

**JEWISH POVERTY CHALLENGE – YEAR TWO**  
**AN INITIATIVE OF THE NJHSA CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH**

To accommodate the rapid pace of service responses developed by NJHSA member agencies in a short amount of time and the critical need to innovate, the [Network's Center for Innovation and Research](#) has modified the NJHSA Jewish Poverty Challenge program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having administered an Intensive Incubation Program in Year One with support provided to three member agency teams ([JFS Columbus](#), [JFCS of Greater Philadelphia](#) and [JFS Metro Detroit](#), [JVS Human Services Detroit](#) and [Yad Ezra](#)), the Jewish Poverty Challenge will be restructured in Year Two to provide assistance to a much larger number of NJHSA member agencies.

Additionally, the workload and related assistance will be more flexible. All NJHSA member agencies will be able to access relevant content in the form of webinars, shared content and a social innovation toolkit. In addition, up to ten (10) agencies will have the opportunity to qualify for monthly one-on-one assistance and guidance from the consultant team at [Start Co.](#) In all cases, the Year Two of the NJHSA Jewish Poverty Challenge will help NJHSA member agencies better analyze the marketplace, launch and manage solutions, and implement sustainability measures for success to address the many dynamics associated with responding to Jewish Poverty.

Overnight, COVID-19 has thrown our agencies and our society in general in a state of uncertainty and change. On an almost daily basis, agencies have to reflect on and question everything. Who is their client? What are the client's needs today, in a week, a month, a year? Who funds the agency today? Who will fund it next month or next year? How will services be delivered? What client needs will surface through this process?

At the same time, however, most agencies find themselves in an almost impossible situation. As busy and over-committed as the agency was before the pandemic, the agency is now busier. Operating at a pace that threatens to burn out employees and volunteers, the agency must somehow find the time to challenge core assumptions, engage in new partnerships, and find new sources of funding all while developing more efficient and effective ways to serve current and new clients.

Failure to innovate now may threaten an agency's existence, with potentially devastating consequences for the health and well-being of its increasingly vulnerable client populations. To address these challenges, the agency has little choice. Now is the time to innovate. With COVID-19, we no longer have the luxury of the status quo. Normally, a decline into a recession takes place over a 6-month period. Because of the pandemic, this recession arrived faster than any in modern history. The implications are overwhelming and potentially paralyzing. It would be easy to get stuck in the weeds of survival — heads down to deal with the crisis of today, but to do so could have catastrophic consequences for our agencies and our

clients. We must anticipate the path and implications of the recession. To survive as organizations, and ensure our clients survive and thrive, we must rethink and redesign products and services, and adjust our assumptions and organization models.

- Please [click here to view the Year Two RFP](#).
- [Responses to FAQ's are available here](#).
- [Watch a video recording of the July 8th webinar -COVID-19 Agency Highlights & Intro to Year Two of the NJHSA Jewish Poverty Challenge](#).
- View the [video recording](#) and [presentation](#) from the June 16th VISION 2020 – Virtual Plenary: Poverty in the US and Implications of COVID-19 in Developing & Delivering Innovate Service Responses to learn more about the Year One's Intensive Incubation Program.