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## **Brooklyn Communities Collaborative receives \$1.4M grant to support maternal health in Central and East Brooklyn**

*Grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will support a Maternal Health Program that improves maternal/infant health and wellbeing through regrants to local, community-rooted nonprofits*

Brooklyn, NY – Today Brooklyn Communities Collaborative (BCC), a non-profit focused on strengthening health and wealth in Brooklyn, announces the award of \$1.4 million to address the maternal health crisis in Central and East Brooklyn from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), an organization committed to improving health and health equity in the United States.

The grant will support a Maternal Health Program that centers community voices to combat the maternal health crisis. Through BCC's Strong Communities Fund, a proven grantmaking system designed to fund and strengthen community-led nonprofits that work on the ground in Brooklyn communities, BCC will provide crucial funds to community-based organizations (CBO) with expertise and experience in improving maternal health. The program will contribute to more seamless access to resources that support health and wellness, improve engagement and education of adolescents and young adults on pre- and inter-conception care in the community, and better manage existing health conditions prior to pregnancy.

"We are thrilled to have the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's support to improve maternal and infant health in Brooklyn," said **Shari Suchoff, Executive Director of BCC**. "This funding will enable small, nonprofit organizations to address pressing, hyperlocal needs of their communities, which is at the core of the work being done through the Strong Communities Fund."

The grant is a part of the RWJF's 'Building Local Alignment Initiative', which uses a participatory grantmaking process to target solutions and support regranting by intermediary organizations around the country. Rooted in the belief that those closest to a problem should be central in crafting solutions, grants were awarded to 2-3 intermediary organizations around the country for regranting and organizational support.

Addressing the maternal and infant health crisis – a top indicator of the overall health of a community – has been identified by BCC and partners as an urgent need in Brooklyn. High rates of maternal and child mortality in many Central and East Brooklyn neighborhoods are among the worst in the country. Black mothers in New York City are 12 times more likely to die during childbirth than white women, while the preterm birth rate in Brownsville, Canarsie, and East New York is 1.5 times higher than the average for all of Brooklyn.

It is shocking that our communities of Central and East Brooklyn have some of the highest maternal and child mortality rates in the country," said **Dr. Marilyn Fraser, CEO of the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health and Co-Chair of the BCC Strong Communities Fund Review Committee**. "The Strong Communities Fund's Maternal Health Program will provide assistance to organizations, doing the



incredible work of promoting maternal and infant health, to further deliver life-changing support to more members of these communities.”

BCC’s Strong Communities Fund has already awarded over \$4M in grants to CBOs addressing critical health concerns like COVID-19 testing and vaccination, and has proven effective at targeting funds in an impactful and community-centered manner. The Maternal Health Program will utilize BCC’s network of over 100 partners to target aid, improve maternal and infant health, and track outcomes across Brooklyn.

For more information about the BCC, please visit: <https://brooklyncommunities.org/>

### **About Brooklyn Communities Collaborative**

Brooklyn Communities Collaborative (BCC) is a not-for-profit based in New York that works with local institutions and stakeholders to address longstanding health inequities in the borough. BCC was founded in 2019 with the goal of leveraging the financial power of anchor institutions and community resources to address the economic factors that improve the social determinants of health – whether it’s supporting housing stability, advancing economic empowerment, expanding care management services, or strengthening CBOs in the area. BCC builds upon years of collaborative efforts with anchor institutions and community partners in Brooklyn. Visit [www. https://brooklyncommunities.org/](https://brooklyncommunities.org/) for more information.

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