

The second theme for 2008 explored the policies around Affordable Housing and the Council on Affordable Housing Rules (COAH). In 2008, COAH promulgated new rules and formulas for determining the required affordable housing for each community in the State. The Foundation's educational program assists local governments and their critical partners understand the far-reaching impact of these complex rules and the status of affordable housing.

In September 2008 the Foundation received a \$200,000 grant from WalMart to fund municipal green initiatives. The Foundation has tasked the Mayors Committee for a Green future with reviewing municipal grant applications for funding of environmentally sustainable projects that others can replicate. In 2009, the Foundation will award \$10,000-\$15,000 to as many as 20 winning municipal applicants.

Also, in September 2008, the Foundation teamed up with the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to begin the Mayors Book Club literacy initiative in New Jersey. This program, through the mayors' offices, will teach New Jersey municipalities how to promote literacy in families and especially young children.

Starting in January 2009, the Foundation will partner with other public policy oriented organizations to publish "white papers" on issues of interest to local government. These white papers, titled the "Friends of Local Government Series" will be published by the Foundation and available for free on the internet in a PDF format.

The first "Friends of the Local Government" paper will focus on the state the economy and how the prognosis for 2009 will impact municipalities and taxpayers. The Foundation will partner with Rutgers, the State University on this white paper.

For more information about the Foundation, please contact Bill Dressel or Michael Darcy at 609-695-3481 extension 122 or 116.

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The Foundation was incorporated in September 2004 under IRS regulations as a 501(c) (3) corporation. The purpose of the Foundation is to conduct, encourage and support educational programs that will serve local government officials and employees. At the same time, this work will add to the public knowledge and benefit all the citizens of New Jersey.

The work of the Foundation began in late 2007 with the Mayors' School Funding Committee focused on the revised school funding formula. The Committee's work, funded with a generous grant from The Fund for New Jersey, involved more than 50 Mayors and experts culminating in a two day long retreat. The result was a report and set of recommendations provided to the Governor, Senate President, and Assembly Speaker offering a unique perspective on the impact of revising the school funding formula for the State of New Jersey.

The Trustees continued their substantial initial effort by developing educational programs for two key issues for the 2008 year: Education and Affordable Housing. Both of these timely issues have tremendous impact on the quality of life in New Jersey and both are closely linked to the functions of local governments and communities.

In September 2008, the Foundation conducted a half-day educational conference entitled: The New Education Order. Partnering with the NJ Department of Education, the conference focused on providing municipal and educational leaders, as well as the general public, timely information on four key educational issues: School Funding, Preschool Expansion, School Construction and School Consolidation/CORE bill. The Foundation program was partly funded by The Fund for New Jersey and featured panel discussions and remarks from Education Commissioner Lucille Davy, Community Affairs Commissioner Joe Doria, Schools Development Authority CEO Scott Weiner, and other education leaders.

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