Fueling Community Journalism Through NJ Community Colleges

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The New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH) and Journalism + Design at The New School (J+D) seek applications from New Jersey's community colleges for an exciting new funding opportunity. Beginning in April, community colleges in NJ may apply for NJCH/J+D awards in the amount of $40,000 to co-develop and launch certificate programs in community journalism across the state.

Program Fast Facts

Application Deadline: Friday, May 26, 2023 at 11:59 pm ET

Award Amount: $40,000 per college

Award Term: July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

Eligibility: any of New Jersey's 18 community colleges may apply

Program Goal: Provide funding and support for at least three community colleges in New Jersey to launch their own noncredit community journalism certificates that equip students and community members with tools to better understand and articulate what's happening in their communities.

This call for applications offers information on the program itself; the resources and support NJCH and J+D will provide to partner sites; and how to apply.

Program Description

NJCH and J+D are teaming up on a new program to co-develop and launch certificate programs in community journalism with community colleges across New Jersey. With generous support from the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium, we will collaborate with and fund at least three colleges in the state at the level of $40,000 each, to create free noncredit offerings that equip people with tools to better understand and articulate what's happening in their communities.

Through this community journalism certificate, participants will learn transferable skills from a variety of disciplines – including journalism, design, the humanities, media literacy and systems thinking – that challenge them to explore creative ways to better inform their community and circulate high-quality news.

This certificate program is intended to center community colleges as hubs for local news and information by expanding access to journalism education, promoting greater media literacy, and offering people opportunities to get involved in the production of community journalism that benefits their communities. It's open to any community college in New Jersey, regardless of whether or not the institution already offers some form of media- or journalism-related programming.

NJCH and J+D will provide faculty at participating colleges with a foundational curriculum for the certificate, along with support to adapt the curriculum based on their own expertise and the unique needs of their communities and college. Applicants can see a version of the curriculum that we previously led with the Community College of Philadelphia [here](#).

Core learning outcomes for certificate participants include how to:

- Produce quality journalism and media with and for your community;

- Better inform your community and share important stories, through digital media and other creative, engaging ways;

- Understand how power functions and uncover what's driving the big issues you care about;

- Find credible information and share what's happening in your local government;

- Use design thinking to help you solve problems and create media that's responsive to local information needs;

- Become a more active participant and informed civic leader in your community.

NJCH and J+D will fund a faculty member at each participating college to create the certificate at their school, adapt the curriculum to their community college and teach at least one version of the program. We will also provide funding to participating colleges to support costs for administration and implementation.

After offering the certificate, colleges will receive additional funds to develop sustainability plans and/or launch new projects or community journalism programs. Funding also will be available to support community and media partners that work with the colleges to help participants and community members apply their skills and support the growth of the college as a hub for local news.

Eligibility

Any of New Jersey's 18 community colleges are eligible to apply for a "Fueling Community Journalism Through NJ Community Colleges" award:

- Atlantic Cape Community College
- Bergen Community College
- Brookdale Community College
- Camden County College
- County College of Morris
- Essex County College
- Hudson County Community College
- Mercer County Community College
- Middlesex College
- Ocean County College
- Passaic County Community College
- Raritan Valley Community College
- Rowan College at Burlington County
- Rowan College of South Jersey
- Salem Community College
- Sussex County Community College
- Union College
- Warren County Community College

Colleges will need to have an EIN or NJ tax-exempt number to apply and be in good standing with state and federal tax entities.

Developing and launching the certificate program will require strong campus-wide coordination and alignment; as a result, all proposals must include a signed letter of support from their campus President's office (see application in Foundant for additional details).

Please note that eligible community colleges may not submit more than one proposal for consideration for a NJCH/J+D award.

Award Details

Each community college in the program will receive an award of $40,000 to offset costs associated with developing and launching the certificate program. Award funds must be used as follows:

- $10,000 for participating faculty stipends: $5,000 to be paid directly to the faculty member for summer/fall 2023 training, $5,000 to be paid to the faculty member via the college for spring 2024 certificate program instruction.

- $10,000 for administrative costs associated with launching the certificate, including costs such as, but not limited to, administrative staff time; equipment; promotional events and materials such as flyers, ads, etc. We request that colleges allocate at least $2,000 of administrative funds for costs related to making the program more accessible, such as transportation or childcare stipends for participants.

- $20,000 for program sustainability and partnerships, to be disbursed upon successful completion of the first run of the certificate program in spring 2024. Colleges can use these funds however they choose, with the goals of building and sustaining the certificate program and more deeply establishing the college as an information hub in the community.

Note that partner colleges may allocate no more than 10% of the total NJCH/J+D award for indirect costs. All other costs must be directly related to the certificate program.

Colleges will also identify local community and media partners they could collaborate with to provide participants in the certificate with program opportunities to publish original work or engage with important issues in their communities. For example, organizations like [Resolve Philly](#), which the Community College of Philadelphia partnered with to connect their program participants with paid opportunities to create a print community newsletter published by Resolve.

Those community partners selected by the colleges will be eligible for separate NJCH/J+D seed grants to support their participation in the program and collaboration with the college. If needed, NJCH and J+D can also help colleges identify partnerships with local media and community organizations as part of the program development.

Program Timeline

- April 6, 2023: CFA opens to NJ community colleges

- May 26, 2023: Application deadline

- Early-to-mid June 2023: Applications reviewed and evaluated by Advisory Board

- Late June 2023: Selected colleges notified and awards announced

- Mid July-early August 2023: J+D and NJCH work with faculty from select colleges to develop the curriculum for their certificate. This will entail at least two in-person sessions.

- August-September 2023: Colleges begin working with their administrations to approve and prepare the certificate program to accept applications. Faculty work with NJCH and J+D to gauge

interest and develop opportunities among local media and community partners in collaborating on local info and storytelling projects with program participants.

- October-December 2023: Collaborate with faculty and marketing/communications teams at each college to develop any materials, events or strategies to recruit participants.

- Spring 2024: Each college launches their certificate program.

Please note that aside from NJCH/J+D deadlines for proposal application, evaluation, and review, the program timeline above is somewhat flexible and can be adjusted based on each participating college's needs and readiness.

Application Process

Applications are now open. **To apply, please go to NJCH's online application system ([click here](#)).**

All applications must be completed and submitted via NJCH's online application system no later than **Friday, May 26, 2023 at 11:59 PM Eastern**.

Organizations that have not applied for any NJCH funding opportunities since September 2020 will need to create an account in our online grant application system. Returning applicants will be able to access the system using their account credentials.

A preview of the application form is available on the Call for Applications webpage.

Questions about applying? Contact Valerie Popp, Director of Strategic Initiatives, at vpopp@njhumanities.org. We're always happy to help!

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by an external advisory board made up of active community journalists; journalism faculty and curriculum experts; NJ-based community college faculty, administrators, and students; and experts in local grassroots youth development and community engagement. The committee will make awards to colleges on the following basis:

- Rationale for hosting the certificate program

- Institutional capacity for hosting the certificate program

- College's capacity to reach and serve populations and communities that have been historically marginalized in NJ's higher education and news landscapes

- Demonstrated history of or excitement about meaningful community engagement and developing collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations

- Vision and inclination to sustain the certificate program and related campus-community work beyond the award term

- Faculty enthusiasm for civic media and local news

The selection committee will also consider geographic and institutional diversity of the applicants to ensure that awardees reach and represent communities across the state.

Award Notification

NJCH/J+D will notify selected colleges of their awards by late June 2023. Colleges that receive awards will be contacted via email and provided with an award letter, an award agreement outlining guidelines,

award disbursement schedules, and reporting requirements, and other administrative materials. Colleges that do not receive awards will be notified via email in late June 2023 and may request feedback on their applications.