



# Know Your Issue Project

## 2020-21 Project Plan

The following outlines our plans for bringing the *'Know Your Issue' Project* to campuses in the Bonner Network beginning this fall semester. This plan builds on the Summer 2020 Project which engaged more than 40 Bonners in a summer policy research internship.

Our long-term goal is to embed this project as an on-going community-engaged learning and service opportunity for Bonners and other students. Many students in the Bonner Program have expressed an interest in learning and doing policy research as a way to more deeply engage in community problem-solving and working towards a more just world. This project complements the *Teaching Social Action project* which teaches and engages students in the process of advocating for policy change on issues they care about.

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### 1) Know Your Issue Webinar Series

We have created a new webinar series on the Bonner Learning Community (BLC) with lessons, readings, and assignments adapted from the Summer 2020 sessions. These can be followed by individual students and/or student teams at their own pace or on a schedule set by each campus.

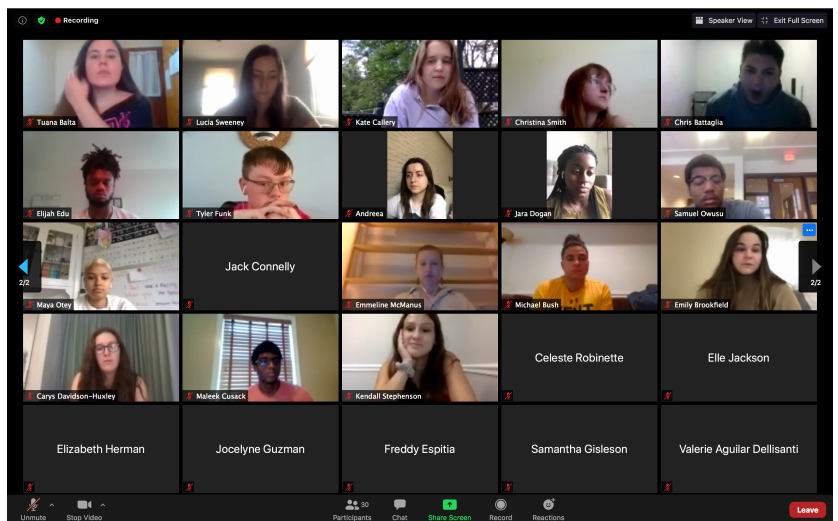
- Introduction to the "Know Your Issue" Project
- Background
- Choosing Your Issue Brief Topic
- Introduction to the Policy Options Wiki
- Starting Your Issue Brief on the Policy Options Wiki
- Researching National, State & Local Information
- Profiling Policy Options & Model Programs
- Interviewing
- Managing Your Local & State Bureaus
- Planning Your Issue Forum

The BLC platform will also serve as the central location for communication among and across participants in this project, including facilitated online discussions. The discussions will be prompted in part by assignment questions posed in the above webinar sessions. We will also use the BLC to post relevant articles, conduct some short surveys or polls, highlight some of research being done by students in the project, and announce online issue forum events for students to attend.

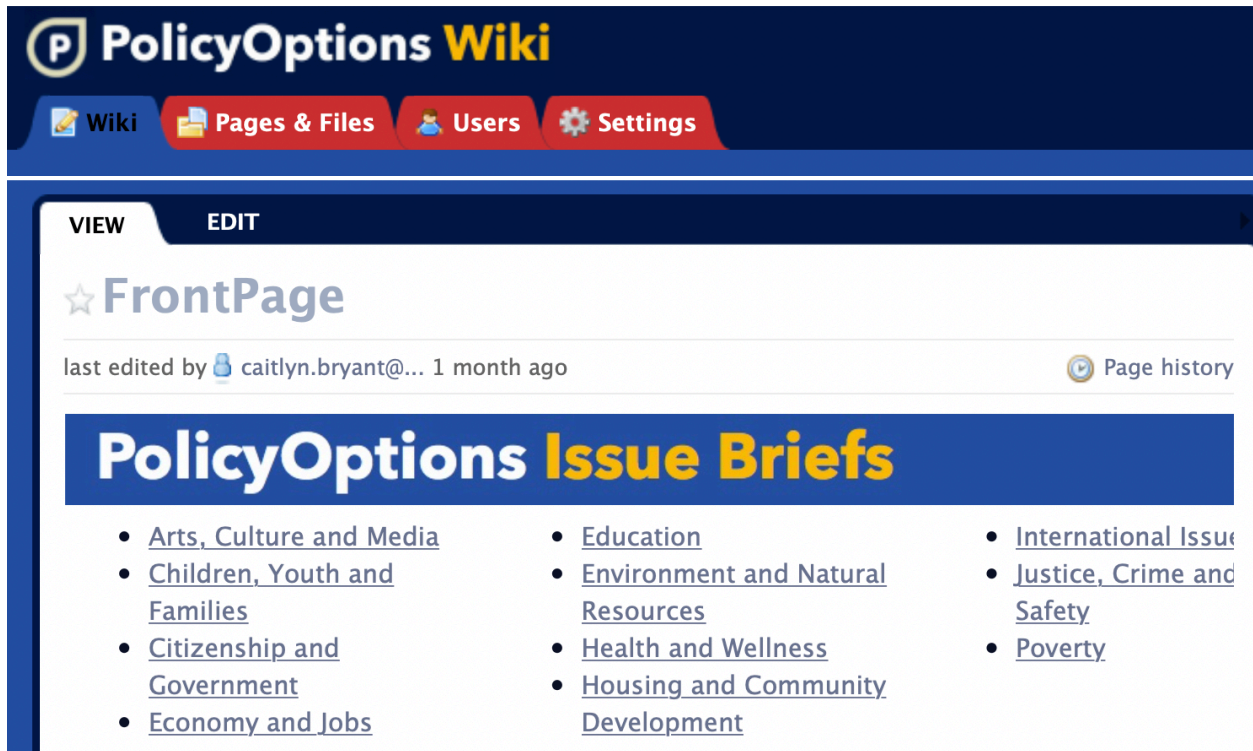
## 2) National 'Know Your Issue' Zoom Sessions

We will hold Zoom sessions every other week during the semester for students participating in this project to get to know one another, share research progress and tips, and hear from guest speakers.

We will survey the group to determine a date and time to hold our first national Zoom session.



### 3) Issue Brief Topics



The screenshot shows the 'PolicyOptions Wiki' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Wiki', 'Pages & Files', 'Users', and 'Settings'. Below this, the page title is 'FrontPage', last edited by 'caitlyn.bryant@...' 1 month ago. The main content area features a blue header for 'PolicyOptions Issue Briefs' followed by a list of topic categories:

- [Arts, Culture and Media](#)
- [Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [Citizenship and Government](#)
- [Economy and Jobs](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Environment and Natural Resources](#)
- [Health and Wellness](#)
- [Housing and Community Development](#)
- [International Issues](#)
- [Justice, Crime and Safety](#)
- [Poverty](#)

We would like to focus the issue brief topics this school year based on input from your local community partners. The easiest way to accomplish this would be to share with them a menu of potential issue brief topics related to their work (note: I can help you develop this list). With this as a starting point, your partner(s) can choose one of these topics or else use them as a starting point to suggest a topic of their own.

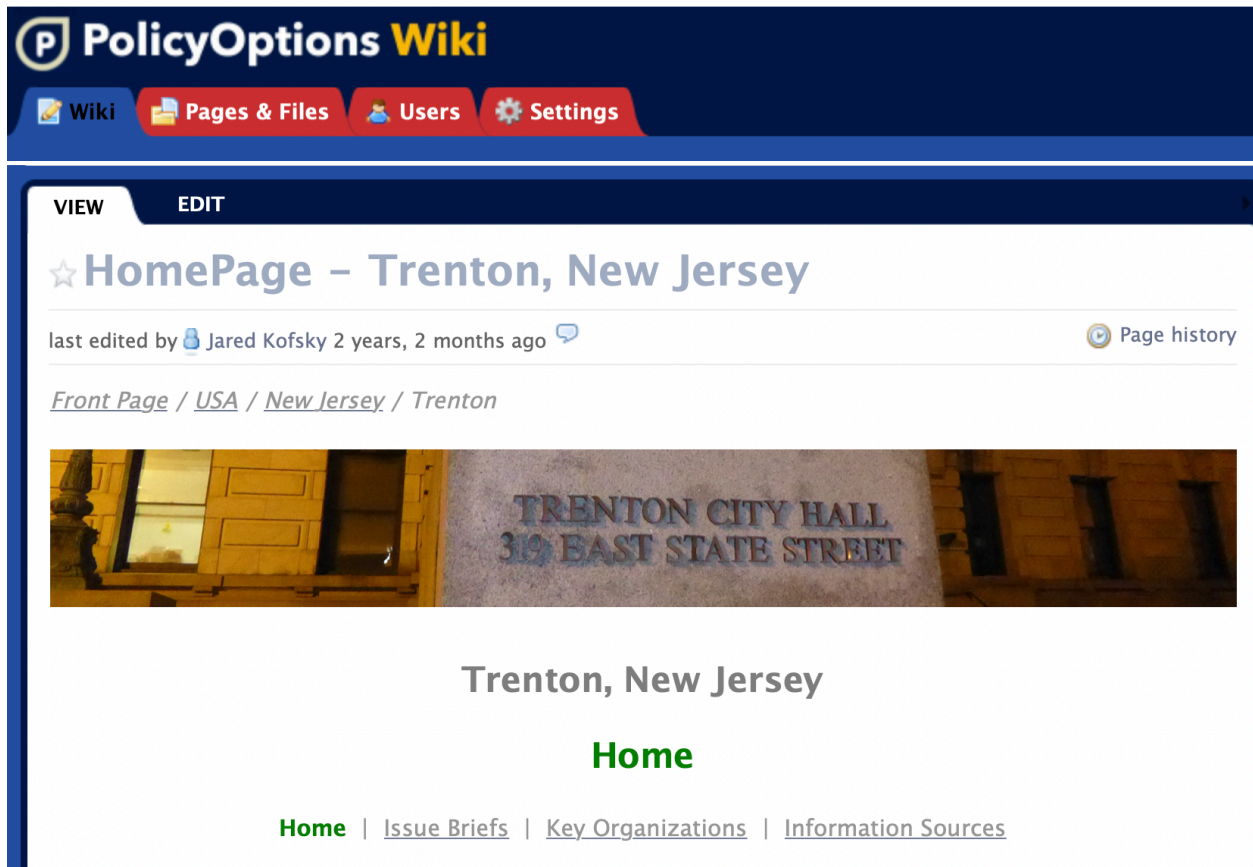
Having a 'client' or 'audience' for the issue briefs determined at the outset will ensure that the topic is focused and relevant to the needs and interests of your community partners. If this is not feasible, then we encourage you to make your own selection from among the draft set of topics you developed, prioritizing ones that address the most pressing issues in your community.

### 4) Student Research Teams

This summer we learned that most students would prefer to work in a team rather than alone, especially now that so much of our educational and services experiences are now done remotely.

Small teams of two or three students can also take on bigger topics and are more likely to complete their research on time. Finally, a group of students can more easily organize all the steps required to host an issue forum which is important goal in this project.

## 5) Local and State Policy Options Bureaus



The screenshot shows the PolicyOptions Wiki interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the 'PolicyOptions Wiki' logo and navigation buttons for 'Wiki', 'Pages & Files', 'Users', and 'Settings'. Below the header, there are tabs for 'VIEW' and 'EDIT'. The main content area features the title '★ HomePage – Trenton, New Jersey' and a sub-header 'last edited by Jared Kofsky 2 years, 2 months ago'. A breadcrumb trail reads 'Front Page / USA / New Jersey / Trenton'. A photograph of Trenton City Hall is displayed, with the text 'TRENTON CITY HALL 319 EAST STATE STREET' overlaid. Below the photo, the text 'Trenton, New Jersey' is centered, followed by a green 'Home' link. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Issue Briefs', 'Key Organizations', and 'Information Sources'.

In addition to researching issue briefs and posting them on the PolicyOptions Wiki (<http://policyoptions.pbworks.com>), your students will be updating and adding to the directory of key organizations and sources of information on your state and local bureau pages on the PolicyOptions wiki. These local and state bureau pages will make it easier to find the issue briefs related to your community and also be a valuable information source for many in your campus and community, including future students when they begin their own issue brief research.

## 6) Virtual Issue Forums

We are asking all Know Your Issue students or student teams to host a virtual issue forum related to their issue brief topic. These forums will be most easily organized for the benefit of other students in the Bonner Program (note: we encourage teams to send invitations to the entire national Bonner Network.) Of course, these forums can also engage your local community, especially when the issue brief topic was chosen in response to a community partner request or preference. In those circumstances, your student team would collaborate with your local community to organize and host the forum.

## 7) National Coordination

The **Bonner Foundation** staff (primarily Bobby Hackett) will provide the following support to this project:

- Review and approve issue brief topics (this is a critically important step to ensure that the issue briefs are not too broad or too narrow).
- Set up issue brief pages (sometimes this step can be a little tricky)
- Review and give feedback on issue brief drafts (which is why we will ask students to develop their issue brief directly on the wiki rather than on a separate Google or Word doc)
- Host a series of live Zoom sessions throughout the semester (likely on an every other week basis) to bring together all the students in the Bonner Network working on this project.

**Campus facilitators** (whether Bonner staff and/or student leaders) will:

- Recruit students
- Help define issue brief topics in collaboration with the Bonner Foundation (me)
- Set the timeline and deadlines for issue brief research progress of their students
- Set schedule and topic for campus team meetings
- Recruit faculty advisor (with the long-term goal of linking this project to a credit-bearing course)
- Join a National Steering Committee

The **National Steering Committee** will be made up of representatives from each participating campus and will:

- Review and give feedback on Know Your Issue modules and PolicyOptions Research Guide
- Convene and support cross-campus student teams that are working on common topics
- Advise and help recruit "experts" who can present at National Zoom Sessions
- Participate in regular check-in calls to assess progress of the overall project, suggest adjustments, assist with developing additional resources

## 8) How to Get Started

The first step is to contact me ([rhackett@bonner.org](mailto:rhackett@bonner.org)) to let me know that you are interested in having Bonners (and perhaps other students) participate in this project. Also, think about who on your staff and/or among your students will help facilitate this project.

Then, once you know who among your students will participate, please send their names and email addresses so we can give them accounts on the PolicyOptions Wiki and also invite them to the Know Your Issue Webinar Series on the Bonner Learning Community.

After that we can then set-up a call to talk through your plans for implementing this project this fall and perhaps into next semester. Of course, if you have any questions or ideas on how this project can work best in your Bonner Program and on your campus, please let me know.

## 9) Issue Brief Topics from Summer 2020

Below is a list of the issue brief topics that were started this past summer by Bonners who participated in the remote Know Your Issue Summer 2020 Project. Please note that these topics were chosen by students based on their personal interests and commitments, not necessarily through any direct dialogue with their community partners.

<b>Issue Area(s)</b>	<b>Issue Brief Topic</b>
<b>Economy and Jobs,Poverty</b>	Gentrification
<b>Economy and Jobs,Poverty</b>	Access to Credit and Personal Finance Training for Low Income Individuals
<b>Citizenship and Government,Economy and Jobs</b>	Immigration Reform and the Economy
<b>Economy and Jobs</b>	Youth Employment
<b>Economy and Jobs</b>	Public Transportation for Low-Income Communities
<b>Education</b>	School Choice
<b>Education</b>	School Funding
<b>Education</b>	STEM Education for Underrepresented Minorities
<b>Education</b>	Educational Technology Gap
<b>Economy and Jobs,Education</b>	Vocational Education
<b>Education</b>	Special Education Teachers
<b>Education,Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Educational Opportunities in Jails and Prisons
<b>Citizenship and Government,Education</b>	Civic Education
<b>Arts Culture and Media,Education</b>	Art Education for Low-Income Youth
<b>Children Youth and Families,Education</b>	Expanding Swim Lessons for Low-Income Children

<b>Children Youth and Families,Education</b>	Access to Recreation and Career Enrichment Opportunities for Urban Youth
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	HIV/AIDS Health Insurance Policy
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	Maternal Health
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	Reproductive Justice
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	Infant Mortality
<b>Children Youth and Families</b>	Foster Care Placements
<b>Education,Poverty</b>	Child Hunger and Nutrition
<b>Poverty</b>	Community Food Security
<b>Poverty</b>	Food Security for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
<b>Poverty</b>	Food Insecurity (Food Deserts)
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Reducing Recidivism
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Mass Incarceration
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Prisoner Re-Entry
<b>Arts Culture and Media,Citizenship and Government</b>	Misinformation Online
<b>Arts Culture and Media,Citizenship and Government</b>	Strengthening Civil Society
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Police Reform
<b>Citizenship and Government,Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Legal Aid for Undocumented Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Drug Policy Reform
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Drug Policy Reform
<b>Education,Justice Crime and Public Safety</b>	Preventing School-to-Prison Pipeline
<b>Justice Crime and Public Safety,Poverty</b>	Support for Homeless Women Who Have Experienced Sexual Assault and Abuse
<b>Poverty</b>	Family Homelessness
<b>Education</b>	Special Education Funding
<b>Health and Wellness,Poverty</b>	Urban Agriculture

## **10) Syllabus (as found in Webinar Series)**

### **Introduction & Background to the "Know Your Issue" Project**

- Background on PolicyOptions
- Audiences for Your Issue Briefs
- Bonner Learning Community Platform
- How We Will Manage the Know Your Issue Project

### **Choosing Your Issue Brief Topic**

- What Makes a Good Issue Brief Topic?
- Choosing and Narrowing Your Topic
- Working with Community Partners
- Sharing Your Issue Brief Topic

### **Starting Your Issue Brief on the PolicyOptions Wiki**

- Setting Up Your Account
- How to Edit Pages
- Content & Structure
- Using PolicyOptions Templates
- Creating New Pages Using Templates
- Guide to Creating Your Issue Brief Wiki Pages on the PolicyOptions Wiki

### **Researching National, State & Local Information**

- Key Organization Search  
Scope of the Problem
- Past Policy & Program Milestones
- Current Policy & Programs

### **Researching Policy Options & Model Programs**

- Policy Options & Model Programs
- Theory of Change, Logic Models, & Evidence-Based Programs

### **Interviewing**

- Interviewing Practitioners & Experts to Strengthen Your Issue Brief

### **Managing Your Local & State Bureaus**

- Local & State Policy Information Landscape
- Review Status of the PolicyOptions Wiki
- Using PolicyOptions Templates to Create Your Bureau Pages
- Adding Issue Brief Links
- Building Your Directory of Key Organizations
- Adding Information Sources
- Managing Your Bureau Home Page
- Organizing State & Local Bureau Teams

### **Planning Your Issue Forum**

- Brainstorming Your Issue Forum Audience & Goals

### **Big Picture**

- Welcome & Introductions
- Big Picture: Community Partners
- Big Picture: Student Development
- Big Picture: Campus Infrastructure
- Big Picture: Know Your Issue & the Bonner Strategic Plan



# New Jersey Bonner AmeriCorps 2020-21 Partners & Issue Areas

<b>HomeWorks Trenton</b>	College Access, Education, Racial Issues, Socio-emotional
<b>Shiloh</b>	Education
<b>Arm in Arm</b>	Food Security
<b>JFCS</b>	Food Security
<b>Mercer Street Friends</b>	Food Security, Education, Job skill
<b>Trenton Area Soup Kitchen</b>	Food Security, Education, Job skill
<b>Trenton Health Team</b>	Food Security, Health
<b>Capital YMCA</b>	Food Security, Health
<b>Princeton YMCA</b>	Food Security, Health, Education, College Access
<b>Elijah's Promise</b>	Food Security, Urban Agriculture, Sustainability
<b>Homefront</b>	Homelessness, Education, Food Security
<b>Isles</b>	Urban Agriculture, Sustainability

## **Education**

- **College Access**  
– HomeWorks, Princeton YMCA
- **K-12** – Shiloh, Princeton YMCA

## **Poverty**

- **Food Security** – Arm in Arm, Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, Homefront, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Capital YMCA, Princeton YMCA, Elijah's Promise
- **Urban Agriculture** – Elijah's Promise, Isles

## **Economy & Jobs**

- **Job Skills** – Mercer Street Friends, TASK,

**Health & Wellness** – Trenton Area Health Team, Capital YMCA

## **Environment & Natural Resources**

- **Sustainability** – Elijah's Promise, Isles
- **Urban Agriculture** – Elijah's Promise, Isles