

A COMMUNITY  
**PLAN**  
with spirit

2022-2023 BUSINESS PLAN



Newark Center for Meditative Culture

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# Executive Summary

The goal of Newark Center for Meditative Culture (NCCMC) is to develop integrated and broad applications to bring mindfulness and meditation in their many forms and life practices to the community. We envision a center for individuals, families, and neighborhoods to turn to for help in healing practices, prevention, reconnection, and transformation for the sake of self, family, society, and our environment.

Our approach to cultivating our meditation community and providing teachings is holistic and socially engaged rather than that of a more standard style of many meditation centers where engagement is more defined and insular. This does not mean, however, that we don't feel the need to also develop an evolved meditation community that requires space in a closed compassionate circle.

Until recently we have carefully managed our finances through a break-even style of bookkeeping — what comes in goes out, restricting funds only when there was a need to plan ahead. We were able to do it in this way, as we have had very little overhead. Now, a new grant for overhead support is a “game changer” for us in that we can now focus even more intently on what we do best rather than worry about the next month's rent.

To take our goals to the next level though, we still need to stay ahead and find funding for courses we want to provide. We want to fine-tune our services and make them easy for people to access. We want to develop our Center as a hub that the community feels excited to gather. Importantly, we are currently focusing on regular BIPOC\* community programs.

## STORY 1

**One young lone meditator** came to us once and scuffled shyly into the art center where we were holding our meditation session. He said “I can't believe I'm in here. I never thought I'd be in a place like this.” He also said he had imagined how nice it would be to meditate outdoors in a park — and his dream came true! We sit in the park in the summer!

*= Exposure, safe place, non-judgement.*

\*Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

# Our Organization

## Overview

Newark Center for Meditative Culture is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing transformative programs to Newark NJ, the Greater Newark Area, and beyond.

## Statements

### **Our Mission**

To provide a safe space where like-minded people can gather to learn and practice the arts of meditation, mindfulness, self-care, and healing and to become intentionally engaged together as changemakers within our multicultural and diverse population.

### **Our Vision**

To be an inclusive community center that provides connection, empowerment, and resources for all people who seek a purposeful, conscientious lifestyle within a spiritual context.

### **Our Practice**

We are a meditation community rooted in the spiritual and secular principles and practices of eastern and indigenous psychology and philosophy. Applications are both traditional and contemporary and include practices from Buddhist, Ancestral, Yogic, Daoist, Sufi, and other wisdom teachings and disciplines.

## Our History

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### **2012-2016 Developing as a Community Initiative**

For the first formative years we served as a community initiative. Gradually, we held once a month groups, building to twice a month, then weekly, followed by seasonal day-long retreats. We also participated in community programs to bring awareness of our services.

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### **2017-2018 Establishing a Non-Profit Organization**

We finalized the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) in April 2017. Continuing with our weekly meditation group and seasonal retreats we then needed to begin creating processes and developing policies and guidelines.

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### **2019 A Year to Expand**

We expanded our community reach and commitment through procuring a rented room as our Center to offer more programs and availability of services.

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### **2020 Renewal and Reconnection**

Though the pandemic greatly affected our engagement, through a grant we were able to produce 33 online sessions to support the community in self-care during this period.

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### **2021 Preparing for In-person Programs Again**

Our next step was to secure and prepare two new rooms for our Center — the Lenape Room and the Medicine Room. They sat waiting for longer than expected as we still couldn't provide in-person programs.

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### **2022 Focusing on BIPOC Programs**

Through a grant provided in 2021 we were able to hold our first BIPOC residential retreat in nature in the summer of 2022. We also held an online BIPOC Activist series. Another multi-year grant in mid-2022 will provide us with basic operating support through 2024 with the grantor request that it will help serve the BIPOC community.

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# Business Objectives

## The Here and Now Goals

### Our Roots are Our Foundation

Funding for additional space in order to develop our community to have a continual place to meet is critical. Developing an online and hardcopy library will ground our community in knowledge. Starting a meditative artisan shop will act as an income generator.

### Our People are Our Gold

Maturing a community of practice of friends of NCMC who committedly engage is a clear purpose. We want to be able to compensate our precious teachers reasonably and equitably. Finding people to provide professional services such as administrative assistance, grant-writing, public relations, and social media will keep us stable. Developing study programs will ensure that students who choose have an advancement or teaching track.

## What's Possible in the Future

We picture a center where visiting teachers have a place to stay with us, that has a teaching vegetarian kitchen, a creativity room, and a children's room for mindful activities especially while parents practice — all while maturing environmentally sound practices.

## Blue Sky Goals

We can envision someday having a sustainable green center that might include advanced study and research, still rooted in our rich local meditative community. We can imagine a large, divinely-designed, cross-culturally comprehended contemplation hall, open to all and a destination to many.

### STORY 2

**After our first BIPOC retreat in nature** one student shared: “I brought back with me the [fire] from my ancestors, from my linear, from my spiritual guides and I’m charged and powered more than ever to keep doing this work! Thank you [NCMC] for hosting such an incredible weekend for our folks!”

*= Ancestral, like-minded, like-color, multi-color, comfort.*

# Our People

## Our Leadership

Currently we have a **Board of Directors** consisting of ten people — two living in Newark, two in the Oranges, two who live locally, two in New York State and one now living in Puerto Rico. The board includes the Spiritual Director, Chairperson, Co-founders, Treasurer, Secretary, and five other directors. Five of the directors are founding directors. In 2021 we instituted a **Council of Elders** which currently consists of three board directors, however, we plan to carefully invite supporters from outside of the Board to become Elders.

## Our Teachers and Instructors

Our main teachers and instructors are also on the board. We currently have one visiting monastic teacher and three visiting lay teachers. It is a diverse group of teachers, in a way replicating our community. There are individuals whose birthplaces range from China, Haiti, Germany, Panama, Puerto Rico, Uganda, and naturally the United States.

Our Spiritual Director brings in Ancestral, Shamanic, and Medicine Meditation along with his over 35 years of meditation and wellness practices. Currently, NCMC Internal Teachers practice secular Insight, Mindfulness, MBSR, Yoga, Tai-chi and Reiki. NCMC's Visiting Teachers are of the Theravadan, Chan, and Tibetan Buddhist traditions and one is a Qi-gong Master in his father's lineage. Currently, the teachers have a combined meditation practice of over 200 years!



### **Our Students**

Our students are often beginners at meditation and come with a variety of meditation practices that they have tried, often through online guided meditations.

### **Our Volunteers and Champions**

Outside of our board, we have simply a few consistent and loyal volunteers and some patient long-term supporters who understand the benefits of what we are doing and are committed to our longevity in the community. Once individuals in our community have practiced enough to see for themselves the real benefits of practice, we know that they will be enthusiastic to serve and engage even more.

### **Our Believers**

These are our supporters who don't necessarily show up at our programs, but believe in our cause and support our work through social media, advice, and networking.



# Our Culture

It is important to understand that we are not simply a meditation center, but rather, a center for meditative culture.

Often in our day-to-day lives our awareness is consumed by the task of maintaining our private and social faces. Much of the data we receive from our environment, from other humans and our own emotional and intuitive signals go ignored.

One of the precious benefits of maintaining a meditation practice is the cultivation of a more encompassing awareness. As awareness expands, so does our ability to be present for ourselves, others, and the subtle signals of nature and humanity. This then allows us to respond to the world from a place of awareness as opposed to habit.

When meditation practitioners gather together in a soul group, the result is the creation of a charged space. This now sacred space is infused with the collective breath of compassion and service, peace and love. The shared experience within this sacred space signals the presence of meditative culture.

Upon leaving the collective each person takes with them a portion of the collective charge to share with all they encounter upon their way, sowing the seeds of meditative culture in their daily travels.

*Meditative culture does not spread by coercion or marketing. It's contagious. It expands organically in response to the people's desire for change.*

## STORY 3

**A Newark activist would pop in and sit with us only when she was sometimes available on the one day a week we had a group. Her comment though, "I love knowing that you are here doing this every week even though I most often can't make it."**

*= The more group sessions we can hold, the more opportunities for people to show up.*

# Our Programs

## Diversity and Inclusiveness

We offer both general programs and targeted programs for specific affinity groups. For example, our People of Color retreats especially are intended to provide an affinity group for individuals who daily confront the effects of oppression and racism, and who therefore may choose to avoid mixed programs.

All of our programs are offered as donation-based, fee-based, or free to the participant. We base this system on the practice of *dana* or generosity, which is inherent to many spiritual traditions. Your donations will allow us to continue to provide life enhancing programs to the entire community regardless of their present economic circumstances.

## Programs to Date

Since 2012 NCMC has presented about 465 transformative, health promoting, and self-empowering sessions and programs:

- 19 Meditation Day Retreats (including 4 BIPOC)
- 10 Sunday Journaling and Meditation Workshops
- 247 Weekly Basic Meditation Classes
- 68 bi-lingual Spanish/English)
- 4 Ten-Week Mindfulness Courses
- 6 Therapeutic Art & Mindfulness Sessions
- 26 Dharma Movie Sessions
- 2 Open Mind Film Festivals
- 2 Online Meditation Medicine Courses
- 3 Online Yoga-Meditation Courses
- 18 Tai-Chi/Qi-Gong Classes
- 4 Reiki Workshops
- 4 BIPOC Activist Self-Care Workshops
- 1 Deep Ecology Training Workshop
- 16 Nature Walks and Hikes
- 3 Publications: a meditation book, a dharma book, and a mindfulness manual
- 31 online video sessions including a series of 8 in spanish-language
- 1 BIPOC residential retreat in nature.

## Planned for 2022-2023

1. Monthly BIPOC Gatherings
2. BIPOC programs including for family/youth
3. Weekly Mindfulness Classes
4. Seasonal IntraCity Hikes
5. Seasonal Daylong Retreats
6. AcuDetox Training Course\*
7. BIPOC Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Training Course
8. 2nd Annual BIPOC Residential Retreat in Nature
9. Various Community Events
10. Student opportunities to advance to teachers
11. Mindfulness, wellness, and self-care workshops in-house and for organizations (corporate, educational, therapeutic, non-profit)

## The Ask

1. A 10K grant or funding for a 2023 BIPOC Residential Retreat in Nature
2. A Newark Collaborator to sponsor the AcuDetox Training Course\*.
3. Funding for a BIPOC MBSR Training Course
4. Consistent Volunteers
5. More funding for contractors and freelancers
6. Fundraising Support

\*NADA Protocol Acupuncture Detox Specialist Certification Course using either needles or beads. (Description can be found at <https://acudetox.com>.)

## Beyond The Ask

- It is expected that by the end of 2023 at the latest we will need to move from the building that houses our Center. We will be looking for an inexpensive and spiritually appropriate new location.

- The next big step will be to hire an Executive Director. Though we are not yet ready for such a large step, we plan to be by 2024. This will mean we will need long-term funding.

# Population and Trends

## The Market for Mindfulness and Meditation

There are about 307,000 people living in Newark NJ and combined with the contiguous cities that make up the Greater Newark Area there are substantially more. In Newark the population consists of black/African American people at about 50%, Latino/Hispanic at over 36%, and white at near 27%. There are smaller percentages of other races.

There is a high interest in meditation but with the unpredictability of many people’s lives in the area it is slow to develop a committed community due to:

- a) the ongoing concerns from Covid
- b) how income disparity effects individual’s consistency and planning
- b) the possible need to create neighborhood groups in different wards for easy access.

There is a vital need and earnest requests for affinity group programs such as for women and people of color that we are acting on.

There are marginalized people especially those who speak English as a second language or not at all, who we’d like to reach. The impact of structural discrimination and feelings of isolation can increase stress levels in this population among others.

There is evidence from our programs that demonstrates a desire of families wanting to practice mindfulness and meditation together and we hope to address this need even more.

RACE & HISPANIC ORIGIN		%
Black or African American alone		49.5
Hispanic or Latino		36.7
White alone		26.8
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino		10.9
Two or More Races		6.6
Asian alone		1.8
American Indian & Alaska Native alone		0.4
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander		0.1

INCOME & POVERTY	
Median Household Income (in 2020 dollars)	\$37,476
Persons in Poverty (percent)	26.3

EDUCATION (% of persons aged 25+)	
High School Graduate or Higher	76.5
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	15.5

FOOD INSECURITY	
Multiple Sections of City among Top 10 Food Deserts in NJ	

CHART SOURCES:  
 Top three charts above:  
 US Census Bureau;  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/newarkcitynewjersey>. The discrepancy in counts to percentage in Race & Hispanic Origin is due to the census allowance for individuals to choose multiple races or origins.  
 Food Insecurity: NJ Economic Development Authority;  
<https://www.njeda.com/>

## Forces and Trends

The interest and trend in yoga in the Greater Newark Area is higher than that of meditation, so we do always offer moving meditations in our programs including yoga, tai-chi, and qi-gong as these practices lead to discipline, mindfulness, and focus. However, we do not intend to become competitive with yoga instructors but instead to invite them to teach and partner with us. Of note, many yoga practitioners often want to advance in sitting meditation and we can provide instruction and guidance.

Understanding our community need for healing, we have expanded our teaching of tai-chi and qi-gong as a healing science that also brings mental calm. This has manifested through some of our teachers long-standing backgrounds in these arts.

There are also lone, talented teachers of unique meditation practices instructing in the area who are ready to teach with us under our curriculum as we become ready to partner with them.

There is especially interest in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). We hope to be able to provide interested students with grants to train in teaching MBSR.

The force to focus on family mindfulness is becoming clear as we are asked to teach at programs that target families or are geared towards families. We also find that parents often want to bring their children to our programs.

## Potential Redundancy

In the city, certified yoga instructors are bountiful. They are also bringing light meditation practice into their classes.

We will distinguish ourselves by building a reputation as experts in meditation and mindfulness through our breadth of study and practice, along with our holistic approach to developing a meditative culture.

### STORY 4

**Three seasoned public school staff members** in Newark have come regularly and felt the positive results of continual practice. They've asked us mature questions about how to relieve their stress as they watch their students in difficulty and are immersed themselves in co-worker conflicts. One found results in walking meditation, another in sitting meditation, and another more in the continual probing that her new mindfulness brings.

*= De-stressing techniques to help through work-related stress.*

# Outreach Plan

## Community Characteristics

The majority of our students and supporters live in or around Newark. The general age range is approximately 25 to 60. Level of education ranges from high school to master degrees and PhDs. Many work in the school system, for non-profits, in healthcare, and the arts, but also in a wide-range of employment. The majority who attend are African American, followed by Hispanic/Latino, and then white — parallel with the demographics of the city and surrounding area. Their belief systems are wide-ranging and often multi-spiritual/multi-disciplined. Most Newarkers like to patronize locally and indulge in the comforts that Newark provides them so they will want a meditation community that is theirs. However, due to our online presence our work is expanding beyond city and even local limitations.

## Advertising and Promotion Plan

Our community uses a variety of means, especially technology to engage with us so it's imperative that we keep up with the demands:

- Volunteers: Gain more volunteers to support our marketing.
- Marketing to Supporters: We keep our current supporters informed through social media, online event outlets, and weekly emails.
- Print materials: Distribution of business cards and postcards, seasonal program schedules.
- Target different student types: Possible promotions for corporate workshops, school workshops, college workshops.
- Public Relations: This is an important aspect that we have just begun to approach as it needs dedicated energy from the right individual.

## Retention Plan

- Volunteer Interest: We will continue to offer our students various means to contribute and engage to keep the momentum and their interest alive and further their practice of generosity.
- Donation-based, Fee-based, and Free Programs: This allows for the different budgets and wants of our community and helps support our sustainability.
- Personal Feedback: We get feedback on our programs from our students and partners through personal dialogue that is then brought back to the board members for further discussion. Students also like to make suggestions to us by email or social media.
- Surveys: We often use a simple survey after retreats for students to fill out so that we can find out how we might improve our programs. It also lets them see that their opinions and needs are important to us.

### STORY 5

**A young sensitive woman studying reiki** online to be a reiki master, having gone back and forth and back and forth through her childhood between here and Uruguay, lacks confidence in both her languages. She stated from the heart, “My passion is to become a meditation teacher.”

*= Helping to build confidence and support potential meditation and mindfulness teachers.*



# Processes and Evaluation

## The Flow

- Service Providers We are slowly adding professional contractors as funding allows.
- Facilities Our Center allows for storage of supplies in one convenient location in Newark for all our team to access and meet with each other.
- Volunteers We take on only as much programming as we can manage. The more volunteer support we have the more services we can offer.

## The Processes

- Project Teams and Standing Committees so that tasks are defined.
- Project Management to make sure that programs stay on target and within budget.
- Retreat Kits so that volunteers can easily find documents and guidelines they might need.
- Teacher Guidelines so that our teachers and instructors are clear about their responsibilities.
- Constant Assessments of requests or plans for our services in order to make sure we can provide them adequately before committing.
- Policy Development to use as internal and external guidelines to best practices.

## The Contingency Plan

Our contingency plan is simple. If funding isn't sufficient, we would continue to work cooperatively with community organizations and non-profits. This however would make our service to the community complex and inefficient. It would also reduce our services so that we wouldn't be able to meet the need.

# Financial Information

## 2021 Financial Report

NEWARK CENTER FOR MEDITATIVE CULTURE	
<b>Statement of Activity</b> January - December 2021	
Prepared by: Afia Eugene; Balancing the Books Bookkeeping and Strategic Planning Services Date: Monday, Aug 29, 2022	
Revenue	
Eventbrite Donations	44.00
Grants	21,642.00
Program Donations	3,710.78
Sales of Product Revenue	5.47
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>25,402.25</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>25,402.25</b>
Expenditures	
Advertising & Marketing	21.76
Bank Charges & Processing Fees	141.62
Charitable Contributions	130.00
Dues & subscriptions	38.97
Insurance	398.41
Legal & Professional Services	1,130.00
Office Supplies & Software	114.33
Other Business Expenses	27.44
PO Box Rental	106.00
Total Program Supplies	8,480.53
Rent & Lease	1,550.00
Repairs & Maintenance	96.00
Taxes & Licenses	393.25
Instructor/Teacher Expenses	1,977.50
Utilities	500.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>15,105.81</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>10,296.44</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>10,296.44</b>

## 2022-2023 Budget

PROJECTED INCOME & EXPENSES	TOTALS
<b>INCOME</b>	
Grant: Operating Support	30,000
Donation: Operating Support	3935
Potential Grant: BIPOC Retreat Scholarships	10,000
Estimated BIPOC Retreat Income	3000
BIPOC Programs (including MBSR course)	5640
General Program Income (including AcuDetox course)	9100
Retreat Days Available Meal Funds	220
General Donations	1000
Fundraisers	2,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>64,895</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Potential Grant: BIPOC Retreat Scholarships	-10,000
Estimated BIPOC Retreat Expenses	-2500
BIPOC Programs (including MBSR course)	-5640
General Program Expenses (including AcuDetox course)	-8075
Center Lease	-10,800
Insurance	-660
Bookkeeping & Accounting Platform	-4090
Freelance Contractors	-15,000
State/Federal Filing Fees	-125
IT Expenses (router, site, other online services)	-575
Office Expenses (PO box, furniture, equip., supplies, etc.)	-975
Potential Moving Expenses	-1000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>-59,440</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>5,455</b>

## Grants To Date

### Victoria Foundation

2020	\$1,400	Community Online Sessions for Covid Support
2021	\$5,000	Online Therapeutic Art & Meditation Sessions; Publication of Urban Mindfulness Handbooks

### Whole Foods Community Giving

2021	\$1,642	General Operating Support
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### Kataly Foundation

2021	\$15,000	BIPOC Residential Mindfulness Retreat in Nature
2022	\$30,000	Operating Support
2023	\$40,000	Pledged for Operating Support

# Members of the Board

**Ib'nallah S. Kazi** Spiritual Director,

Founding Board Member

**Marcie Barth** Chairperson/Co-founder

**Cornelia Santschi** Co-founder

**Afia Eugene** Treasurer

**Veronica Guevara-Lovgren** Secretary

**Ihsaan R. Muhammad** Founding Board Member

**Andrea Lee** Founding Board Member

**J. Javier Cruz** Board Member

**Keyana Jones** Board Member

**Les Arthur** Board Member

The Bio-notes of each Board Member can be found on the **Leadership Page** at <http://newarkmeditation.org/leadership/> on our website at [www.newarkmeditation.org](http://www.newarkmeditation.org).

# Collaborative Community Engagement

NCMC is committed to social engagement and compassionate activism along with educating the community about the overall mental and physical, benefits of meditation and mindfulness.

Facilitating workshops for several non-profit organizations over the years including: Barat Foundation, Greater Newark Tennis & Education, Ironbound Community Corporation, Newark LGBTQ Center, Newark Museum, Newark Yoga Movement, NJPAC, Rabbit Hole Farm, Sis & Bro Foundation, Greater Newark LISC.

In the educational sector, we have provided our services to: Rutgers Law School, Louise A. Spencer Community School, North Star Academy High School, Technology High School, Rutgers Medical School, Rafael Hernandez Elementary School.

Participation in walks/marches and compassionate activities such as: Million March NYC, Buddhist Global Relief NYC & NJ Walks to Feed the Hungry, 300.org People's Climate March, Clean Energy Walk Phila. (w/NJ group), Buddhist Council Meditate NYC & Peace Lantern Festival.

Working closely with venue providers over the years including: Index Art Center, City Without Walls Gallery, Seed Gallery, Military Park Partnership, Ironbound Community Corporation, Trinity & St. Philip's Cathedral.

## STORY 6

**A certified yoga teacher and devoted meditator** wrote to us: "I applaud the work that you're doing... I know the value and the life-changing effects of a spiritual life that includes meditation and mindfulness. It's imperative that ALL communities have an opportunity to learn these types of practices and tools."

*= Developing commitment and discipline toward life-changing effects.*

# Contacts

## Contact information

Physical Address: 2 Park Place, Newark NJ 07102

Mailing Address: PO Box 182, Newark NJ 07101

Email: [info@newarkmeditation.org](mailto:info@newarkmeditation.org)

Website: [www.newarkmeditation.org](http://www.newarkmeditation.org)

Voicemail: 862-227-3288

## Social Media

To follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok subscribe to our weekly news update, or for current program registration go to:

<https://linktr.ee/NCMC>

## Make a Donation

To make a donation please go to the

**Donate Page** at <http://newarkmeditation.org/donate/>

on our website at [www.newarkmeditation.org](http://www.newarkmeditation.org).

Thank you for your consideration.



## Newark Center for Meditative Culture

Newark Center for Meditative Culture is a New Jersey 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your tax-deductible donations make it possible for us to continue to deliver transformative programs to the Greater Newark community and beyond.



**2022 Candid Gold Seal of Transparency.**