57 percent, created a new master plan, an Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery, and become the most “wired” city in America. These achievements have dramatically changed the lives of our residents, strengthened our economy, and gained us national attention, awards, and admiration.

However, we still have much work to do. We must take action to support our youth, who are our future. We still have to assist our chronic homeless population. We need jobs and housing for our residents. In this report and in my address tonight, you will learn how we—with your support, commitment, and love of Newark—are accomplishing that. Tonight and together, we will raise NJPAC’s historic rafters to say, “We are Newark—and Proud of It!”

All the best!



Ras J. Baraka  
Mayor





New Police Officers Oath of Office Ceremony

# Advancements in Crime, Homelessness, and Quality of Life

**W**hen Mayor Ras J. Baraka took office in 2014, he promised to bring down crime and make the city safer, and to that extent, in 2023, the Newark Police Division reported that:

## Increased Funding for the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery

The City of Newark strengthened partnerships with community-based violence interrupters, including: The Brick City Peace Collective (BCPC), Newark Community Street Team, and the Newark Street Academy.

- In 2023, the City of Newark invested:
  - **\$3M** for community partners to provide therapeutic and crisis intervention services including mental health, emotional support and substance abuse counseling
  - **\$14M** to 37 community partner agencies through RFP applications for violence prevention
  - **\$5M** to BCPC (up from \$750K)
  - **\$2.16M** to 9 community partners for Increased High Risk Intervention (HRI)
  - **More than tripled community engagement events**





**In 2023, the Newark Fire Division:**

- Secured more than **\$5.4M** in federal grants for new staff and equipment
- Hired 9 new firefighters
- Promoted 9 others to captains and 1 to battalion chief
- Plans to hire an additional 70 to 100 new firefighters



**NewarkGo Provides Affordable Transportation**

The NewarkGo program provides over 2,000 affordable scooters and bicycles throughout the city and has achieved the following highlights:

- Nearly 75,000 individual riders
- Provided 1,300 free helmets
- Provided more than one million rides so far

**Homelessness Services yielded the following successes in 2023:**

- A **57.6% decrease** in the unsheltered population
- From the Hope Village shelter, **21% moved to permanent housing**
- Acquisition of a **\$2.9M grant** to provide crisis services to individuals experiencing mental health emergencies
- Development of a texting service to alert outreach teams of residents in need of shelter

**In 2023, the Department of Public Works:**

- Brought recycling pick-up service back in-house to provide cleaner, more courteous service
- Purchased 5 new street sweepers



Summer Youth Employment Program

# Improvements in Workforce Development, Entrepreneurship and Equitable Housing

**U**nder Mayor Ras J. Baraka, the City of Newark has brought equitable development and housing to residents, while ensuring that jobs and entrepreneur opportunities are a priority, specifically:

- Invest Newark offered nine training sessions and programs in 2023 for current and future entrepreneurs. **Nearly 500 participated**, including 70 restaurant owners during Restaurant Week.
- Invest Newark's **Executive Business Accelerator** and **Small Business Stronger classes** had **25 graduates**. These graduates employ over 100 full-time employees, over 70 part-time employees, and over 50 contractors.

## Created More Youth Jobs

- The Summer Youth Employment Program secured **\$2.7M** in private and state funds.
- **More than 100 paid interns** joined the Mayor's Internship Program to learn about the city's inner workings, shaping the next generation of Newark's leaders.
- The Mayor's Raise Your Voice Academy brought together **80 youth** through a 15-week urban education and social justice curriculum to equip youth with leadership and management tools to create new, critical, thought leaders within Newark.



January 2024, residents were able to purchase city-owned properties for \$1 in the Newark City Hall Council Chamber.

### Provided Equitable and Affordable Housing

In 2023, the Department of Economic and Housing Development:

- Had more than **12,000 housing units being built**

### More Housing Updates

Updated and adopted the recommended Newark Zoning & Land Use Regulation (NZLUR) to allow for more density and to revitalize the city's neglected corridors. Some of the highlights of the NZLUR are:

- New housing, retail and amenities in neighborhoods outside of downtown
- New vitality, beauty and activity for long neglected major corridors
- More affordable housing through zoning and density changes
- Home-based business opportunities that can build wealth for residents

**Strengthened the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (IZO)** that requires developers of 15 units or more to set aside 20% of their units to be affordable for low- and moderate-income families. Last year, the IZO was amended again to provide for a 90-day exclusivity period during which the units are available exclusively for Newark residents.

**“Equitable Investment in Newark Communities” (EINC) initiative** expands affordable homeownership by developing or rehabilitating single and multi-family homes that residents can own and/or rent at affordable prices. In 2023, a total of **16 sites were identified**.

downtown or with applications for construction.

- Reallocated **\$921,000 to help 69 families** avoid eviction this year using those funds.
- Expanded the Live Newark Program, to provide up to **\$20,000 for down payment or closing costs** and **\$40,000 for repairs** to homeowners.
- Through the **Guaranteed Income Pilot** infused **\$5.1M into the local economy** and directly impacted 430 Newark families.
- Invest Newark helped **37,000 households** sign up for the **Affordable Connectivity Program**. This \$30 per month federal subsidy resulted in a **savings of over \$1M** per month for Newark households.

### Newark Landbank Updates

- Since 2021, the Newark Land Bank has put **52 properties** back into productive use and continues to assist Newark residents on the path to homeownership, as well as hires local MWBE contractors.
  - 2023 – Invest Newark put 6 Newark residents on the path to homeownership with partners NACA and NHA.

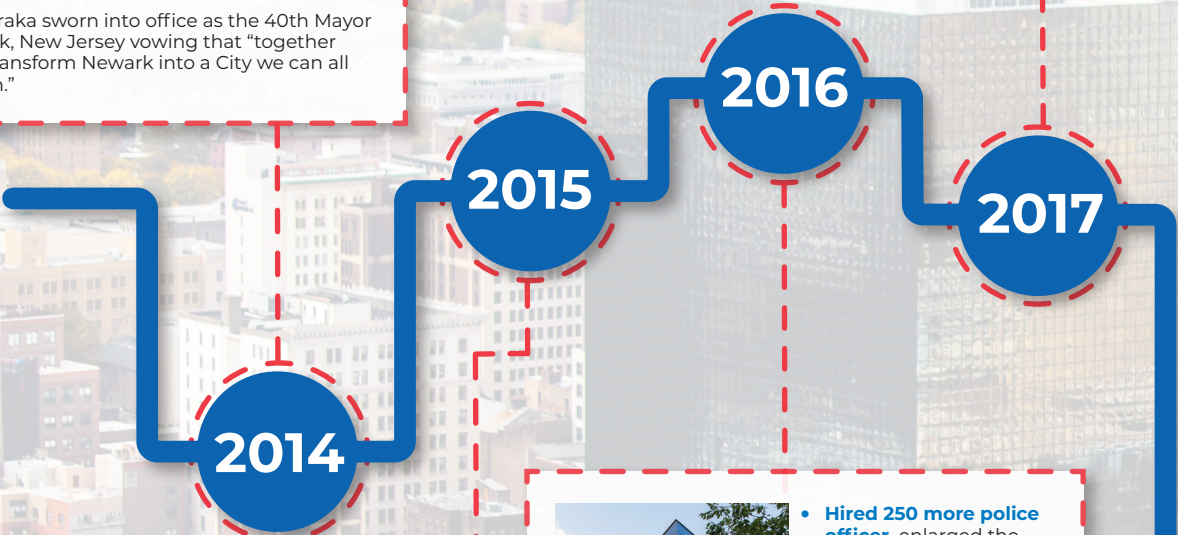


# A Look at the Last



Ras J. Baraka sworn into office as the 40th Mayor of Newark, New Jersey vowing that "together we will transform Newark into a City we can all believe in."

- Celebrated **\$2B in development underway**
- Announced **Hire. Buy. Live. Newark** to encourage businesses to hire, buy and live within Newark
- Newark's crime reduces to the **lowest level in 50 years.**
- Identified at least 125 "hot spots" throughout the city for camera surveillance



2014

2015

2016

2017

2018



- Launched the **"Model Neighborhoods Initiative,"** to provide intense public service, development, and support of two neighborhoods as models for other areas in the City
- Formed **"My Brother's Keeper Newark"** as the City's response to President Obama's call for outreach to young men of color across the nation

- **Reduced the City's \$30M structural deficit.** A \$90M budget gap was eliminated without layoffs or property tax increases
- **Increased number of police officers** on the street from 60% to 72%
- Created the **Civilian Complaint Review Board**



- Established a payroll tax exemption for **businesses that hire ex-offenders**
- **Prudential opened a new tower;** Newark welcomed chains, including the Nike store, Starbucks, and Blaze Pizza
- **The Hahnes Building** development broke ground, including a Whole Foods, and a new TRYP by Wyndham hotel
- **Close to 1,000 units** of residential space begun construction
- **Secured funding to complete the Riverfront Park,** and **closed the deal on Triangle Park** across the street from the Prudential Center

- **Hired 250 more police officer,** enlarged the Shootings Task Force, and combined police and fire
- **Committed to hiring a trained social worker for every 25 police officers hired**
- Established a payroll tax abatement for Newark businesses with a workforce of **51% or more of Newark residents**



# 10 Years of Change



- Moody's upgraded the City of Newark's rating to Baa2
- Nearly **100 pieces of equipment purchased** by Department of Public Works to keep the streets clean
- **Newark 2020 surpasses goal** of having partners hire 2,020 employees by 2020
- Enabled Section 8 recipients to use their rental vouchers to purchase their first homes

2021

- **Built new 24,000-square-foot shelter** with 166 beds, counseling, case management, and social services
- **Opened Newark Hope Village** shipping containers to temporarily shelter the most vulnerable residents
- Council passed **Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance** that requires developers to set aside **20% of their units to create affordability**
- **Created the state's only Land Bank** to increase home-ownership citywide, regardless of income level
- First Source ordinance requires **30% of vendors to be Newark residents**
- Created an **Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery**
- Created **Newark Parks Foundation, Inc**

2020



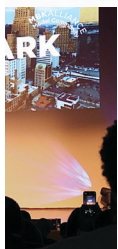
- Partnered with the county to get **\$120M to replace lead service lines**
- Refinanced its \$100M obligation bonds and managed to **save \$14M** over a two-year period
- **Lead tested more than 2,000 children** and exceeded HUD lead abatement guidelines

2023



- Newark's Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery (OVPTTR), is now **replicated by the state of New Jersey** and other municipalities nationwide
- The City **added 196 Police Officers** to the Police Division and **51 Firefighters** to the Fire Division
- The City partnered with the College of Saint Elizabeth to provide a **debt-free college education to 40 young students**
- The Newark Fiber program **increased fiber connectivity by 30%** for businesses, affordable housing developments, and recreation centers
- The **Newark360 Master Plan** resulted in the largest community engagement process in Newark's history
- The City has generated **\$2.5M** for the affordable housing trust fund

2019



- Newark put a **NAN Tech Center** in every ward to leverage Newark's 27 miles of fiber
- **Regained local control of the public schools** from the State of New Jersey
- City **unemployment rate went down 30%** since 2014
- **My Brother's Keeper** Newark hosted the Obama Foundation's Pathway to Success Opportunity Summit, helping more than **600 young men of color**

2022

- With the help of anchor institutions, 4,000 residents were employed, **doubling the City's Newark 2020 goal**
- Newark was able to **disburse \$20M in American Rescue Plan funding** to residents in need, to help them pay back rent
- Opened a new full-service homeless shelter, Miller Street Pathways to Housing Center
- **Vice President Kamala Harris visited** Newark to highlight the success of the lead service replacement program



# Innovation in Arts and Culture, Recreation and Senior Services

**T**he City of Newark is a strong supporter of the creative community and has worked tirelessly to support not only artists and creatives, but cultural institutions as well.

*In 2023, the City of Newark opened the Arts and Education District:*

- The district has provided residents and visitors with a **central location for cultural programming** and arts education.
- The first community meeting was held at Arts High School with **more than 100 attendees**.
- A **pilot shuttle program** with Rutgers Newark was established to encourage participation at events.
- Events held within the district include:
  - **Afro Beats festival, the Lincoln Park Music Festival, and the Newark Arts Festival**

## Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs Updates

- Since 2020, the Creative Catalyst Fund **has awarded 402 grants totaling more than \$2.2M** to individual artists and cultural organizations citywide.
- Last year, the City facilitated the creation of **more than a dozen murals** and the **installation of the Harriet Tubman Monument** in the newly renamed Harriet Tubman Square.
- The City invested in **restoration of Newark Symphony Hall's Terrace Ballroom**.

**Department of Recreation and Senior Services Updates**

- There were a **half million activity touches (AT) generated** in 2023 through various programs including the Summer Enrichment Program (10,000+ ATs), senior chair aerobics (2,000+ ATs), and through boxing tournaments (16,000+ ATs).
- Newark Community Impact Fund supported numerous community-focused conferences and events throughout 2023 including the City's **Newark Fashion Forward** events, **Sing in Praise of King**, **Summer Fun**, and **Tubman for Tots** programming at the new Harriet Tubman monument.
- The Division of Senior Services **partnered with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater** to provide seniors with dance classes and flexibility training.



Sing in Praise of King



Tubman for Tots

**Office of Community Engagement Updates**

- The **Latina Empowerment Brunch** brought together prominent Latina women for an event dedicated to helping Latina professionals and students achieve professional and personal success.
- The **Newark Latin Festival** broke records in audience attendance.
- The Hispanic Heritage Month Scholarship awarded **\$1,000** to a student from each ward.



Latina Empowerment Brunch



Latin Festival



Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration



President Obama joins the My Brother's Keeper Alliance Impact in Action convening in Chicago, IL on May 10, 2023.

# An Increased Focus on Wellness, Literacy and Technology

**T**he City of Newark received a designation in 2023 by former President Barack Obama as one of four cities nationwide who were selected as a My Brother's Keeper Alliance Model Community.

- The Department of Health & Community Wellness's book drive distributed more than 700 books to parents and children.
- The **Reading Under the Stars** annual summer program creates a multisensory experience for students and encourages reading and literacy.

## Office of Comprehensive Community Education Updates

- The **Cradle Project Conference** served as a one-day event to illuminate the urgency of quality Maternal Health Delivery Systems to promote positive health outcomes for expectant mothers and promote the power of early literacy.
- The City commissioned an advisory board and a comprehensive report, "**An Assessment of School Enrollment Systems in Newark, NJ: Exploring Potential Paths Forward**" to improve the enrollment process.
- The **Newark Citywide Prenatal to 3rd Grade 10-point Plan** was rolled out to improve literacy rates.



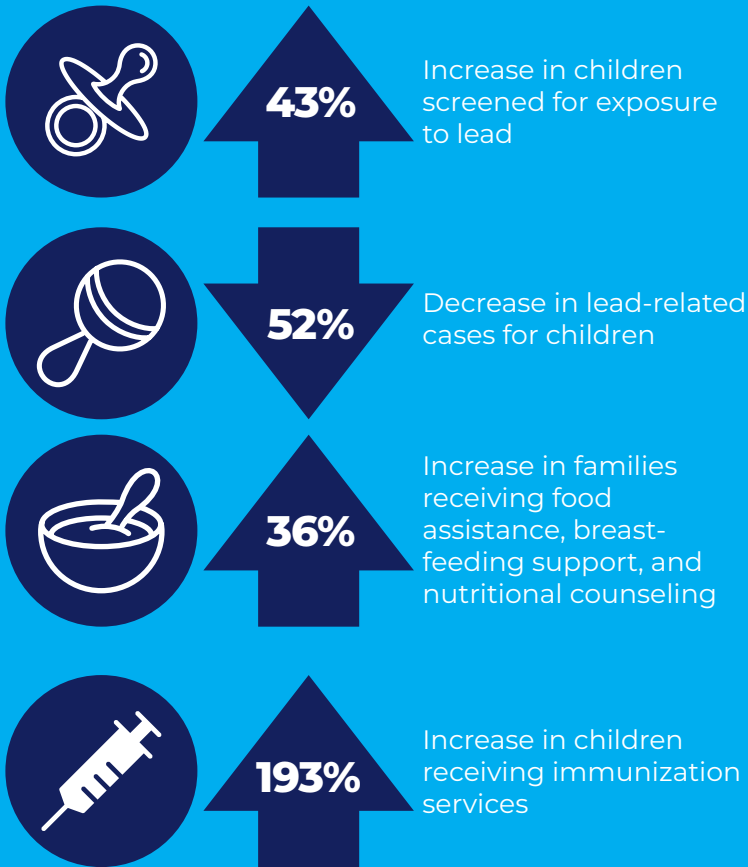
### Department of Health & Community Wellness Updates

In 2023, the Department of Health & Community Wellness procured three state-of-the-art medical mobile units, partnering with community-based organizations to target underserved communities and provide them with essential medical and mental health services. Other updates include:

- **Opened the Mary Eliza Mahoney Health Center at Speedway**, a school-based clinic in the heart of the West Ward, easily accessible to the community around the Speedway Elementary School
- **Deployed Assistive Devices for the Visually Impaired** such as OrCam MyEye devices—glasses that will read text out to visually impaired individuals



### Health Over the Last 10 Years



### 2023 Technology Highlights

- Invest Newark and the Office of Information Technology led an effort to expand internet access that to date has resulted in **more than 700 public housing units having access to Newark Fiber**.
- The Newark Builds Newark program provides residents with **training for in-demand careers** in virtual reality, sustainable offshore wind-energy construction, drone piloting, and fiber optics development.
- In partnership with Rutgers-Newark, **public Wi-Fi was expanded** in Newark to include Harriet Tubman Square and Halsey Street.
- Over a dozen new small businesses signed up for Newark Fiber.

## City of Newark

**Ras J. Baraka**  
*Mayor*

### Municipal Council

**LaMonica R. McIver**  
*Council President/  
Council Member, Central Ward*

**Patrick O. Council**  
*Council Member, South Ward*

**C. Lawrence Crump**  
*Council Member-at-Large*

**Carlos M. Gonzalez**  
*Council Member-at-Large*

**Dupré L. Kelly**  
*Council Member, West Ward*

**Luis A. Quintana**  
*Council Member-at-Large*

**Anibal Ramos, Jr.**  
*Council Member, North Ward*

**Louise Scott-Rountree**  
*Council Member-at-Large*

**Michael J. Silva**  
*Council Member, East Ward*



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