



EXPANDING THE NEWARK COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM



JUNE 26, 2025

**Rutgers Business School,
1 Washington Park, Newark, NJ 07102**



SEARCH AND SELECTION
Management Consulting



Rutgers Institute for
Corporate Social Innovation



FOUNDATION



NEWARK COMMUNITY
FOOD SYSTEM

Welcome to the 13th Annual Sustainable Empowerment Conference

“Expanding the Newark Community Food System”

Rutgers Business School and its Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI), in collaboration with Newark Science & Sustainability, Inc., are proud to host this transformational community event. We have brought together an extraordinary assemblage of speakers and community participants who are committed to co-creating a sustainable future for Newark, New Jersey and beyond.

Our live conference shines a spotlight on grassroots-led efforts that are creating better health and wellness for our communities and environment. It features powerful, facilitated roundtable discussions on:

- Expanding Philanthropy, Community Engagement & Public-Private Partnerships
- Sustainable Agriculture and Clean Energy
- Enhancing Healthy Food Access in Our School Systems and Institutions

The conference offers a valuable opportunity to advance these goals by bringing together stakeholders committed to equity, sustainability, and collective impact.

A huge thank you to all attendees, speakers, and community partners for your presence and dedication to building a healthier, more resilient Newark. And to the Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health (REACH) for giving us the grant to make this possible.



Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D.

Executive Director
Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation



Tobias A. Fox

Managing Director,
Newark Science & Sustainability, Inc.



9:00AM– 9:30AM Breakfast, Networking & Community Building, Second Floor Lounge

Breakfast, Networking, and Community Building

9:30AM – 10:00AM Room 205

Welcome & Keynote Remarks

- Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D., Executive Director, RICS
- Tobias Fox, Founder & Managing Director, NewarkSAS
- Kevin Lyons, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Professional Practice, RBS
- Nicole Hewitt-Cabral, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Newark

10:00AM– 11:00AM Room 205

Panel Discussion: Healthy Food Access & Security

Moderator: Claudia Urdanivia, Urban Agriculture Agent + Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County

Panelists:

- Tobias Fox, Founder & Managing Director, NewarkSAS
- Fallon Davis, Founder & CEO, STEAM URBAN
- Hashim Bennett Sr., CEO, Plants & Ponds LLC

11:00AM – 12:00 PM

Roundtable Discussions:

Breakout Rooms (Room 202, 216, 226)

- Expanding Philanthropy, Community Engagement & Public Private Partnerships (Room 216)

o Facilitators:

§ Nagisa Manabe, Owner and Operator, River Staan Certified Organic Farm

§ Briana Huett, Assistant Professor of Professional Practice & Director of Office of Community Engagement, Rutgers University - Newark

- Sustainable Agriculture and Clean Energy (Room 226)

o Facilitators:

§ William G. Russell, Principal, Transitioning to Green LLC.

§ Gabrielle Bromfeld, Program Associate, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County 4-H Youth Development

- Enhancing Healthy Food Access in Our School Systems and Institutions (Room 202)

o Facilitators:

§ Laura Cole, Fresh Food Coordinator, The Coalition for Healthy Foods in Newark Schools (CHFINS)

§ Carlene Rhoden, NYC Public School Teacher, NYC Department of Education

12:00PM – 12:30PM Room 205

Roundtable Report Outs, Next Steps, Closing Remarks

- Jacqueline Bido, Chief Strategy Officer, Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc.

12:30PM – 1PM

Lunch, Networking, & Community Building, 2nd Floor Lounge

We invite you to join the City of Newark's Sustainability Unconference at 15 Washington Street following the end of our conference.

**13th Annual Sustainable
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June 26, 2025**

Overview

Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI)

At the [Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation \(RICSI\)](#), we understand the urgency of today's complex societal challenges—and we see business as a powerful, yet often underutilized, force for meaningful change. More and more, research shows that companies dedicated to social impact are not only doing good but also outperforming those that are not.

RICS I brings together a rich blend of diverse perspectives, strategic locations, and strong networks to unite leaders from the corporate, nonprofit, and public spheres. By collaborating with top academic experts, we aim to drive forward the field of Corporate Social Innovation and prepare the next generation of purpose-driven changemakers. Our mission is to serve as a premier academic catalyst for solving society's most critical issues.



The Four Pillars of CSI

Our Strategic Approach

- Educate – We offer a robust mix of academic programs, including undergraduate and graduate courses, executive education, and workforce development opportunities that prepare individuals for impactful careers.
- Collaborate – Through strategic partnerships and applied learning, we work hand-in-hand with businesses and mission-driven organizations to advance Corporate Social Innovation practices.
- Inspire – By showcasing innovative models and sharing actionable insights, we elevate thought leadership and spark new ideas that create long-term value for both communities and businesses.

For more information visit RICS I's website, LinkedIn Page and Instagram Profile



Instagram: @rbs_csi



LinkedIn: @Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation

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Overview

Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc. (Newark SAS)

Established in 2013, Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc. (Newark SAS) is a mission-driven 501(c)(3) nonprofit rooted in Newark, NJ. The organization's work focuses on building long-term sustainability across generations by delivering educational programs, hands-on agricultural training, and community-based green development projects that promote eco-conscious living and improve access to healthy food both locally and globally.



Our mission is to empower communities by advancing food justice and sustainable energy solutions. Through a diverse range of programs, we focus on cultivating sustainable agriculture, promoting the use of renewable energy, and offering learning experiences that take place both indoors and outdoors. These experiences help participants apply knowledge in real-world settings and foster a deeper connection with nature. Guided by our five core pillars, we offer a holistic and interdisciplinary model of environmental education and community engagement.

- **Sustainable Urban Agriculture**
- **Renewable & Clean Energy Solutions**
- **Green Building & Eco-Friendly Construction**
- **Health, Wellness & Nutrition Education**
- **Environmental Arts & Creative Expression**

For more information visit Newark SAS' website, LinkedIn Page and Instagram Profile



Instagram: @newarksas



LinkedIn: @Newark Science and Sustainability

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Overview

Expanding the Newark Community Food System

This conference is made possible through the generous support of the [Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health \(REACH\) Initiative](#), under the grant-funded project Expanding the Impact of Newark Community Food Systems. The initiative aims to address critical social determinants of health (SDoH), with a focused emphasis on improving food access and nutrition security in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods across Newark, New Jersey.

The project is a joint effort between the [Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation \(RICSI\)](#)—under the leadership of Executive Director Jeana Wirtenberg—and its Community Engagement Partner, [Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc.](#),

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by Founder and Managing Director Tobias A. Fox, who also serves as the facilitator for Newark Community Food Systems.



BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES

Welcome and Keynote Remarks

Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Professional Practice and Executive Director of Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation



Jeana is Associate Professor of Professional Practice in the Management & Global Business Department, Rutgers Business School, and Executive Director of the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI). She leads the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative and teaches Sustainability/ESG related courses in Rutgers Business School's MBA and Executive Education. Jeana is the lead editor and author of *The Sustainable Enterprise Fieldbook: Building New Bridges* (Greenleaf, 2008; Routledge, 2019). Her previous book: *Building a Culture for Sustainability: People, Planet and Profits in a New Green Economy* (Praeger, 2014) shows how to holistically integrate sustainability throughout the culture of organizations. She is also the CEO of *Transitioning to Green*, a consulting firm for integrating sustainability into business practices.

Previously, Jeana was HR Director at Public Service Enterprise Group and held leadership roles at AT&T. She started her career as a Social Science Analyst in the Federal government where she was a Social Science Analyst in the Office of Research at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and led the Women's Research/Social Processes team at the National Institute of Education. Jeana holds a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Psychology from UCLA and teaches Organizational Behavior, Corporate Social Innovation, Women Leading in Business, and other management courses at Rutgers Business School.

Welcome and Keynote Remarks

Tobias A. Fox Managing Director, Newark Science & Sustainability, Inc.



Tobias A. Fox is the Founder and Managing Director of Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc., a nonprofit organization, and the Newark Community Food System. Fox is also a writer with a decade of independent publishing experience, a professional organizer, agriculturalist, visual storyteller, and coordinator of the annual Sustainable Living Empowerment Conference. For over ten years, he has shown collaborative grassroots leadership, passion, and dedication to sustainability and community growth. Tobias A. Fox conducts community events, presentations, and workshops on sustainable living, and assists local and global urban farmers and gardeners. Recently, his outreach has expanded to the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, the Philippines, and Africa.

Fox was honored as one of the 100 People of Newark for his outstanding contributions during Newark's 350th anniversary, a project produced by the 100 People Foundation in partnership with PSEG Foundation.

Tobias has participated in tree-planting events in low-income neighborhoods with environmental concerns, and he continuously shares his expertise during conferences and forums. Fox's passion stems from personal experiences. Growing up in a household of sixteen with scarce resources, and losing his mother at 16 and his younger brother a year later, he was driven to make a difference. These challenges have strengthened his resolve to bring about significant change in his community.

Welcome and Keynote Remarks

Kevin Lyons, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Professional Practice, RBS



Dr. Lyons' research includes the integration of sustainability, social and health impact criteria into Supply Chain, procurement, and contracting processes and operations to promote economic development and positive social determinants of health outcomes. He developed the Supply Chain Environmental Archeology research program/lab, which involves the archeological study of climate change and environmental impacts via the supply chain, big data analytics, risk assessment, decision analysis as well as product end-of-life and new product innovation research. Dr. Lyons has also researched and developed in-state end-to-end supply chain networks which reduce waste, climate impacts while increasing economic prosperity. He is the principal investigator for multiple Purchasing and Equity Investment Disparity Studies, and the U.S. State Department's Mandela Washington Fellowship Program.

Previously, Dr. Lyons was the Chief Procurement Officer at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and he is an U.S. Air Force Veteran.

Board Member, Invest Newark
Commissioner, Newark Equitable Growth Commission
Faculty Board Member, Rutgers Global Health Institute

Books:

- Buying for the Future; Contract Management and the Environmental Challenge (2000)
- A Roadmap to Green Supply Chains: Using Supply Chain Archaeology and Big Data Analytics (2015)

Links:

- <https://www.njeda.com/njeda-to-partner-with-rutgers-on-disparity-study-for-nj-wind-port-contracting/>
- <https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/who-we-are/kevin-lyons/>
- <https://www.business.rutgers.edu/news/three-faculty-members-receive-nj-department-environmental-protection-research-grant>
- <https://www.business.rutgers.edu/news/new-york-fed-official-impressed-newarks-collaboration-economy>

Welcome and Keynote Remarks

Nicole Hewitt-Cabral Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Newark



Nicole Hewitt-Cabral serves as the Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Newark, bringing over two decades of expertise in sustainability and community development. The daughter of Jamaican immigrants, her early experiences on her family's farm instilled a deep-rooted passion for the environment. She is also the founder and CEO of Community Action Strategies LLC, a consulting firm dedicated to advancing equitable, community-driven solutions to social and environmental challenges.

Nicole has served in professional roles with organizations including Public Agenda, the Institute for Sustainable Communities, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Peace Corps, and the White House. She holds a Master of Public Administration in Public and Nonprofit Policy and Management from New York University, and a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Hood College.

She is an avid urban gardener, trained dancer, accomplished capoeirista, and enthusiastic cyclist. In the rare moments of free time, she can often be found keeping pace with her energetic four-year-old as he zips through the city on his scooter.

Panel Discussion: Healthy Food Access & Security

Claudia Urdanivia-Panel Moderator

Senior Program Coordinator at Rutgers Cooperative Extension



Claudia Urdanivia is a community development and food systems practitioner who has supported community gardens and urban farms in Northern New Jersey and the Bronx for a decade. In her role as Urban Agriculture agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Hudson and Essex Counties, Claudia provides education, technical assistance, and programming support for communities in urban areas.

Tobias Fox, Founder & Managing Director, NSAS



As mentioned previously, Tobias A. Fox is the Founder and Managing Director of Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc. He is an essential voice on today's panel. As a leading architect of Newark's community food systems and a nationally recognized advocate for grassroots sustainability, Fox brings unmatched on-the-ground expertise and lived experience. His leadership in organizing the Sustainable Living Empowerment Conference and his international work in urban agriculture underscore his deep commitment to environmental justice, health equity, and community-driven solutions—making his perspective invaluable to this dialogue.

Panel Discussion: Healthy Food Access & Security

Fallon Davis, Founder & CEO, STEAM URBAN



Fallon is a nationally recognized educator, land steward, and food justice advocate. They empower Black and Brown youth through land-based education, innovation, and cultural healing. As a leader in urban agriculture and climate justice, Fallon also directs A Healing Sanctuary in Newark and serves on the NJ Black Farmers Cooperative, where their advocacy was key to passing the state's first Urban Agriculture Resolution. Their work has earned accolades including the Dr. Arnold Brown Racial Justice Award and a PBS 21 feature that won a 2024 Grammy Award.

Panel Discussion: Healthy Food Access & Security

Hashim Bennett Sr., CEO, Plants & Ponds LLC



Hashim Bennett is a seasoned Green Infrastructure Contractor with over two decades of experience at the intersection of environmental science, community empowerment, and sustainable land development. Rooted in a lifelong commitment to earth stewardship, Hashim brings deep expertise in designing, installing, and maintaining green infrastructure systems such as rain catchment, drip irrigation, outdoor structures and urban agriculture installations across New Jersey’s urban and school landscapes. A certified Master Gardener and high school science educator, Hashim integrates ecological literacy with hands-on implementation, bridging classroom learning with real-world sustainability practices. He has led multidisciplinary teams and partnered with organizations like Rutgers University and local municipalities to deploy data-driven en-

vironmental monitoring tools that inform green infrastructure planning. His projects emphasize equity, resilience, and regenerative design—prioritizing community voice and local capacity-building. Hashim’s approach is grounded in permaculture ethics, stormwater management best practices, and a strong belief that green spaces in urban areas are not luxuries but necessities. Whether transforming vacant lots into productive gardens, managing youth workforce programs around green jobs, or retrofitting schoolyards to reduce runoff, Hashim ensures that every project reflects both environmental and social impact.

CORE SKILLS

- Green infrastructure design and implementation
- Stormwater management
- Community engagement & workforce development
- Urban agriculture and permaculture systems
- Environmental education & curriculum design
- Project management and grant writing
- Soil health restoration and monitoring

CERTIFICATIONS

- Rutgers Certified Master Gardener
- OSHA 30 Construction Safety & Health
- NJDEP Green Infrastructure Training (in progress)
- Permaculture Design Certificate (in progress)

“To build green is to build justice — returning health, beauty, and opportunity to the places most often denied them.”

Roundtable Facilitators

Nagisa Manabe, Owner and Operator, River Stoan Certified Organic Farm



Nagisa Manabe owns and operates River Stoan Certified Organic Farm in Kingston, NJ. Deeply committed to farming, conservation and environmental justice in the Garden State, she volunteers as the Chief Development Officer for the Ramapough Munsee Lenape Turtle Clan and works as a Land Access Coordinator for NOFA-NJ.

Prior to that she was a marketing and sales executive at organizations including USPS, Diageo, Godiva, Coca-Cola, P&G and JnJ. She is a graduate of Yale College and has a BA in Economics and Japanese Studies. She also is a graduate of Harvard University's MBA program.

Dr. Briana Huett, Assistant Professor at Rutgers University-Newark



Dr. Briana Huett is an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice, Director of Community Engagement, and Director of the NextGen Leadership Academy at Rutgers-Newark School of Public Affairs and Administration. Having worked as a nonprofit program manager and administrator, and a university-level community engagement and service-learning professional for over 10 years, her passion is to connect student learning and academic research with community members' knowledge and expertise through deep partnerships built upon trust, mutual respect, and equity.

Roundtable Facilitators

Bill Russell

Principal, Transitioning to Green, LLC



Bill Russell is a Principal at Transitioning to Green, LLC, specializing in sustainability consulting and training. Bill is currently advancing TTG's "Future-fit Strategies for Sustainability" services that align core corporate strategies and current decisions with forecasted risks and opportunities. These services include implementing technology tools that automate building decarbonization initiatives from initial selection of Energy Efficient Measures and Scenario Analysis for resilient transition planning through agile implementation and change management support. Bill also serves to educate and train students and employees

as they develop their awareness and sustainability-aligned skills required to lead project teams, corporate functions, and industry collaborations to innovate and transform their work into sustainably aligned value and outcomes. He currently works with Rutgers University to develop and deliver several Executive Education courses, leveraging gamification and scenario simulation tools for climate and environmental risks and advancing a circular economy. Formerly the Global Environmental/Sustainability Services Leader at PwC, Bill developed foundational methodologies for GHG accounting, ESG reporting, and climate risk management. Additionally, Bill is a co-author of the widely regarded The Sustainable Enterprise Fieldbook.

Gabrielle Bromfeld

Program Associate with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County



As a program associate at Rutgers, Gaby coordinates county-level and statewide initiatives that involve youth in transforming our food systems. Her work centers on food waste reduction, composting, and fostering community engagement through positive youth development. She plays a crucial role in evaluating and researching the impact of youth food systems programming in urban settings, forging strong partnerships with community organizations and volunteers to maximize reach. Notably, she collaborates with community colleges to establish food recovery practices that both mitigate waste and provide vital support to campus food pantries, directly combating student food insecurity. Beyond her direct program management, she contributes her time to the New Jersey Food Democracy Collaborative, working to advance food advocacy across the state.

Roundtable Facilitators

Laura Cole, Fresh Food Coordinator

The Coalition for Healthy Foods in Newark Schools (CHFiNS)



Laura Cole is a dynamic food systems organizer, earth worker, and social justice advocate rooted in the vibrant city of Newark, NJ. She currently serves as the Fresh Food Coordinator for The Coalition for Healthy Foods in Newark Schools (CHFiNS), where she leads efforts to expand equitable access to fresh, locally sourced food for students and families.

With a background in Behavioral Science, Emergency Medical Services, and natural medicine, Laura brings a holistic lens to her work—one that centers the deep interconnections between food, health, culture, and systemic equity. Her lived experience growing up in Newark, where access to nourishing, culturally relevant food was limited, fuels her unwavering commitment to community empowerment and food justice.

Laura's work is grounded in grassroots collaboration, healing practices, and advocacy for structural change. She believes deeply in the power of community-led solutions and is dedicated to building sustainable, just food systems that restore agency and dignity to those most impacted by inequity. As a facilitator for this year's Sustainable Living Empowerment Conference, Laura is honored to contribute to the ongoing movement to expand and strengthen Newark's community food system.

Carlene A. Rhoden

Special Education Teacher



Carlene Rhoden is a special education teacher in New York. She has been teaching for 6 years. Carlene earned her master's degree in special education at the University of Mount Saint Vincent. She has been working in the early intervention profession as an Applied Behavioral Analysis instructor for 4 years helping infants, and toddlers who struggle with their Developmental Domains or having diagnosed conditions with a high probability of such delays. She has a long extended professional career in administration at The City University of New York (CUNY). Teaching is her passion, and Carlene believes that all children can learn.

Program Committee

Jacqueline M. Bido, Ed.D.



A Newark, New Jersey native, Dr. Bido is the Chief Strategy Officer of Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc. As a Project Coordinator for the Community Based Public Safety Collective, she utilizes her breadth of work to drive systemic change locally and nationally. She is the founder of Elevate Newark and BIDOISM, LLC., which are consulting companies created to empower and help people, their organizations, and the communities they serve to invoke social change. She continues to expand her mission through business consultation, program development, and grant writing to support local and national initiatives. She is the author of “The Person Versus the Process.”

Dr. Bido served as an Information Systems Tech in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom during her time in the US Navy. As a former District Administrator for Parent and Family Engagement in the Orange County Public Schools Title I Department she coached and trained 73 Parent Engagement Liaisons and schools in implementing successful communication strategies and systems for engaging parents, families, and the community.

She serves on the USDA Federal Advisory Board for Minority Farmers, VA Federal Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, Keep It Green Coalition Policy Chair, and a host of other boards to continue to be a catalyst for change. Dr. Jacqueline Bido earned her Doctorate Degree from Seton Hall University in Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy. She is a mother to five beautiful children, who have been her greatest achievement because their mere existence proves the importance of the work she does to make the world a better place for them and all to live.

Tobias A. Fox, NSAS

(see the bio included above)

Jeana Wirtenberg, RICS

(see the bio included above)

Program Committee

Deborah Flamengo



Deborah Flamengo, M.A., a native of Newark, New Jersey, is the Program Coordinator for the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI). In this role, she is involved and supports all the Institute's initiatives, grants, and academic courses, as well as providing administrative support to all RICSI team members. Previously, Deborah worked with the Office of University-Community Partnerships located at Rutgers University – Newark, where she oversaw and coordinated two community-based initiatives and worked closely with the Assistant Chancellor for University-Community Partnerships to create and develop partnerships between faculty, staff, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and the

Greater Newark community. Deborah earned her Bachelor's degree from Rutgers University-Newark and her Master's degree from Montclair State University. She also received a Rutgers Business School Executive Education MBA Certificate in Driving Innovative Business Solutions. She has also presented twice at the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) Annual Conferences.

Mark Bilotta



Mark Bilotta is a graduate student at Rutgers Business School, pursuing an M.S. in Digital Marketing. He brings a strong foundation in digital advertising, consumer behavior, and mobile innovation, enriched by practical experience as a Digital Marketing Consultant Intern at the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation. In this role, he contributed to marketing strategy and outreach for the 2025 CSI Excellence Awards. Mark is a graduate of NJIT, where he founded and led both the university's volleyball club and its media marketing team. His previous experience includes managing seasonal social campaigns for local businesses in Monmouth County and collaborat-

ing with Newark-based startup Glyde App to enhance user engagement and operational efficiency through strategic social media and UX improvements.

SPECIAL THANKS

JEANA WIRTENBERG, Ph.D.	Associate Professor of Professional Practice and Executive Director, Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation.
TOBIAS A. FOX	Managing Director, Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc
JACQUELEEN BIDO, Ed.D	Chief Strategy Officer, Newark Science and Sustainability, Inc
DEBORAH FLAMENGO	Program Coordinator, RICSI
MARK BILOTTA	Digital Marketing Consultant, RICSI, MSDM Master's Student

We extend our gratitude to the [Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health](#) for funding the conference. We also deeply appreciate the generous donations to this event from [Whole Cities Foundation](#) and [Whole Foods Market](#).

