



Foundational Black Alliance
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**Restoring Balance:
A Framework for Establishing a Center for Black
Policy, Research, and Development in New Jersey**

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ON BEHALF OF

Foundational Black Alliance

Revised October 2026



REPORT ATTRIBUTION

This report was researched, developed, and prepared by Janell Bolden on behalf of the **Foundational Black Alliance (FBA)**. It presents the organization's proposal for the establishment of a Center for Black Policy Research & Development (CBPRD) to advance equitable representation, public resource allocation, and community development opportunities for Black New Jersey, inclusive of Foundational Black Americans.

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1. Abstract

This paper examines the feasibility and justification for establishing a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development (CBPRD) in the State of New Jersey. Drawing on the historical model of the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research, and Development (CHPRD), originally created in 1975 as the Office of Hispanic Affairs, the study demonstrates that targeted policy centers can be created administratively within existing executive authority and can significantly improve access to public resources.

The paper evaluates CHPRD's structure, funding mechanisms, and outcomes, and compares them to current disparities affecting Black residents in New Jersey. It further explores federal legal considerations, including Equal Protection and Title VI constraints, with particular focus on race-conscious and race-restricted program elements, and provides a compliant framework for establishing a parallel institution. The paper concludes with actionable policy recommendations, including draft executive and legislative language to implement the CBPRD.



2. Introduction

State governments have long used targeted policy interventions to address disparities among historically underserved populations. In New Jersey, the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research, and Development (CHPRD) serves as a prominent example of such intervention. Established in 1975 as the Office of Hispanic Affairs within the Department of Community Affairs, the Center was designed to improve Hispanic participation in public policy and expand access to critical services (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997).

Despite the existence of this targeted infrastructure, Black residents in New Jersey—who experience persistent disparities in income, education, health, and housing—lack a comparable institutional framework (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; New Jersey Department of Health, 2022; The Sentencing Project, 2022). This paper posits that the administrative model used to create CHPRD can and should be replicated to establish a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development (CBPRD).

3. Administrative Creation

The Office of Hispanic Affairs (OHA), later known as the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research, and Development (CHPRD), was not initially established through a standalone statute but rather as an administrative unit within the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). Its creation reflects a strategic use of executive authority to address emerging demographic and policy needs without waiting for formal legislative enactment.

The OHA was formally initiated in 1975 with a defined mission centered on the Hispanic population in New Jersey. Specifically, its purpose was to:

- Facilitate access to government services
- Improve communication between the state and Hispanic communities
- Administer funding to community-based organizations

These objectives were not merely symbolic. They were operationalized through direct engagement with Hispanic-serving organizations, coordination across state agencies, and targeted allocation of public resources. From its earliest phase, the Office functioned as a centralized mechanism for integrating Hispanic communities into the broader framework of state



governance, particularly in areas where barriers such as language, cultural differences, and institutional underrepresentation limited access (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997; Hero, 1992).

Importantly, the OHA was embedded within an existing governmental structure—specifically, the Department of Community Affairs—rather than created as an independent agency. It operated as part of the Division of Public Affairs and was tasked with serving as a liaison between Hispanic communities and the Governor's Office, as well as other state entities (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). This placement allowed the Office to leverage existing administrative infrastructure, funding channels, and interdepartmental relationships, thereby accelerating its implementation and effectiveness.

The administrative nature of its creation is particularly significant from both a policy and legal standpoint. Because the OHA was established through executive action and internal governmental organization, it did not require immediate legislative approval or the passage of a dedicated enabling statute. Instead, it relied on existing appropriations and the broad authority granted to executive agencies to organize programs, allocate resources, and respond to public needs (Moe, 1989). This demonstrates that targeted policy centers can be developed efficiently within the executive branch when there is sufficient political will.

Furthermore, this method of creation provided the Office with a degree of adaptability that might not have been possible under a rigid statutory framework. Over time, the OHA evolved in both scope and function—expanding its grantmaking capacity, developing workforce initiatives, and eventually transitioning into the more formalized CHPRD structure. This evolution underscores the effectiveness of administrative creation as a foundational step, allowing the program to establish itself, demonstrate impact, and later justify expansion or formalization.

From a broader policy perspective, the administrative origin of the OHA/CHPRD establishes a clear precedent: the State of New Jersey has demonstrated ability to create a targeted, ethnicity-focused policy center using existing executive authority. This precedent is directly relevant to contemporary policy discussions, as it confirms that the establishment of a similar center—such as a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development—does not inherently require new legislation at the outset. Instead, it can be initiated through the same administrative mechanisms



that gave rise to the CHPRD, with subsequent legislative action serving to formalize or expand its role over time.

In sum, the administrative creation of the OHA/CHPRD illustrates how state governments can rapidly respond to demographic shifts and systemic disparities through targeted institutional design. It also provides a concrete, historically grounded model for replicating such efforts in a manner that is both legally permissible and operationally effective.

4. Race-Conscious and Race-Restricted Funding Structure

While the administrative creation of the Office of Hispanic Affairs (OHA) established the institutional framework, it was the Center's funding structure and program design that operationalized its mission in a concrete and measurable way. From its inception, the OHA—and later CHPRD—was not structured as a neutral or broadly generalized service entity. Rather, it functioned as a targeted funding and development system explicitly oriented toward the Hispanic community, both in terms of organizational recipients and individual beneficiaries.

As documented in the CHPRD historical report, a core function of the Center was "the administration of grant dollars to Hispanic community based organizations" (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). This mandate establishes a clear linkage between public funding and a defined ethnic constituency. Grants were not distributed indiscriminately across all community organizations; instead, they were directed toward entities whose mission, leadership, and service populations were explicitly Hispanic.

However, the Center's funding model extended beyond this race-conscious organizational targeting, into areas that can be more accurately characterized as race-restricted program design. In particular, initiatives related to entrepreneurial development, workforce training, and fellowship or internship pipelines were structured to cultivate and support Hispanic individuals directly (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997; Selden, Brudney, & Kellough, 1998).

This distinction between race-conscious and race-restricted programming is critical (Gotanda, 1991):



- **Race-conscious programs** typically involve outreach, geographic targeting, or service delivery mechanisms that disproportionately benefit a particular group without formally excluding others.
- **Race-restricted programs** impose eligibility criteria that are explicitly tied to ethnic identity, thereby conditioning access to public benefits on membership in a defined group.

The operational effect of this structure is the creation of a closed-loop funding system, in which:

1. Public funds are allocated to Hispanic-serving organizations
2. Those organizations deliver services and opportunities primarily to Hispanic individuals
3. Workforce and leadership programs reinforce Hispanic participation within institutional systems

The CHPRD model does not rely on a single mechanism of targeting but instead employs a layered approach:

- **Organizational targeting** (Hispanic-serving CBOs)
- **Programmatic targeting** (culturally specific services)
- **Individual targeting** (fellowships, entrepreneurship, leadership pipelines)

This multi-tiered structure amplifies the Center's impact but also strengthens the conclusion that it operates as an ethnicity-specific funding and development system, rather than a neutral public service entity. In this way, the CHPRD funding structure serves as both a model of targeted intervention and a point of comparison for evaluating equity in state policy.

5. New Jersey Demographic Disparities: A Comparative Analysis

A comprehensive analysis of demographic indicators in New Jersey reveals persistent and systemic disparities across racial and ethnic groups in key areas, including income, wealth, education, health, housing, and criminal justice outcomes. While both Hispanic and Black populations experience disadvantage relative to White residents, the data consistently shows that Black residents face deeper and more entrenched disparities across multiple categories.



5.1 Income and Wealth Disparities

Income inequality in New Jersey reflects a clear stratification across racial and ethnic groups, with White households occupying the highest economic position (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Median Household Income:

Group	Median Household Income
White households	~\$110,000
Hispanic households	~\$75,000–\$80,000
Black households	~\$58,000

While Hispanic households earn significantly less than White households, Black households experience an even more pronounced income gap, earning nearly half of White median income (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Wealth disparities are even more severe (Bhutta et al., 2020; Oliver & Shapiro, 2006):

- White households maintain the highest levels of accumulated wealth
- Hispanic households hold substantially less wealth, though generally more than Black households
- Black households possess less than 15% of the wealth of White households

5.2 Educational Disparities

Educational outcomes in New Jersey show clear differences in early academic achievement, particularly in literacy (New Jersey Department of Education, 2023).



3rd Grade Reading Proficiency:

Group	Proficiency Rate
White students	~60–65%
Hispanic students	~40–45%
Black students	~30–35%

Black students consistently demonstrate the lowest proficiency rates, indicating deeper systemic barriers in early childhood education, school funding, and access to academic support (New Jersey Department of Education, 2023; Heckman & Masterov, 2007). These early disparities have cascading effects on high school graduation rates, college enrollment and completion, and workforce readiness.

5.3 Health Disparities

Infant Mortality Rates (New Jersey Department of Health, 2022):

Group	Rate
White infants	Lowest
Hispanic infants	Moderately elevated
Black infants	More than 3× higher than White infants

Black residents also experience significantly higher rates of hypertension, diabetes, and maternal mortality (Artiga et al., 2020; New Jersey Department of Health, 2022). These patterns indicate that the severity and concentration of health risks are greatest among Black residents, reflecting long-standing inequities in healthcare access and social determinants of health (Williams & Collins, 2001).



5.4 Housing and Homeownership Disparities

Homeownership Rates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022):

Group	Homeownership Rate
White households	~75%
Hispanic households	~45–50%
Black households	~40%

Black households remain the least likely to own homes, reflecting deeper systemic exclusion from housing markets (Rothstein, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Lower homeownership rates contribute directly to reduced wealth accumulation, limited intergenerational asset transfer, and greater housing instability (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006).

5.5 Criminal Justice Disparities

Statistics

- Black residents are significantly overrepresented in incarceration rates relative to their population share (The Sentencing Project, 2022; New Jersey Department of Corrections, 2022)
- Arrest rates for Black individuals are substantially higher than those for both White and Hispanic populations (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2022)
- The magnitude of disparity is consistently most severe for Black residents (The Sentencing Project, 2022)

These disparities have far-reaching consequences, including reduced employment opportunities, barriers to housing, disruption of family structures, and long-term economic disadvantage (Alexander, 2010; Western, 2006).



5.6 Comparative Analysis and Structural Implications

Table 1: Comparative Socioeconomic Indicators in New Jersey

Indicator	White Population	Hispanic Population	Black Population	Observations
Median Income	~\$110,000	~\$75K–\$80K	~\$58,000	Largest income gap for Black households
Wealth Levels	Highest baseline	Moderate	<15% of White wealth	Extreme wealth disparity for Black households
Reading Proficiency	~60–65%	~40–45%	~30–35%	Early education gap most severe for Black students
Infant Mortality	Lowest	Moderate	3× higher than White	Significant health disparity for Black infants
Homeownership	~75%	~45–50%	~40%	Black households least likely to own homes
Incarceration	Lowest	Elevated	Highest	Criminal justice disparity most severe for Black residents

Key Analytical Conclusion: This comparative analysis does not undermine the justification for targeted Hispanic-focused programs. Rather, it highlights a critical policy and constitutional issue: when disparity is used as the basis for targeted intervention, the severity and breadth of disparities must guide the scope of policy response. The data demonstrates that Black residents experience equal or greater structural disadvantage across nearly all major indicators.



6. Fifty Years of Tangible Impact: What CHPRD Built

The justification for establishing a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development is not predicated on abstract principle alone. It is supported by a demonstrable, fifty-year institutional record documenting what sustained, targeted state investment produces when consistently applied to a historically underserved population. The Center for Hispanic Policy, Research, and Development's half-century of uninterrupted operation has generated measurable and compounding benefits for New Jersey's Hispanic community across the precise domains — income, wealth accumulation, educational attainment, health outcomes, housing stability, and civic representation — in which Black residents currently experience the most pronounced and persistent disparities. A systematic examination of that institutional record, considered alongside the equally systematic absence of any comparable state-funded infrastructure serving Black New Jerseyans, reveals not a disparity of ambition or community capacity, but a disparity of governmental commitment. The consequence of that disparity is not merely symbolic. It represents a quantifiable and ongoing cost — in unrealized wealth, diminished access to public resources, and foreclosed economic opportunity — borne disproportionately by Black families and communities across successive generations.

6.1 Community-Based Organization Infrastructure

Upon the distribution of the Office of Hispanic Affairs' inaugural appropriation of approximately \$300,000 in 1975, the State of New Jersey commenced a deliberate process of constructing a network of Hispanic-serving community-based organizations (CBOs) where no comparable infrastructure had previously existed at scale. The funding strategy employed during the Office's first year of operation directed state resources to a broad array of organizations engaged in representing and providing services to New Jersey's growing Latino population, including, among others, ASPIRA of Newark, La Casa de Don Pedro of Newark, PACO of Jersey City, PROCEED of Elizabeth, the Hispanic Information Center of Passaic, and COPRA of Camden (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). These initial allocations were not designed as discrete, time-limited disbursements. Rather, they constituted foundational investments in what would become a permanent and expanding network of community-serving institutions embedded throughout the state.



Over the succeeding decades, the Center developed a multi-tiered approach to ensuring the long-term fiscal sustainability of its funded organizations. Through the strategic leveraging of appropriated State Aid funds against available federal resources, an appropriation of approximately \$650,000 in State Aid produced a combined yield of \$1,565,186 in total state and federal resources directed toward the Latino community (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). This 2.4-to-1 leverage ratio — achieved with regularity through donor-match structures negotiated with the Department of Human Services — effectively ensured that each dollar committed by the state through the OHA/CHPRD generated more than two additional dollars in federal investment within Hispanic communities. Specifically, for every dollar of state funding the Center provided, recipient agencies secured an additional \$3.00 in matched federal resources, a structural priority that the OHA maintained consistently throughout its operational history (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997).

By 1991, the CHPRD had extended grant funding to 26 of the approximately 50 incorporated Latino agencies in New Jersey holding registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status — representing 50 percent of all formally recognized Latino nonprofit organizations operating within the state (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). This figure is significant: within sixteen years of the Office's establishment, the State of New Jersey had developed sufficient community-based infrastructure to provide direct institutional support to half of all registered Latino nonprofits in the state. That trajectory of investment has continued and expanded in the decades since. Today, the CHPRD administers more than \$3 million in annual grant funding to 34 Hispanic community-based organizations, through which 60 distinct programs deliver direct services to communities across New Jersey (New Jersey Department of State [NJDOS], 2024a). This network — encompassing 34 funded organizations operating 60 programs — is the product of five decades of sustained, state-directed institutional investment. No analogous infrastructure has ever been established, funded, or sustained on behalf of Black New Jerseyans.

6.2 Workforce Development and the Leadership Pipeline

Among the most consequential and enduring structural contributions of the CHPRD has been its sustained, programmatic cultivation of a Hispanic professional and civic leadership class within the State of New Jersey. In the summer of 1988, the Office initiated the "Hispanic Interns in Community Service" program as a pilot initiative, designed to place Latino college students in professional positions within the Department of Community Affairs with the dual objective of encouraging careers in public service and developing participants' communication, research, and



administrative competencies (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). The program's expansion was measured and deliberate. Over its first four years of operation, cumulative investment in the initiative reached \$222,013, providing ten to twelve weeks of compensated internship placements to a total of 87 students (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997).

Under the leadership of Director Alicia Diaz in the mid-1990s, the program underwent substantial institutional growth. By 1995, the number of annual placements had increased to twenty-nine, a figure made possible through the cultivation of formal partnerships with private sector entities and additional departments within the Department of Community Affairs, with projections to serve fifty students annually by 1997 (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). Now administered under the designation of the Governor's Hispanic Fellows Program, the initiative has continued to expand in both scope and recognition. The 2025 program cohort enrolled 33 fellows — the largest class in the program's operational history — reflecting the maturation of an initiative that has evolved from a modest pilot into a flagship state-supported leadership development program (NJDOS, 2025a). Since its inception in 1988, the program has placed hundreds of Hispanic college students into professional positions spanning government agencies, private sector organizations, and public service institutions across New Jersey. The alumni produced through this pipeline constitute an intergenerational network of Hispanic civic and professional leadership — a network that, by the state's own acknowledgment, would not exist in its current form absent the institutional infrastructure created to develop it (NJDOS LinkedIn, 2022).

No analogous program has been established, funded, or sustained for Black New Jerseyans. No state-directed initiative has systematically placed Black college students into professional government internships, developed Black civic leadership capacity, or constructed the alumni networks and intergenerational mentorship relationships that compound over time into durable career trajectories and meaningful institutional representation. The consequences of this programmatic absence are neither incidental nor superficial. They are structural in nature, and their effects are directly legible in longitudinal data documenting the persistent underrepresentation of Black residents across leadership positions in New Jersey's public sector, private sector, and civic institutions (The Sentencing Project, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

6.3 Policy Advocacy and Legislative Influence



The CHPRD's institutional function extended substantially beyond the administration of grant funding. From its inception, the Center was designed to operate as an embedded policy voice within the executive branch of state government, positioned to shape the development and implementation of public policy affecting New Jersey's Hispanic population. The Office of Hispanic Affairs recognized the necessity of developing a Center capable of facilitating and directing government services in a comprehensive and coordinated manner through sustained policy initiatives, systematic research, and direct technical assistance to community-serving entities (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). That foundational mandate has remained operative throughout the Center's history. In its current form, the CHPRD is explicitly charged with empowering Hispanic community-based organizations across New Jersey while simultaneously ensuring that both the executive and legislative branches of state government are regularly informed of legislative initiatives carrying potential consequences for the Hispanic community (NJDOS, 2024b).

This institutionalized advocacy function has produced demonstrable and concrete policy outcomes. The Center commissioned Rutgers University to conduct a comprehensive study on the state of Hispanics in New Jersey, an undertaking expressly conceived as a mechanism for influencing the direction of public policy as it pertained to Latino residents of the state (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). The resulting 1993 report, *The State of Affairs of Latinos in New Jersey*, served as the direct impetus for a formal briefing session convened with members of the Governor's cabinet, and produced measurable programmatic and policy responses across multiple state agencies (Bonilla-Santiago, 1993; Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). This sequence — from state-commissioned research, to executive-level briefing, to measurable agency response — illustrates the operational logic of institutionalized advocacy: the systematic conversion of community-level data into actionable policy directives, and the translation of those directives into the allocation of public resources.

No functionally equivalent mechanism has been established for Black New Jerseyans. No state entity has been formally charged with the continuous responsibility of translating data on conditions facing Black residents into executive branch policy advocacy, providing regular briefings to the Governor on the status of Black communities, or coordinating across state agencies to ensure that Black residents receive an equitable share of state resources commensurate with their documented needs. The closest approximation to a comprehensive state-level study of Black community conditions in New Jersey is the work undertaken by the New



Jersey Reparations Council, which released its final report, *For Such a Time as This: The Nowness of Reparations for Black People in New Jersey*, on Juneteenth 2025 (New Jersey Reparations Council [NJRC], 2025). That report — a 244-page document produced over two years of intensive study by nine subject-matter committees spanning history, health equity, economic justice, segregation, and public safety — represents the most thorough examination of structural conditions facing Black New Jerseyans undertaken at the state level to date (NJRC, 2025). However, the Council's mandate was expressly and narrowly circumscribed to the assessment of historical harms for purposes of reparations consideration, rather than the development of ongoing, forward-facing public policy recommendations directed at current service delivery, resource allocation, or programmatic intervention. It was, by design, a retrospective instrument of redress — not a continuous mechanism of governance. In the absence of any institutional infrastructure performing the latter function, Black residents and their advocates have been required to rely upon external organizations — nonprofits, civil rights bodies, and community advocacy groups — that, however capable and committed, lack the formal governmental access, the recognized institutional standing within the executive branch, and the sustained public funding that the CHPRD has exercised as an embedded instrument of state government since 1975 (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006; Wilson, 2012).



6.4 Research Infrastructure and Data Power

Knowledge production is institutional power. The CHPRD understood this early and invested accordingly. In late summer 1991, the Office of Hispanic Affairs became the Center for Hispanic Policy Research and Development, and simultaneously established the CHPRD Resource Library and Bibliographic Data Base — a centralized statewide data hub on Latino demographics, economic conditions, service gaps, and policy needs (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). The name change publicly recognized the expansion of the former Office's activities into research and development, and the bibliographic database was designed to play an integral role in providing comprehensive coverage of information about the Latino population and identifying issues and trends important for policy development and advocacy (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997).

The Center has most recently partnered with the Center for Research on the Educational and Employment Outcomes of Hispanic Students at Montclair State University to conduct a statewide needs assessment of New Jersey's Hispanic community, aimed at collecting information about Hispanic-serving or culturally relevant community-based programs and services available in the state, the experiences of community members navigating those programs, and the outstanding needs of Hispanic communities (CHPRD & CREEHS, 2021). This ongoing research infrastructure — university partnerships, statewide surveys, community needs assessments — gives CHPRD and the Hispanic community a continuously updated, empirically grounded basis for policy claims.

Black communities in New Jersey have no comparable state-funded research center producing this kind of systematic, ongoing documentation of conditions and needs. The result is an asymmetry in evidentiary power: when Hispanic community advocates present their case, they can draw on state-commissioned research; when Black community advocates present theirs, they rely primarily on external studies and federal data sets not tailored to New Jersey's specific conditions (Alexander, 2010; Williams & Collins, 2001).



6.5 Entrepreneurial Development and Wealth Building

The capacity to generate, organize, and deploy knowledge constitutes a foundational dimension of institutional power. The CHPRD recognized this principle early in its institutional development and invested accordingly. In the late summer of 1991, the Office of Hispanic Affairs was formally reconstituted as the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development, and simultaneously established the CHPRD Resource Library and Bibliographic Data Base — a centralized, statewide repository of information encompassing Latino demographics, economic conditions, service delivery gaps, and emerging policy needs (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). The formal renaming of the institution was not merely administrative in character; it publicly acknowledged and institutionalized the expansion of the Center's operational mandate into the domains of research and policy development. The bibliographic database was specifically designed to serve an integral function in providing comprehensive, continuously updated coverage of information pertaining to New Jersey's Latino population, and to enable the identification of emerging issues and trends of direct relevance to policy development and community advocacy (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997).

This commitment to systematic knowledge production has continued and deepened in subsequent decades. Most recently, the CHPRD entered into a formal research partnership with the Center for Research on the Educational and Employment Outcomes of Hispanic Students at Montclair State University to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment of New Jersey's Hispanic community. That assessment was designed to gather structured information regarding the availability of Hispanic-serving and culturally competent community-based programs and services across the state, the experiences of community members in navigating existing service systems, and the unmet needs of Hispanic communities across multiple domains of well-being (CHPRD & CREEHS, 2021). The cumulative effect of this sustained research infrastructure — encompassing formal university partnerships, statewide survey instruments, and systematic community needs assessments — is to provide the CHPRD and the Hispanic community it serves with a continuously updated, empirically grounded evidentiary foundation upon which policy claims, legislative advocacy, and resource allocation arguments may be advanced with institutional authority.

No comparable state-funded research infrastructure exists for Black New Jerseyans. No agency has been charged with producing the systematic, ongoing, and jurisdiction-specific documentation of Black community conditions, service gaps, and policy needs that would provide



an equivalent evidentiary foundation for Black community advocacy at the state level. The practical consequence of this absence is a pronounced asymmetry in institutional evidentiary capacity: when advocates for Hispanic communities advance policy claims before executive or legislative bodies, they may draw upon state-commissioned, New Jersey-specific research produced by the very governmental entity designed to serve them; when advocates for Black communities advance comparable claims, they are compelled to rely primarily upon externally produced studies and aggregated federal data sets that are not calibrated to the specific demographic, geographic, and policy conditions of New Jersey (Alexander, 2010; Williams & Collins, 2001). This disparity in evidentiary capacity translates directly into a disparity in policy influence, and ultimately into a disparity in the allocation of public resources.

6.6 The Compounding Cost of Institutional Absence

The most important principle to understand about sustained institutional investment is that its benefits are not linear in nature — they compound. A community-based organization funded in 1976 hired staff who developed professional expertise, cultivated lasting community relationships, and trained the next generation of organizational leaders. A student who completed the Hispanic Interns in Community Service Program in 1991 may today occupy a position as a state agency director, a school superintendent, or a hospital administrator — carrying the institutional knowledge and civic orientation that state investment helped to cultivate decades prior. A research study commissioned in 1993 shaped a policy change that altered the distribution of state resources, which in turn shifted economic conditions across communities, which changed the range of possibilities available to individual families. These effects do not appear in any single year's budget line. They accumulate quietly, year after year and decade after decade, into the durable infrastructure of community capacity — infrastructure that, once built, continues to generate returns long after the original investment was made (Moe, 1989; Wilson, 1989; Selden, Brudney, & Kellough, 1998).



NJ Progress Within the Hispanic Community From 1975 Onward

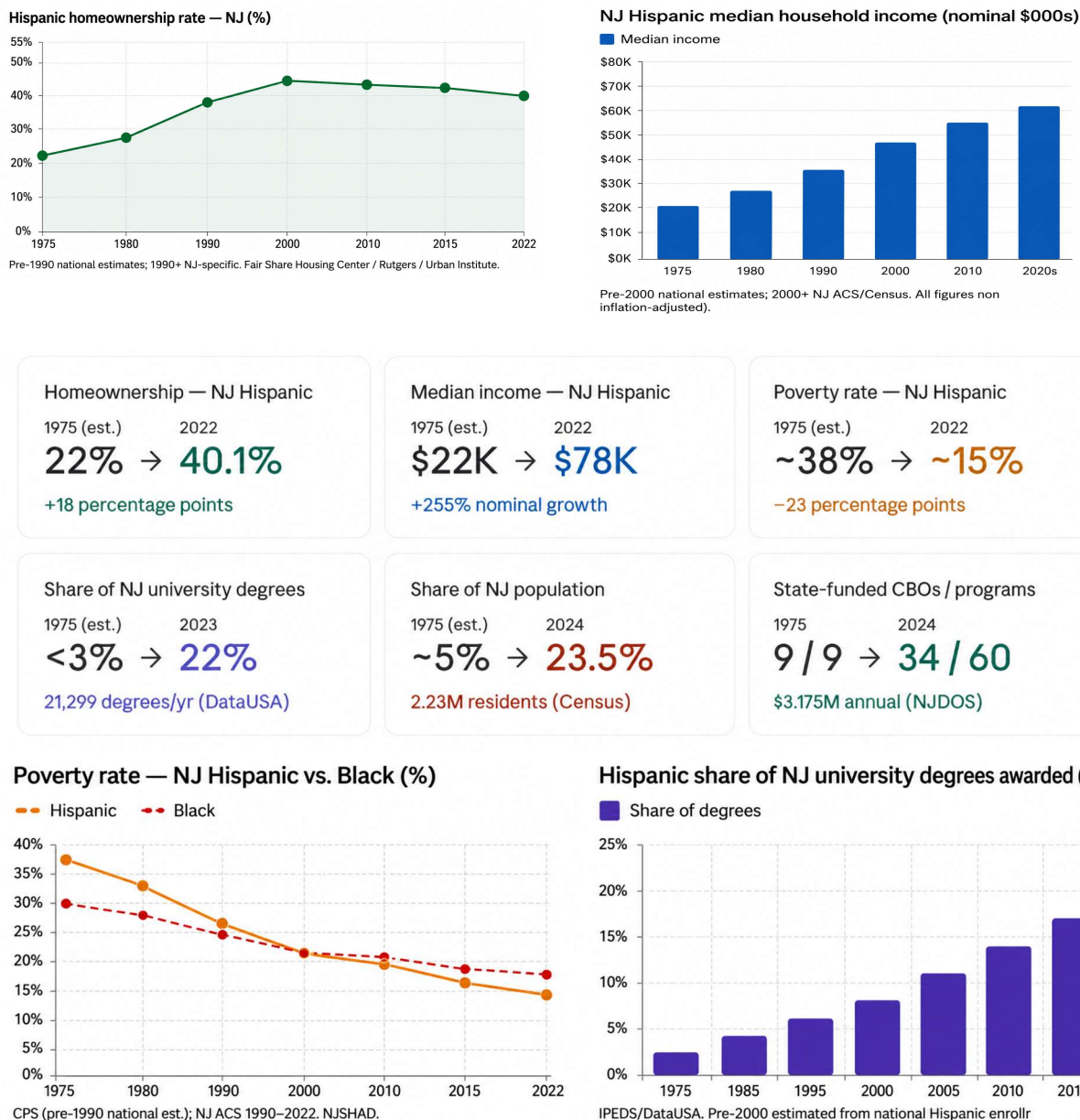


Figure 1.

The data presented in Figure 1 of this paper documents the measurable expression of that compounding over five decades. Between 1975 and 2022, the Hispanic homeownership rate in



New Jersey increased from an estimated 22 percent to 40.1 percent — an 18 percentage point gain that represents hundreds of thousands of families acquiring a primary vehicle of intergenerational wealth accumulation (Fair Share Housing Center, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Over the same period, median household income among New Jersey Hispanic households rose from approximately \$22,000 to approximately \$78,000 in nominal terms — a 255 percent increase — while the Hispanic poverty rate declined from an estimated 38 percent to approximately 15 percent, a reduction of 23 percentage points (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; NJSHAD, 2022). In higher education, Hispanic students grew from representing less than 3 percent of university degrees awarded in New Jersey to 22 percent by 2023, a figure that translates to more than 21,000 degrees conferred annually (DataUSA, 2023). And at the broadest level of civic and political presence, the Hispanic share of New Jersey's total population expanded from approximately 5 percent in 1975 to 23.5 percent in 2024 — a demographic transformation accompanied by the community infrastructure, organized advocacy, and leadership capacity that the CHPRD helped to build and sustain across each of those decades (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024; NJDOS, 2024a).

These outcomes do not represent the product of any single policy or program. They reflect the compounding returns of sustained, multi-dimensional institutional investment — in community organizations, in leadership pipelines, in research infrastructure, and in embedded policy advocacy — operating simultaneously and reinforcing one another across five decades. No single component of this system produced these gains in isolation. The cumulative architecture of support that the CHPRD constructed and maintained is precisely what allowed each individual investment to generate returns beyond its immediate application.

What was lost by the absence of a comparable institutional framework for Black New Jerseyans is therefore not simply the equivalent of the dollars CHPRD administered in any given fiscal year. It is the compounded value of fifty years of community-based organizational capacity that was never built; fifty years of leadership pipelines that were never constructed; fifty years of state-commissioned research that was never produced; and fifty years of embedded policy advocacy within the executive branch that was never institutionalized. The Black community in New Jersey has had to navigate — and in many cases has failed to navigate — the same structural barriers that the CHPRD was specifically designed to help Hispanic communities surmount, without access to a comparable institutional mechanism for doing so. The data presented in Section 5 of



this paper, demonstrating that Black residents experience equal or greater disadvantage across every major socioeconomic indicator relative to both White and Hispanic residents, is in part a measurable record of that compounded institutional absence (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Artiga et al., 2020; New Jersey Department of Health, 2022).

The contrast made visible in Figure 1 is instructive precisely because it is not a record of Hispanic exceptionalism — it is a record of what coordinated, sustained state investment in an underserved community produces when that investment is maintained across generations. Hispanic homeownership in New Jersey, at 40.1 percent, remains far below the White homeownership rate of approximately 75 percent, and significant disparities across income, poverty, and educational attainment persist (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The progress documented in Figure 1 is real, but it is not complete, and it did not emerge from community effort alone. It emerged from a deliberate partnership between the state and the community — a partnership formalized in 1975 and sustained without interruption for fifty years. Black New Jerseyans have been denied that partnership. The consequence is not a temporary gap. It is a structural deficit that has been deepening, in compounding fashion, across the same fifty years during which Hispanic communities were building the institutional infrastructure that Figure 1 reflects.

Had a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development been established alongside the Office of Hispanic Affairs in 1975, it would today — after fifty years of uninterrupted operation — have funded and sustained dozens of Black-led community organizations across New Jersey; graduated hundreds of Black professionals through a state-supported leadership and civic development pipeline; produced decades of New Jersey-specific research informing Black-focused policy advocacy at the highest levels of state government; and leveraged state appropriations into a multiplied stream of federal and private resources directed toward Black communities. The homeownership, income, poverty, and educational attainment trajectories that Figure 1 traces for Hispanic New Jerseyans would have a parallel counterpart for Black New Jerseyans — and the socioeconomic data presented in Section 5 of this paper would tell a materially different story than it does today. The absence of that center was not an accident or an oversight. It was a policy choice, and its costs have been real, ongoing, compounding, and measurable (Alexander, 2010; Wilson, 2012; Rothstein, 2017). Correcting it now — through the establishment of a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development modeled explicitly on the



half-century precedent of the CHPRD — does not undo the compounding losses of fifty years, but it does begin the clock.

7. Legal Analysis: Equal Protection

The CHPRD model—particularly its combination of grants to Hispanic-serving organizations and programs that, in some instances, condition participation on Hispanic identity—implicates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (U.S. Const. amend. XIV). The governing doctrine is clear: when the state uses race or ethnicity in allocating public benefits, courts apply strict scrutiny, the most demanding standard of review (*Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, 1995; Croson, 1989).

7.1 Triggering Strict Scrutiny

Under *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña* (1995), all governmental racial classifications, whether benign or remedial, are subject to strict scrutiny. This standard is triggered not only by explicit racial set-asides, but also by programs where eligibility or prioritization turns on ethnic identity.

Within the CHPRD framework, different program components fall at different points on the spectrum:

- **Race-conscious mechanisms:** directing funds through Hispanic-serving organizations or tailoring services (e.g., language access) to Hispanic communities
- **Race-restricted mechanisms:** fellowships, internships, or entrepreneurial programs where eligibility is tied directly to Hispanic identity

The latter category constitutes facial racial classification and squarely triggers strict scrutiny.

7.2 Compelling Governmental Interest

To survive strict scrutiny, the state must first demonstrate a compelling governmental interest. In *City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.* (1989), the Court emphasized that a generalized desire to remedy "societal discrimination" is insufficient. Instead, the government must show specific, localized evidence of discrimination in the relevant sector.

Applied here, any race-restricted CHPRD program must be supported by:



- Documented disparities affecting Hispanics in the particular domain
- A demonstrable nexus between those disparities and the program's design

7.3 Narrow Tailoring Requirements

Even where a compelling interest exists, the program must be narrowly tailored. The Court has articulated several indicators of narrow tailoring:

- **Evidentiary Fit:** The program must directly address the specific harms identified. Broad or overinclusive categories undermine tailoring (*Croson*, 1989).
- **Consideration of Race-Neutral Alternatives:** The government must seriously consider whether race-neutral measures could achieve similar ends.
- **Limited Scope and Duration:** Programs should be temporary or subject to periodic review.
- **Flexibility (Avoidance of Rigid Quotas):** The Court has disfavored fixed or categorical racial eligibility rules. In *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), flexibility and individualized consideration were central to upholding the program.

7.4 Under-inclusiveness and Consistency Across Similarly Situated Groups

A critical, and often underemphasized, aspect of narrow tailoring is under-inclusiveness—the failure to address the full scope of a problem in a principled way.

- In *Croson* (1989), the Court criticized the city for using broad racial categories without aligning them to the actual distribution of disadvantage.
- In *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007), the Court emphasized that racial classifications must be applied with precision and coherence.

If the state deploys race-conscious and race-restricted tools to address these problems for one group but does not extend comparable mechanisms to another similarly situated group, the policy risks being both underinclusive and inconsistently applied.



7.5 Title VI Considerations

To the extent CHPRD programs involve federal funds, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is also implicated (42 U.S.C. § 2000d). Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in federally funded programs (Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI). Race-restricted eligibility criteria present heightened risk unless:

- They are justified under a recognized remedial framework
- They are tightly tailored and supported by evidence
- They do not operate to exclude similarly situated individuals from federally supported benefits

7.6 Application to CHPRD's Hybrid Structure

The CHPRD model is best understood as hybrid:

- **Race-conscious elements:** Grants to Hispanic-serving organizations; language access and culturally tailored services
- **Race-restricted elements:** Fellowships, internships, or entrepreneurial programs tied to Hispanic identity

The former are generally more defensible as access-enhancing measures. The latter are facial racial classifications that must clear strict scrutiny. The constitutional risk arises not only from the existence of race-restricted programs, but from their selective institutionalization without parallel structures for others facing comparable harms.

7.7 Implications for Policy Design and Parity

The Equal Protection analysis does not require the state to abandon targeted interventions. It does, however, require that when the state chooses to use race, it does so:

- With clear evidentiary justification
- Through narrowly tailored mechanisms
- In a manner that is coherent and consistent across similarly situated groups



In this context, establishing a CBPRD serves two constitutionally relevant functions:

1. **Policy Consistency:** It aligns the state's use of targeted tools with the scope of documented disparities, reducing under-inclusiveness.
2. **Risk Mitigation:** It diminishes the likelihood that existing programs will be viewed as selective or uneven applications of race-based benefits.

8. Administrative Pathway to Establish the CBPRD

The establishment of a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development (CBPRD) can be achieved through a structured administrative process modeled after the creation and evolution of the OHA and CHPRD (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997; Moe, 1989).

8.1 Step 1: Executive Action

The first and most critical step is executive authorization by the Governor, which formally establishes the CBPRD within an existing state department. The Center may be housed within:

- **Department of State** (policy coordination, cultural affairs, interagency alignment)
- **Department of Community Affairs (DCA)** (housing, community development, grant administration)

The executive directive should:

- Define the Center's mission and scope
- Establish its authority to administer grants and programs
- Authorize interagency coordination
- Provide for the appointment of leadership



8.2 Step 2: Organizational Structure

Leadership:

- **Executive Director** — Responsible for strategic direction, program oversight, and intergovernmental coordination; serves as the primary liaison to the Governor's Office and state agencies
- **Advisory Board** — Composed of community leaders, policy experts, academics, and stakeholders; provides guidance on funding priorities, program design, and evaluation

Core Divisions:

Division	Responsibilities
Grants and Community Investment	Administers funding to community-based organizations; oversees grant evaluation, compliance, and performance monitoring
Research and Data Analysis	Conducts studies on disparities; collects and analyzes statewide demographic and economic data; produces policy reports
Policy Development and Advocacy	Develops policy recommendations; coordinates with state agencies to implement reforms; serves as central policy advisory body
Workforce and Economic Development	Manages fellowship, internship, and entrepreneurial programs; builds leadership pipelines; supports workforce training

8.3 Step 3: Budget Allocation

Initial Appropriation:

- Recommended starting range: **\$1–3 million**
- Allocated through executive budget authority, reallocation of existing program funds, or supplemental appropriations



Funding Strategy (Leveraged Model):

- Pursuing federal matching funds (e.g., workforce development, housing, health grants)
- Partnering with private foundations and nonprofit organizations
- Coordinating with existing state programs to maximize resource efficiency

8.4 Step 4: Program Launch

Phase 1 — Foundational Programs:

- Community-based grants
- Research initiatives
- Policy development activities

Phase 2 — Capacity-Building Programs:

- Fellowship and internship pipelines
- Workforce training programs
- Entrepreneurial development initiatives

Phase 3 — Expansion and Integration:

- Cross-agency collaboration
- Statewide program scaling
- Long-term policy implementation

8.5 Proposed Programs

Grant Programs:

- *Housing Stability:* Affordable housing initiatives, homeownership assistance, anti-displacement strategies
- *Workforce Development:* Job training and placement, skills development for high-growth industries, reentry and employment support



- *Youth Services*: Early education and literacy, mentorship and leadership development, college readiness and scholarship support
- *Health Initiatives*: Community health outreach, preventative care, maternal and infant health

Fellowship and Pipeline Programs:

- *Policy Fellowship Program*: Places fellows in state agencies and policy offices; develops expertise in public administration
- *Graduate Research Stipends*: Supports academic research on disparities and policy solutions
- *Government Internship Pipelines*: Provides entry points into public service careers; increases representation in government
- *Entrepreneurial Development Programs*: Grants and technical assistance for small businesses; access to capital, mentorship, and business incubation

9. Policy Recommendations

9.1 Establish CBPRD Administratively

The most effective and immediate pathway is through the Governor's executive authority, consistent with the administrative creation of the OHA (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997) and well-established principles of executive branch organization (Moe, 1989; Wilson, 1989).

Executive Initiation and Legal Authority

The Governor may establish the CBPRD through:

- An Executive Order or formal administrative directive
- Placement within an existing department (e.g., Department of State or Department of Community Affairs)
- Delegation of authority to administer programs, coordinate agencies, and allocate resources



Advantages of Executive Action:

- Bypasses the time constraints of the legislative process (committee reviews, budget negotiations, extended timelines)
- Allows the state to respond quickly to documented disparities and launch programs within the current fiscal cycle
- Enables phased operational capacity building: appointing leadership, establishing administrative infrastructure, launching pilot programs, and building community partnerships

9.2 Allocate Initial Funding

Provide initial funding through the Governor's budget appropriation, consistent with the funding structure used for CHPRD.

- Include a dedicated line item for CBPRD in the annual executive budget
- Fund core operations, staffing, and initial program rollout
- Leverage additional funding through federal grants, public–private partnerships, and philanthropic support

9.3 Develop Evaluation Metrics

Develop a comprehensive performance measurement system to ensure transparency, effectiveness, and continuous improvement.

Define Clear Performance Indicators:

- Program participation and access (enrollment, completion rates, geographic reach)
- Economic outcomes (employment placement, income growth, business formation, access to capital)
- Educational outcomes (skill attainment, credential completion, academic advancement)
- Community-level impact (housing stability, health access, quality of life)



Ensure Accountability and Transparency:

- Publish annual impact reports
- Establish benchmarks and performance targets
- Incorporate feedback from stakeholders and community partners

9.4 Plan for Long-Term Institutionalization

Transition from Administrative Creation to Legislative Codification

This transition should include:

- Development of enabling legislation codifying the Center's mission, authority, and responsibilities
- Formal budget appropriation securing recurring funding through the legislative budget process
- Creation of statutory governance structures, including a formalized Advisory Board and reporting requirements to the Legislature

Expand Funding and Program Scope Based on Demonstrated Impact

- Use evaluation metrics to identify successful programs and prioritize scaling
- Increase funding allocations based on proven effectiveness
- Introduce new initiatives in emerging areas (technology and innovation, climate and environmental equity, advanced workforce training)
- Increase access to federal grants and align programs with national funding priorities

Integrate CBPRD into Statewide Policy Infrastructure

- Establish formal partnerships with the Departments of Education, Health, Labor and Workforce Development, and Community Affairs
- Position CBPRD as a central policy advisor providing regular reports and recommendations to the Governor, state agencies, and the Legislature



- Serve as a central repository for data and analysis on disparities, standardizing data collection across agencies
- Maintain strong connections with community-based organizations, academic institutions, advocacy groups, and private sector partners



10. Conclusion

The Center for Hispanic Policy, Research, and Development (CHPRD) provides a clear and instructive model for how a state can design, implement, and sustain a targeted policy intervention aimed at addressing structural disparities within a defined population (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997). Its origins as an administratively created entity within an existing department demonstrate that meaningful institutional change does not always require immediate legislative action (Moe, 1989). Rather, it can begin through the strategic use of executive authority, followed by phased expansion, funding alignment, and eventual institutionalization.

This model is not theoretical—it is proven. It shows that New Jersey has both the legal authority and operational capability to establish targeted centers that address the needs of historically underserved populations. As such, the proposal to create a Center for Black Policy, Research, and Development (CBPRD) is grounded not in speculation, but in existing state precedent.

From an **administrative standpoint**, the establishment of CBPRD is highly feasible. The same mechanisms used to create the Office of Hispanic Affairs—executive action, departmental placement, and initial budget allocation—remain available today (Bonilla-Santiago, 1997; Wilson, 1989).

From a **legal perspective**, the creation of CBPRD is defensible under current constitutional standards, particularly when designed with attention to Equal Protection principles (*Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, 1995; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003). Importantly, extending a comparable framework to Black communities also strengthens the overall legal posture of the state by addressing concerns related to under-inclusiveness and selective application of race-based policy tools (*City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.*, 1989; *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, 2007).

From a **policy standpoint**, the establishment of CBPRD is fully consistent with New Jersey's demonstrated approach to addressing disparity. The demographic data presented in this analysis makes clear that Black residents in New Jersey experience equal or greater disparities across income, wealth, education, health, housing, and criminal justice outcomes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; New Jersey Department of Health, 2022; Bhutta et al., 2020; The Sentencing Project, 2022).



Most importantly, the creation of CBPRD represents a critical step toward equitable governance and balanced resource distribution. The current landscape reflects a structural imbalance in which targeted funding systems, leadership pipelines, and policy infrastructure exist for one disadvantaged group but not for another similarly situated group (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006; Wilson, 2012). Addressing this imbalance is essential not only for improving outcomes, but for ensuring that public policy reflects principles of fairness, consistency, and equal concern.

CHPRD demonstrates what is possible. CBPRD represents what is necessary.



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