



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

150 West State Street, Trenton NJ 08608

Phone (609) 989-1100

**QuickTakes!**

## **The College of New Jersey to Help Lead Civic Information Consortium**

July 25, 2018

Early in July, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy approved legislation dedicating \$5 million to the Civic Information Consortium, a first-of-its-kind nonprofit with a mission to revive, strengthen and transform local media in New Jersey.

TCNJ, along with Montclair State, NJIT, Rowan and Rutgers, will lead the collaborative effort to fund the information needs of residents around New Jersey, especially in underserved communities, low-income communities and communities of color.

Endeavors will include supporting longstanding and startup news outlets alike while also launching media-literacy and civic-engagement programs.

“The Civic Info Consortium will provide TCNJ students and faculty with some wonderful opportunities to innovate in the fields of media and technology,” said TCNJ journalism professor Donna Shaw. “Among other goals, the legislation specifically calls for the funding of projects that help train students in the practice of community storytelling, journalism, and media production.”

Free Press Action Fund conceived the legislation by drawing on more than two years of community input and engagement.

“Over the last 18 months, residents around the state spoke out in support of the Civic Info Bill,” said Mike Rispoli, the state director for Free Press Action Fund. “Thousands signed petitions, called their lawmakers, attended community forums and participated in lobby days at the statehouse. Their stories about how communities have suffered from years of media consolidation were the driving force to securing millions of dollars that will strengthen local news and information in towns and cities across New Jersey.

Eligible grant proposals must show the proposed work is in collaboration with at least one of the colleges and one media, technology, or community representative.

For more information on the Free Action Press Fund, please visit <https://www.freepress.net/>

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