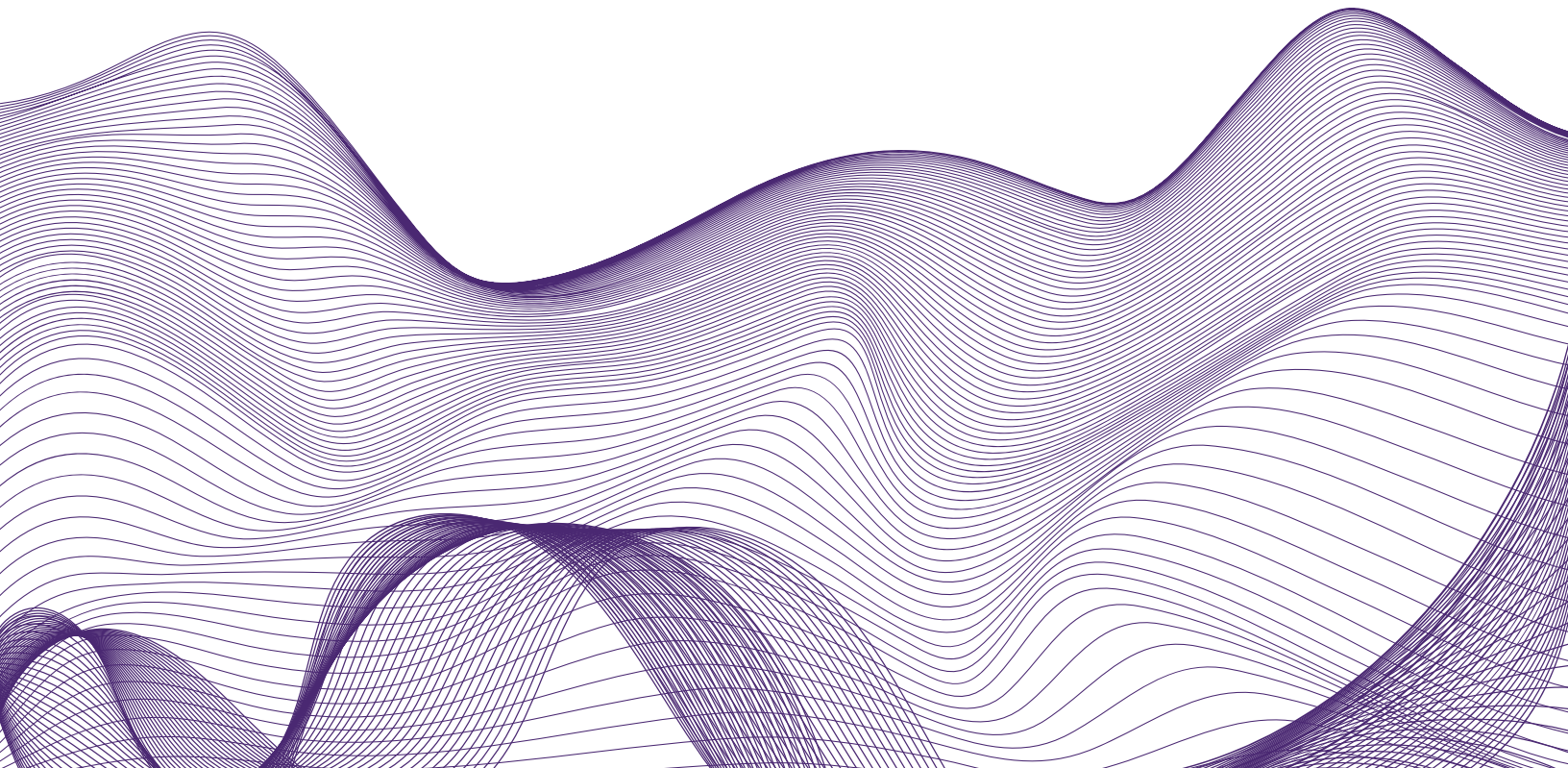




FOREVER FORWARD

Transformative Leadership Development Program:
Forever Forward Fellowship Feedback (2023)



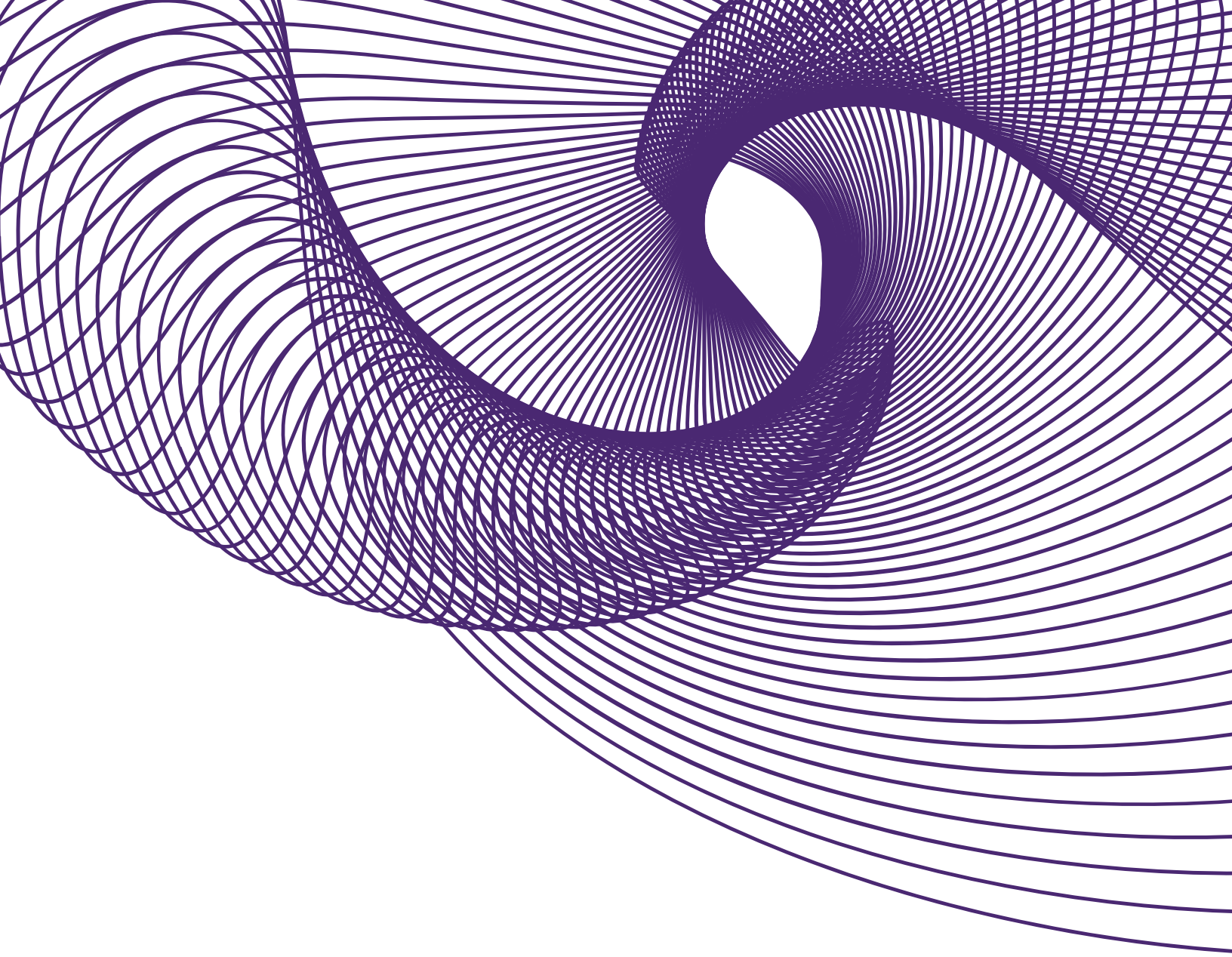


Table Of Contents

03 Background

05 Forever Forward
Fellowship Overview

09 Forever Forward
Fellowship Feedback

Section I. Background

The Smith Family Foundation of New Jersey (SFFNJ) was established in 2016. As leaders in their respective communities, the members of the Smith family banded together to finance and commit their philanthropic efforts of “sowing seeds” in their hometown of Trenton, New Jersey. The family was blessed with financial resources that would later support students and bolster Trenton’s non-profit sector with physical roots and highly effective, financially diverse, and culturally competent organizations with a passion to serve and empower Trentonians.

The Smith family, led by matriarch Pearlie Smith, is composed of Trenton Central High School graduates and fifth-generation Trentonians. Grounded in their Christian values and love of community, they believe that with the proper resources and support, communities can flourish and be self-sustaining. As residents in the SouthWard of Trenton, the Smith family has lived and persevered despite the systemic challenges they and city families have faced and continue to face, specifically poverty and its pervasiveness in the city.

The core values of SFFNJ are education, cultivation, and transformation, with a mission of empowering our community, cultivating leaders and transforming lives. The transformative work that the Smith Family Foundation is implementing throughout the City of Trenton is called, “The Purple Ribbon”. The foundation provides leadership development and funding to increase the impact of organizations that serve the citizens of Trenton.

Section I.

They are building a community that works collectively to promote a healthy and thriving urban hub. The Purple Ribbon is a data driven framework and includes their Transformative Leadership Development Program, the Non-Profit Incubation Center, the #IAmtheChange Movement, annual grants, and the Forever Forward Fellowship.

Core Values:

- Sowing the Seed: EDUCATION
- Fostering Sustainability: CULTIVATION
- Changing Lives: TRANSFORMATION

Service Agenda: "Higher Education as the Normal Next Step" as defined by SFFNJ takes on several pathways:

- 2 year/community college
- 4 year college/university
- Vocational/trade school
- Career readiness for adults and youth
- Continuing education and leadership development for leaders in the non-profit sector

The foundation has invested over one million dollars into the growth and development of Trenton's residents and organizations, and as a result, hundreds of lives have been positively impacted. SFFNJ will continue sowing into Trenton for years to come.



Section II. Forever Forward Fellowship Overview

The Forever Forward Fellowship was created to provide funding and leadership development to Trenton-based grassroots organizations, including the religious sector. As a three-year grant, it provides organizations with the channels to increase capacity, deepen their networks in the City of Trenton, and strengthen internal practices, policies, and procedures.

Upon acceptance to the Forever Forward Fellowship, organizations are given a myriad of workshops, personal and professional development, and staff and board training opportunities. This includes mandatory participation in the Transformative Leadership Development Program which equips the administrative and governing leadership of participating organizations with the tools required to increase their impact executive coaching for the Executive Directors of each organization. The first cohort of the Forever Forward Fellowship was able to glean valuable knowledge from learning opportunities facilitated by the following professionals : Dr. Carol McMillian, Zoe Brookes, Sam Frisby, Adriana Abizadeh, Roslyn Dashiell, Karen Courtney, Issac Dorsey, Neil McKeon, Marygrace Billek, Farrah Gee, Dr. Shannon Mason, Harold Smith, Tara Butler, and Katherine Nunnally.



Section II.

Workshops	Facilitators	Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Thinking and Planning • SWOT Analysis 	Dr. Carol McMillian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lonesome • Apex Consulting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logic Model • Evaluation 	Zoe Brookes	Brookes Consulting
Executive Director's Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Frisby • Adriana Abizadeh • Roslyn Dashiell • Karen Courtney 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YMCA • LALDEF • PEI Kids • Children's Home Society
Federal Grant Writing	Issac Dorsey	Children's Home Society
Budgeting & Diverse Income	Neil McKeon	Merrill Lynch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Coaching • Strategic Planning 	Adriana Abizadeh	Catalyst Consulting Group
Funders' Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marygrace Billek • Farrah Gee • Dr. Shannon Mason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercer County • City of Trenton • Bunbury Fund
Technology Assessment	Dr. Kobinah Abdul-Salim	Protologue Inc.
Myers Briggs	Harold Smith	SFFNJ
Team Myers Briggs	Tara Butler	SFFNJ
Executive Coaching	Katherine Nunnally	SFFNJ

Section II.

The Forever Forward Fellowship is an organizational fellowship. This means that SFFNJ is committed to ensuring the successful completion of the fellowship by a team of three key stakeholders from each organization. In addition to the organizational and leadership development, organizations will be awarded a three-year grant.

In order to qualify, organizations must:

- Have an annual operating budget of \$250,000 or less,
- Have an established board,
- Have been in operation for at least three years, &
- Have at least one full-time staff member or volunteer running day-to-day operations.

This fellowship was born out of a desire to invest in smaller organizations in the City of Trenton that were having sizable impact and were primed to grow and scale. The additional supports offered by The Smith Family Foundation are intended to increase the capacity of the organizations which would lead to increased annual operating budgets, increased staff sizes, and the ability to accept more clients into their programs.

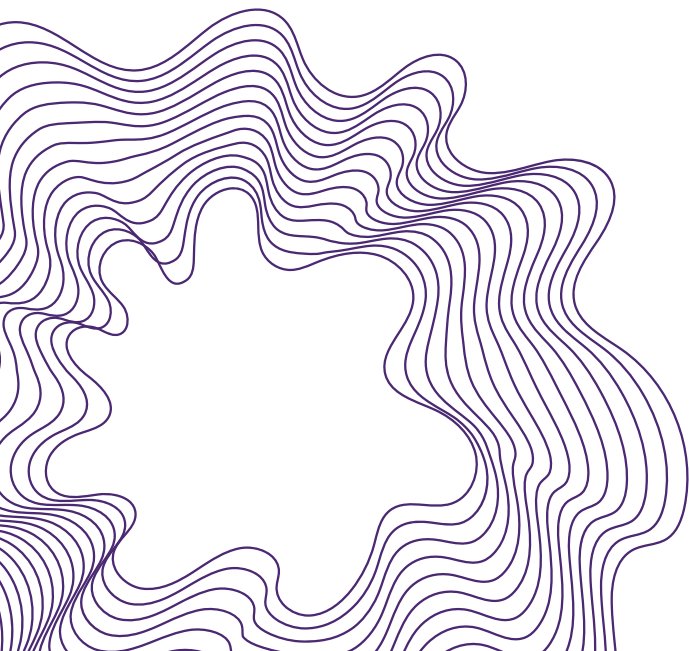
Many foundations prioritize organizations that have larger operating budgets, experienced and seasoned leadership, and staff sizes that allow for widespread impact. Although the Smith Family Foundation also supports similar organizations that have a history of offering support in the Trenton community, they also recognize that smaller organizations can sometimes reach deeper into the pockets of poverty through their on-the-ground presence. By prioritizing smaller organizations with the Forever Forward Fellowship, SFFNJ is committing to lifting up new ideas and sourcing partners and networks that can support the expansion of innovation.



Section II.

Supporting smaller organizations with the Forever Forward Fellowship also means that SFFNJ will be presented with challenges. Oftentimes, these organizations are understaffed, require support and ongoing development of their governing structures, and lack the philanthropic relationships required to capitalize their ideas. The Smith Family Foundation does not shy away from this work; they lean in. The foundation is committed to uplifting grassroots organizations in the City of Trenton that have the potential to truly meet people where they are to fill needs and gaps that have been long-standing.

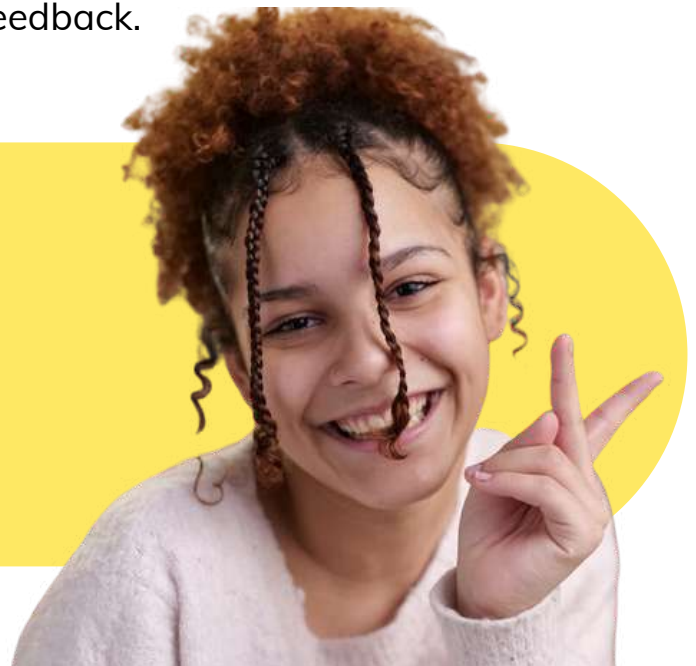
With this first cohort, the foundation learned a great deal about the importance of relationships, their development, and more importantly, their stewardship. Relationships are the key to success for all nonprofits, and opening pathways to access for grassroots partners has been identified as a priority for SFFNJ. In addition, the foundation has learned how to best support grassroots organizations in their attempts at scaling and increasing their impact. It is anticipated that with every cohort, the Smith Family Foundation will continue to learn and evolve for the betterment of the Forever Forward Fellowship, but more importantly, for organizations serving the great City of Trenton.



Section III. Forever Forward Fellowship Grantee Feedback

Following the end of their participation in the Forever Forward Fellowship, 2019's grantees, HomeWorks and HelpSelf, provided feedback on their experience throughout the grant's three-year funding and leadership program. SFFNJ is committed to its grantees and the further development of the Forever Forward Fellowship, and they will utilize this feedback to finetune their application process, programming, and funding parameters for cycles to come.

HomeWorks Trenton, a residential after school program for high school girls, and HelpSelf, a children and family-oriented educational organization, graduated from the three-year funding cycle and its accompanying leadership and development programming in January 2023. Grantees were asked to rate their experiences with SFFNJ's staff, the grant application process, onboarding logistics, and leadership and professional development programming, in addition to their likelihood of recommending the Forever Forward Fellowship program to their peers. Both Executive Directors and Board members from each organization provided feedback.



Section III.

Both grantees expressed appreciation for the breadth of programming offered through the intensive leadership training over the course of the grant period. While HelpSelf had no difficulties with the application process, HomeWorks shared the need for clearer grant and programming requirements available during the application phase, including specific dates and times for required programming. HomeWorks suggested that once selected as a grant recipient, grantees have access to a “hub” of information pertaining to programming, such as schedules, homework assignments, and resources.

The grantees stated that if available, they would participate in future workshops about public speaking, mentorship, event and program planning, financial literacy, collaboration, organization stability, and funding. One participant also suggested that they might benefit from additional workshops related to the topics that were covered in this grant period, particularly for grant writing and funding.

Both grantees stated the non-monetary support that was most impactful to their organizations included 1:1 coaching, workshops, and connecting with Trenton-based organizations and leaders. HomeWorks and HelpSelf both indicated that they would participate in SFFNJ workshops in the future. Grantees closed out their funding participation more knowledgeable in nonprofit sustainability, leadership, and community-building, rating SFFNJ’s programming either very helpful or extremely helpful. Both grantees stated that they would be likely or very likely to recommend an organization or colleague to apply for Forever Forward Fellowship grant funding.

Section III.

Forever Forward Fellowship Strengths:

“Due to the small cohort size and long program duration, we were given a lot of resources, attention and individualized support throughout this process that is rare to find in any foundation/fellowship/program”.

“The biggest strengths were having both our leadership coach (Mrs. Nunnally) and organization coach (Adriana), who not only gave us 1:1 coaching, but helped create concrete templates, manuals and tools to move us from a baby startup to a fully functioning organization”.

“SFF is grounded deeply in the community. As a SFF Forever Forward grantee, we were given more credibility and trust within the city. We were also able to be connected to many folks in Trenton that helped move our organization forward”.

“The various workshops, the one on ones and the support from the whole SFF staff and Adriana”.



Section III.

Forever Forward Fellowship Improvements:

“I would suggest the information about culture and board development be in the first year”.

“More emphasis on development/fundraising”.

“Bringing culture building/leadership training in Year one alongside Myers Briggs; keeping creating all organizational structure and essential materials in Year two; keeping Development/succession plan in year three”.



Smith Family Foundation Board of Directors:

Dr. Valerie Arthur - Board Chair

Rene Idowu - Vice Chair

Tyrell Smith, Treasurer

Tracy Smith, Member

Marsha Moore, Member

Steven Smith, Member

Katherine Nunnally, Member

Harold Smith, Member

Maurice Smith, Member

Teela Smith, Member

Darius Ansley, Member



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