



New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

10:00 AM

Virtual via Zoom

https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_WaBid5tlQnumhi_4nbowWg

- I. Call to Order
- II. Open Public Meetings Act Statement
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Update from Chair
- V. CEO's Report to Board
 - i. Community Advisory Committee Chair Update
- VI. Matters Requiring Board Action
 - i. Approval of NJMIHIA July 22, 2026, Meeting Minutes
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Meeting Adjournment



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY
P. O. Box 101
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08608-0101

LISA ASARE
President & CEO

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting July 22, 2026

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJMIHIA) held on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE

Ex-officio Members

Dr. Raynard Washington, Commissioner of Health

Jane Birkhofer, representing CEO of NJEDA

Vineeta Kapahi, representing Commissioner of Human Services

Dawn Thomas, representing Commissioner of Banking and Insurance

Andrea Jackson, representing Commissioner of Children and Families

Sandra Gilot West, representing Secretary of Higher Education

David Nelson, representing Commissioner of Labor

Public Members

Shakira Abdul-Ali

Rosalee Boyer

Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji ¹

Andrea Martinez-Mejia ¹

Maritza Raimundi-Petroski

Bianka Vargas ¹

¹ Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji, Andrea Martinez-Mejia, and Bianka Vargas missed the roll call but joined the meeting prior to the consideration of matters requiring action.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Lisa Asare, President & CEO, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority
Roza Dabaghyan, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Law

Laura Wilton, Chief of Corporate Governance, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Mahako Etta, Chief of Innovation, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Maria Del Cid-Kosso, External Affairs and Policy Director, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Lauren Lalicon, Senior Program and Policy Director, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Catherine Terrero, Senior Executive Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Cindy Cortez, Administrative Assistant, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Pamela Taylor, MCQC Program Manager, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

Gabrielle Louis, Doula Program Management Officer, NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority

NJMIHIA Staff

President & CEO Asare called the meeting to order.

NJMIHIA External Affairs and Policy Director, Maria Del Cid-Kosso, announced that the NJ Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJMIHIA) was in compliance with the provisions of the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided in the manner prescribed by law.

Ms. Del Cid-Kosso took roll call.

President & CEO Asare welcomed representatives from the Governor's Authorities Unit, and the Office of the Attorney General.

Vice Chair Raynard Washington presided over the meeting with Cindy Cortez keeping the minutes.

Vice Chair Update

Vice Chair Washington opened the meeting by noting that the day's agenda would highlight several key NJMIHIA milestones, including the launch of the Community Advisory Committee and the announcement of the inaugural G.L.O.W. Program award recipients.

He also welcomed Bianka Vargas as the newest member of the NJMIHIA Board. Ms. Vargas shared her enthusiasm for joining the Board and her commitment to advancing efforts that improve maternal and infant health outcomes across New Jersey.

Vice Chair Washington then announced the six members of the Community Advisory Committee, whose role will be to ensure that NJMIHIA's initiatives remain informed by and responsive to the needs of the communities it serves.

President & CEO Report to the Board

President & CEO Asare recognized Black Maternal Mental Health Week (July 19–25), highlighting the importance of maternal mental health, health equity, and access to culturally responsive care and support for Black mothers and families across New Jersey.

She provided an overview of recent NJMIHIA milestones and initiatives, noting that additional program updates were included in the Board Updates Memo. Key highlights included the launch of the G.L.O.W. Program (Grants for Lasting Outcomes in Women's Health) and the NJMIHIA Academy, representing a \$1 million investment to support community-based organizations and early-stage enterprises advancing maternal and infant health. The initiative includes \$750,000 in grant funding and \$250,000 for technical assistance and capacity-building support. Following the application process, 15 organizations were selected for funding across North, Central, and South Jersey.

President & CEO Asare also provided updates on the launch of the Community Advisory Committee, the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Fund (MIHIF), and three advisory workgroups established to support NJMIHIA's strategic priorities: the Executive Workgroup, Program, Innovation & Impact Workgroup, and Community & Health Equity Workgroup.

President & CEO Asare announced the addition of Nicole Kirgan to the NJMIHIA team, highlighting her role in strengthening communications and increasing awareness of NJMIHIA's programs and impact. President & CEO Asare also shared updates on the expanded MIHIA Rides program, which aims to increase transportation access for pregnant individuals and the perinatal workforce throughout Mercer County through partnerships with the Departments of Transportation and Labor.

Looking ahead, President & CEO Asare provided an update on planning for the inaugural NJMIHIA Summit, which will build upon the former Nurture NJ Summit and advance statewide collaboration on maternal and infant health. She concluded by emphasizing NJMIHIA's continued progress in developing partnerships, infrastructure, and community-driven solutions to improve maternal and infant health outcomes across New Jersey.

President & CEO Asare welcomed NJMIHIA Chief of Innovation, Mahako Etta, to present on the progress at the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center (The Center).

Ms. Etta provided an update on the Center, highlighting continued progress toward establishing the Center as a statewide hub for equitable maternal and infant health care, workforce training, research, and community collaboration. Construction remains on schedule for completion in 2027, while operational planning continues in partnership with the NJ Economic Development Authority, the Office of Information Technology, and the Center's anchor tenants to support a seamless launch and coordinated service delivery.

Gabrielle Louis, NJMIHIA Doula Program Manager, shared updates on NJMIHIA's Community-Based Doula Training Program, including the successful completion of the third Doula Town Hall, which brought together more than 100 doulas and birth workers to strengthen connections and advance birth equity efforts. She also announced the July 23, 2026, NJMIHIA Doula Graduation of 30 community-based doulas and 22 facilitators, marking a significant milestone in expanding New Jersey's culturally responsive perinatal workforce.

NJMIHIA Senior Program and Policy Director, Lauren Lalicon, provided an update on NJMIHIA's collaboration with the Department of Labor to develop a multilingual paid family leave awareness campaign focused on increasing access to Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Family Leave Insurance (FLI), particularly among communities experiencing disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. She also highlighted recent expansions to job-protected leave protections in New Jersey and shared information on new resources, including the SimpleFile tool to assist eligible families in accessing the state's Child Tax Credit.

Ms. Lalicon welcomed Tristan Vanech, Senior Product Manager of the NJ Innovation Authority (NJIA), who provided an overview of the Child Tax Credit program, discussed SimpleFile's functionality, and highlighted outreach strategies to connect eligible families with this important resource. Mr. Vanech announced that in partnership with the NJ Division of Taxation and Code for America, NJIA's Affordability Initiative, SimpleFile, will provide up to \$1,000 per dependent aged 5 and under through the NJ Child Tax Credit.

President and CEO Asare opened the floor for questions from the Board.

Board members expressed interest in hosting additional presentations to further increase awareness of SimpleFile and expand outreach efforts by having navigators available at various community locations to provide filing assistance and support.

Matters Requiring Board Action

a. Approval of NJMIHIA Annual Board Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of March 25, 2026, by Public Member, Maritza Raimundi-Petroski, and was seconded by Public Member, Rosalee Boyer. Sandra Gilot West, Dawn Thomas, and Bianka Vargas abstained. Remaining members voted in favor. The motion carried.

b. Approval of Resolution Authorizing an MOU with NJDCF to Support the NJMIHIA Summit 2026.

A motion was made to approve the Resolution by Public Member, Andrea Martinez-Mejia, and was seconded by Public Member, Shakira Abdul-Ali. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Washington requested a motion to adjourn. Andrea Jackson made the motion to adjourn. Public Member, Dr. Damali Campbell-Oparaji, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

I hereby certify this to be a true and original copy of the July 22, 2026, New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority Board meeting minutes.

Lisa Asare

Lisa Asare
President and CEO



MEMORANDUM

To: NJMIHIA Board Members
From: Lisa Asare, NJMIHIA President and CEO
Subject: Monthly Update
Date: September 21, 2026

Chief Executive Office Updates

This update highlights key areas of progress and continued focus for NJMIHIA.

NJMIHIA continues to strengthen relationships with state agencies, community-based organizations, healthcare partners, philanthropic organizations, and other stakeholders. As the Authority moves into implementation of its strategic priorities, these partnerships will be increasingly important to aligning efforts, identifying opportunities for collaboration, and leveraging resources to support sustainable improvements in maternal and infant health.

NJMIHIA will build on this foundation by advancing initiatives that support coordination across sectors, promote innovation, and help address persistent disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes. Through sustained collaboration and strategic engagement, the Authority is working to ensure that its efforts are both responsive to community needs and positioned to achieve meaningful, long-term impact throughout New Jersey.

G.L.O.W. Program and the NJMIHIA Academy

The NJMIHIA Academy launched on August 7, 2026, providing awardees with an overview of the Academy, training modules, grant management deliverables, and individual grant projects and outcomes. Throughout the grant cycle, G.L.O.W. Program awardees will be engaged in a curated business development program that builds their capacity in the areas of funding development, Medicaid billing and reimbursement, diverse revenue generation, communications, and partnership development.

The next Academy training session is scheduled for September 18. The session will focus on Communications, Branding, and Effective Messaging. Grantees will learn how to:

- Use and adhere to the G.L.O.W. Program Marketing Kit, including requirements for funding acknowledgement, logo use, approvals, and coordination with NJMIHIA.



- Develop clear, consistent messaging that accurately reflects NJMIHIA’s role and aligns with its communications standards.
- Create effective, accessible digital and social media content while following guidance on tagging, storytelling, and privacy.

Together, the G.L.O.W. Program and NJMIHIA Academy are building the infrastructure for sustained, equitable, and community-rooted innovation to improve maternal and infant health outcomes across New Jersey.

Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Fund

In August, NJMIHIA Chief of Innovation and Interim Fund Director launched one-on-one meetings with Advisory Council members to re-engage interest, provide an overview of the Fund structure, and discuss potential projects. NJMIHIA continues to advance these partnerships by engaging with our philanthropic partners and stakeholders to discuss alignment around potential funding concepts and opportunities that support the Authority’s mission and strategic priorities. These conversations will continue throughout Fall 2026.

On September 2, 2026, the MIHIF Advisory Council reviewed and approved the New Jersey Doula Readiness Program, a perinatal workforce development initiative.

Doula Initiatives

Since the launch of the Community-Based Doula Program in the Fall of 2025, NJMIHIA has trained 30 community-based doulas as well as 22 facilitators who will help lead future training cohorts across 11 counties, with a focus on expanding access in rural communities. This expansion has been made possible through partnership and support from the New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL).

Training Expansion Through State Partnership

NJMIHIA has executed an MOU with NJDOL to expand and sustain the NJ FamilyCare reimbursable doula workforce across 11 rural counties—Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, Cape May, Salem, Sussex, and Warren—identified by the NJ State Office of Rural Health as lacking adequate maternal and infant health services. The program will recruit 25 Doula Trainers to build a sustainable training pipeline in high-need areas. NJMIHIA is also coordinating with Family Success Centers to identify training locations, with site visits planned in Salem and Cumberland counties.



Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center

NJMIHIA is excited to have Stephen T. Martorana from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) provide an overview of the construction progress at MIHIC, highlighting recent developments and key milestones. His update will also provide the Board with a look at the exciting progress underway as the project continues to move forward.

NJMIHIA continues to advance leasing activities for the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center. The Authority remains engaged with prospective anchor tenants to support planning for future occupancy.

NJMIHIA Committees and Workgroups

NJMIHIA Workgroups

On August 26th, two NJMIHIA Board Workgroups convened – the Program, Innovation and Impact Workgroup (PII), which focuses on program development and evaluation, and Community & Health Equity Workgroup (CHE), which advises through community engagement and lived experience. The workgroups are intended to serve as informal advisory groups that provide expertise, feedback, and support aligned with NJMIHIA’s programs and strategic priorities.

NJMIHIA staff provided updates on the NJMIHIA Strategic Plan, the Community Advisory Committee, the G.L.O.W. Program and NJMIHIA Academy, the MIHIF, and solicited feedback regarding the focus of the NJMIHIA Summit. Members overwhelmingly preferred “NJMIHIA Summit: Reimagining Maternal Care Across the Lifespan” concept, which focuses on whole-person perinatal health.

New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative (NJMCQC)

NJMIHIA held its third quarterly MCQC meeting virtually on August 28, 2026, providing updates on key initiatives across NJMIHIAs four strategic priority areas, including the CAC, Go Trenton, doula programming, breastfeeding calendar, GLOW Program and grantees, Innovation Center, and Innovation Fund. Guest presentations included an update from the New Jersey Department of Health on its New Jersey State Maternal Health Innovation Program and an update from a representative from the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists on upcoming changes to maternity CPT codes.



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

NJMIHIA has launched the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC will provide a forum for community input and ensure that NJMIHIA's work is informed by the perspectives and lived experiences of birthing people, parents, caregivers, community-based organizations, and maternal health providers, particularly those serving communities experiencing the highest inequities in maternal and infant outcomes.

NJMIHIA staff continues to support the Committee's successful engagement and alignment with the Authority's mission. Staff conducted a comprehensive orientation and ambassador training program designed to familiarize members with NJMIHIA's mission, operations, governance structure, ethics requirements, communications protocols, and their role as ambassadors for the Authority's work.

The orientation and training program was held in-person on September 10th. NJMIHIA will work with the Chair and Vice Chair to establish an event schedule and framework that supports the Committee's advisory role. The CAC will meet next on December 10th.

Communications

NJ Temporary Disability and Family Leave Insurance Campaign

NJMIHIA is partnering with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOLE) and a contracted vendor on a coordinated, multilingual awareness campaign focused on Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Family Leave Insurance (FLI). The campaign aims to increase awareness and understanding of these benefits among expectant and new parents, particularly those in communities experiencing disproportionately poor maternal and infant health outcomes and individuals with limited English proficiency. Spanish voice artists have been selected, English audio takes are under review, and Haitian Creole subtitle translations are pending. NJMIHIA is also consolidating feedback on the mothers and birthing persons storyboard. From there, the vendor will develop storyboards featuring fathers and non-birthing persons, as well as a general campaign overview. Videos will move through final production in October, with all assets anticipated by November. The videos will be available in English and Spanish, with subtitles in Haitian Creole and Arabic.



Events

September 9, 2026 - Healthcare Roundtable with the National Black Empowerment Council

NJMIHIA's Chief of Innovation participated in the VITALITY: A Seat at the Table healthcare roundtable hosted by the National Black Empowerment Council. The engaging discussion provided an opportunity to share perspectives on healthcare and strengthen relationships with leaders focused on advancing health and well-being within Black communities. Following the roundtable, participants gathered for dinner and continued fellowship, relationship building, and discussion.

September 16, 2026 – FormFest 2026

NJMIHIA's Senior Program and Policy Director joined the NJ Innovation Authority as a co-presenter at FormFest 2026, a free virtual event showcasing government efforts to make services more accessible through improved forms. The presentation focused on the NJ Doula Assistant Tool, which simplifies and accelerates the NJ FamilyCare Fee-for-Service (FFS) enrollment process.

September 17, 2026 - Statewide Returning Citizens Summit

NJMIHIA participated as a tabling partner at the Statewide Returning Citizens Summit, “Shifting Power: Transforming Communities through Collective Leadership,” at Mercer County Community College in Trenton. The event brought together returning citizens, families, service providers, employers, advocates, faith leaders, and community organizations to connect participants with resources and support for successful reintegration and community well-being.

September 23, 2026 - NJ Early Relational Health Summit

The NJ Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics hosted the 2026 New Jersey Early Relational Health Summit: “Innovating for Families’ Futures” at The Palace at Somerset Park in Somerset. NJMIHIA's Chief of Innovation participated as a panelist, sharing insights on system transformation, emerging innovations, and opportunities to advance early relational health and improve outcomes for children and families across New Jersey.

September 25, 2026 - Nourishing Futures: The Impact of WIC on Breastfeeding Success

NJMIHIA's Director of External Affairs and Policy will attend the 2026 WIC Breastfeeding Conference, “Nourishing Futures: The Impact of WIC on Breastfeeding Success,” at Pines Manor in Edison. The conference highlighted WIC's efforts to increase breastfeeding rates and improve outcomes for families statewide and recognized the program's FY 2025 USDA Breastfeeding Performance Award.



September 27, 2026 - Jazz, Jeans, and Pearls Luncheon

NJMIHIA's Chief of Innovation participated at North Jersey Minerva Corporation's 5th Annual Jazz, Jeans, and Pearls Luncheon in Garwood. She delivered a brief presentation highlighting NJMIHIA's work and its alignment with Minerva's mission to address health disparities and improve health outcomes in underserved communities.

October 8, 2026 – Doula Town Hall

NJMIHIA will be hosting the fourth doula town hall will be held October 8, 2026, from 12:00 PM –3:00 PM at the Department of Children and Families' Professional Center in New Brunswick. The theme for the event is *Expanding Your Practice, Deepening Your Purpose*; in honor of Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month. The event will bring together doulas and birth workers from across the state to strengthen connections, share experiences, and discuss opportunities to further advance birth equity and community-based maternal health supports.

NJMIHIA Summit

NJMIHIA has begun planning for its first annual Summit, a statewide forum that brings together diverse stakeholders to advance maternal and infant health in New Jersey. The Summit will promote collaboration, knowledge-sharing, community engagement, and discussion of innovative approaches to improving outcomes, strengthening systems of care, supporting the perinatal workforce, and addressing maternal and infant health disparities. Planning efforts are underway to shape the event's program, partnerships, and overall vision.

Additional Projects

NJMIHIA Rides Powered by GoTrenton! and Isles

NJMIHIA Rides, powered by GoTrenton! and Isles, continues to expand as a vital transportation support for pregnant and perinatal workforce members, with free rides now extended through June 30, 2027. Launched in December 2025, in partnership with NJDOL and NJ Department of Transportation, to improve access to medical appointments, workforce services, government offices, and other essential destinations. Overall, the NJMIHIA Rides program has provided more than 5,100 rides to over 7,200 unique passengers, connecting pregnant individuals and the perinatal workforce to health care, workforce services, and other essential resources. Data for the August - September reporting period are expected the final week of September. For August alone, GoTrenton! provided over 1,500 rides serving over 2,200 passengers under NJMIHIA ride codes, demonstrating sustained increases in utilization as awareness and the program's service area continue to grow.