

## **Consultant to Develop Plan for Responding to Financial Vulnerability Facing Jewish Community Members in Greater MetroWest, NJ**

### Background

The 2020 Jewish Community Study conducted by Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ (Federation) found that 17% of Jewish households identified as financially struggling. This represents more than 26,000 individuals, including approximately 5,000 children. More than half of these households were unable to afford necessities, and 58% do not have three months of savings set aside to cover unexpected expenses such as auto repairs, home emergencies and unplanned medical expenses. These numbers mirror Jewish poverty statistics nationwide, as well as those found within the general U.S. population.

In response to these findings, Federation convened a task force to make recommendations about how to move forward. After conducting research about existing community resources and strategies adopted by other communities, the task force made several recommendations, which Federation now seeks to begin to implement by engaging a consultant.

### Consultant

Federation is seeking a consultant, for a four-to-six-month period, who will be charged with the following:

- Effectively utilizing data to better understand the community's needs
- Tracking available services in Greater MetroWest
- Uncovering gaps in service in Greater MetroWest
- Ensuring that community organizations are able to support community members in accessing appropriate government funded entitlements and other supports
- Identifying appropriate community partners (including, when appropriate, intended recipients of services, with knowledge of the needs of financially struggling community members)
- Convening Federation's partner agencies and others in the community to establish a shared communal strategy to address those needs
- Looking to other communities and organizations for best practices and ideas to enhance service delivery in Greater MetroWest
- Developing plans to educate and engage the community around the issue.

At the conclusion of the four-to-six-month period, the consultant will be expected to:

- Deliver a plan for Federation to address unmet needs, which should include:
  - Short- and long-term goals
  - Associated costs
  - Potential funding partners
  - Potential service providers
  - Strategies for implementation
- Present a strategy for community education and engagement that will:
  - Increase awareness of the problem
  - Involve a variety of Federation departments and others
  - Include appropriate advocacy efforts.
- Provide a strategy for building a culture of compassion that will include:
  - Suggestions for language to be used on Federation's website and elsewhere

- Recommendations about how to ensure that services are person-centered, empathetic, easy to access and reflect a shared philosophy of all providers and other community partners (such as synagogues).

The consultant needs to be a strong leader who can unite and energize groups and individuals. The ability to promote collaboration will also be critical, and the ideal consultant's background will include work with individuals facing poverty so that s/he is knowledgeable about existing services and supports.