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June 4, 2019

Dear Victoria Foundation Grantee:

As Victoria Foundation approaches the end of a century of giving, we feel the time is right to take a step back and consider how to have the greatest possible impact in light of the needs, challenges, and opportunities Newark faces today.

Much has changed since Victoria trustees decided, in the aftermath of the 1967 rebellion, to direct most of the Foundation's giving to assist children and families in Newark. In many ways, today's Newark is a thriving city. Crime and unemployment have declined, and downtown enjoys a real estate boom. But progress is, to say the least, uneven. Most families in Newark struggle daily to make ends meet as they confront the debilitatingly narrow range of choices their economic situation offers.

The persistence of poverty and inequality in Newark, despite decades of dedicated efforts by nonprofits, community leaders, and local funders, is causing Victoria Foundation to reassess how best to use our resources. Like many of you, we are asking ourselves what we can do differently to attack the root causes of intergenerational poverty and community disinvestment. What can be done to shift the dynamics that reproduce them, year after year? History teaches us that these dynamics stem from structural and institutional racism and segregation, and that shifting them will not be easy. Trustees and staff feel the need to tackle these issues more directly and to work towards making Newark a place of broadly-shared prosperity and opportunity for all its residents.

So that we can devote our full attention to this ambitious undertaking, Victoria trustees have decided to make 2020 a year of planning and strategic assessment of the Foundation's practices. During the 2020 planning year, Victoria will pause all regular grantmaking activities and will not accept proposals for review. With this in mind, Victoria trustees will award two-year grants to most grantees in 2019, approving support for 2020 programming in advance.

We intend to use the time away from our regular grant cycle in 2020 to engage with Newark grantees, residents, civic and community leaders, other foundations, and subject-matter experts. We also will consult with our statewide environmental grantees and assess our priorities in that area. The result will be a well-thought-out plan to guide our future work.

Rest assured, in no way is our planning process aimed at diminishing the Foundation's commitment to its mission. Rather, we believe that we will be able to fulfill that mission more powerfully, as a better, stronger partner to everyone involved in the mission of helping our city and its people reach their full potential.

Change is unsettling, especially where funding is concerned. Trustees and staff recognize that all Victoria Foundation grantees are engaged in important, time-sensitive work, and we appreciate that there will be questions and concerns about our decision to take 2020 as a planning year. Please know that we will seek to make this pause in our grant cycle minimally disruptive and to schedule ample opportunities to speak with our grantees directly.

Since 1924, Victoria Foundation has awarded over \$300 million to benefit Newark and about \$30 million to protect the environment statewide. We are truly excited for the opportunity to reflect, and, in conversation with you, develop strategies that have the potential to strengthen the odds of success for Newark's children and to support a healthier, more equitable environment in New Jersey.

We look forward to engaging with you in the coming months and would like to thank you in advance for your input and support on this exciting journey.

Warmest regards,



Irene Cooper-Basch
Executive Officer



Frank Alvarez
Board President