

Newark, NJ, **March 19, 2024** – Today, MacKenzie Scott’s Yield Giving announced NJ LEEP as one of the Yield Giving Open Call’s awardees working with people and in places experiencing the greatest need in the United States. NJ LEEP received \$2 million to deepen its investment in students from the Greater Newark Area obtaining a college degree. Founded in 2007, NJ LEEP works to close the educational equity gap by partnering with first-generation and low-income students to build the skills needed to achieve their college and career ambitions.

NJ LEEP works with over 360 students across their two core programs - 220 middle and high school students from the greater Newark area in NJ LEEP’s College Bound Program and an additional 144 college students at schools across the country, including Rutgers, Georgetown, Kean, Yale and others, in NJ LEEP’s College Student Success Program. 100% of NJ LEEP students graduate high school, 99% enroll in college and 74% obtain a college degree. NJ LEEP programs build social-emotional skills and an academic foundation, while also providing extensive career exposure. The extraordinary gift from Yield Giving Open Call will allow NJ LEEP to deepen its investment in current programming and to thoughtfully grow the organization to offer more students the NJ LEEP opportunity.

In March 2023, Yield Giving launched an Open Call for community-led, community-focused organizations whose explicit purpose is to enable individuals and families to achieve substantive improvement in their well-being through foundational resources. NJ LEEP’s Executive Director, Matt Feinstein said that the gift is a recognition of the talent and opportunity that exists in Newark – “While Yield Giving made this donation to NJ LEEP, it really is an investment in the young people of Newark and a recognition of their potential.” Added NJ LEEP’s Board Chair, Zenola Harper: “We are so grateful and excited for this transformative gift from Ms. Scott and Yield Giving. It is not only a validation of the work done by the team and students at NJ LEEP but will allow us to expand our impact for students across the greater Newark area.”

The Open Call received 6,353 applications and initially planned for 250 awards of \$1 million each. In the Fall of 2023, organizations top-rated by their peers advanced to a second round of review by an external Evaluation Panel recruited for experience relevant to this cause and underwent a final round of due diligence. In light of the incredible work of these organizations, as judged by their peers and external panelists, the donor team decided to expand the awardee pool and the award amount. "We are excited that our partnership with Yield Giving has resonated with so many organizations," said Cecilia Conrad, CEO of Lever for Change. "In a world teeming with potential and talent, the Open Call has given us an opportunity to identify, uplift, and empower transformative organizations that often remain unseen."

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## **NJ LEEP**

NJ LEEP partners with first-generation and low-income students from the Greater Newark Area to help them achieve their greatest college and career ambitions. We provide the resources, education, support and hope to over 360 students a year and aspire to expand our program to increase the number of Newark students graduating from college and launching into a financially stable career. NJ LEEP works with students as early as middle school to develop a college-going identity, build social-emotional and life skills, grow academic skills, gain career exposure and get into and through college. Students participate in programming during the summer and throughout the academic year.

More information about NJ LEEP can be found at [njleep.org](http://njleep.org).

**Yield Giving**

Established by MacKenzie Scott to share a financial fortune created through the effort of countless people, Yield Giving is named after a belief in adding value by giving up control. To date, Yield's network of staff and advisors has yielded over \$16,500,000,000 to 1,900+ non-profit teams to use as they see fit for the benefit of others. To learn more, visit [www.yieldgiving.com](http://www.yieldgiving.com).

**Lever for Change**

Lever for Change connects donors with bold solutions to the world's biggest problems—including issues like racial inequity, gender inequality, lack of access to economic opportunity, and climate change. Using an inclusive, equitable model and due diligence process, Lever for Change creates customized challenges and other tailored funding opportunities. Top-ranked teams and challenge finalists become members of the Bold Solutions Network—a growing global network that helps secure additional funding, amplify members' impact, and accelerate social change. Founded in 2019 as a nonprofit affiliate of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Lever for Change has influenced over \$1.7 billion in grants to date and provided support to more than 145 organizations. To learn more, visit [www.leverforchange.org](http://www.leverforchange.org).