2026 BACK 2 SCHOOL STORE FACT SHEET

GOAL: To provide essential school items, clothing and more to children in financial need through an empowering shopping experience so they can return to school excited, confident and ready to learn.

DATE: August 2, 2026

LOCATION: Livingston, NJ

CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM THE BACK 2 SCHOOL STORE
Approximately 1,000 children, grades K-5, receive a NEW and FREE outfit (shirt, pants, a winter jacket), underwear, socks, hat, gloves and sneakers. They also receive a new backpack, school supplies, personal care and hygiene items and books. At the same time, their guardians visit the Gaelen Family Resource Center to access complimentary menstrual products and health screenings, information about career and family services, food resources, voting and other community programs. With food insecurity on the rise, a food gift card to a local grocery store will also be distributed to each family.

A DAY OF COLLABORATION AND SERVICE FOR VOLUNTEERS
Hundreds of community volunteers participate in a meaningful day of in-person direct service, led by an all-volunteer committee that works year-round to shop, prepare and run the store.

THE MODEL
Children attend a one-day pop-up "department store" where they are guided by a Volunteer Personal Shopper as they "shop" for their own clothing and supplies. The Back 2 School Store aims to empower each child with choice, and we always have sufficient stock and variety on hand to make sure they have stylish and size appropriate options. For many children, this may be the first time they choose exactly what they like, take home an outfit with a sales tag still attached or where they don't have to worry that their parents are spending too much.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?
NCJW/Essex seeks monetary donations, in-kind donations and other support from local and national companies, foundations, community service groups and individuals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SPONSORSHIPS AND THE BACK 2 SCHOOL STORE
Caitlin Higgins Joy, NCJW/Essex Executive Director
chigginsjoy@ncjwessex.org or 973-740-0588

JOIN US AS A VOLUNTEER
Make a difference in a child's life—volunteer at the Back 2 School Store! Volunteers at the in-person Store are required to complete a background screening. For more information, contact Lisa Golodner, NCJW/Essex Manager of Engagement & Community Impact
lgolodner@ncjwessex.org or 973-740-0588

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW/Essex strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. NCJW is a 501(C) (3) corporation; all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Visit www.ncjwessex.org to learn more.

SPONSOR THE NCJW/ESSEX 2026 BACK 2 SCHOOL STORE!

The Back 2 School Store empowers Essex County, NJ school children, grades K-5, in financial need with *free, brand-new* clothing, school supplies and other necessities. We create an empowering, real-world "shopping" experience that fosters excitement about learning, helping children to focus and succeed in school without concern about their family's ability to afford back-to-school items.

Back-to-school costs, averaging nearly $900 per child, are often overlooked as a major expense, especially for those living in poverty. Approximately 17% of Essex County families are living below poverty level, and recent economic challenges are causing dramatic rises in the number of families whose most basic needs are not being met. The Back 2 School Store aims to make going back to school the joyful, exciting time it should be for children who are experiencing these challenges.

2026 marks the 18th year of this annual event. We have served more than 13,254 children, partnering with 40+ community and social service agencies each year to identify recipients who will benefit most. In August 2026, we plan to serve another 1,000 children. Hundreds of community volunteers will participate in this meaningful day of in-person direct service, alongside an all-volunteer committee that works year-round to prepare for and run the Store.

Each child shops for clothing (winter coat, shirt, pants, hat, gloves, socks, underwear, sneakers), a backpack filled with school supplies, age-appropriate books, personal care items such as dental kits and other necessities with the help of a trained Volunteer Personal Shopper.

While the Back 2 School Store empowers children, it also uplifts their guardians. As children shop, caregivers visit the Gaelen Family Resource Center to receive critical information and community resources. The 2025 Center featured 13 exhibitors who shared resources including: onsite health screenings (blood pressure, diabetes, vision and hearing and CPR demos); complimentary menstrual products; information about area food services, voting registration, career and family services and more. Additionally, we provide each family with a food gift card to a local grocery store to help ease the increasing hunger in our community.

When children have the materials they need, they are more likely to be excited about learning. By supplying school necessities, personal care items and community resources, students become more confident and better positioned to learn and to combat some of the hurdles poverty creates in achieving their academic potential. ***Your sponsorship of the 2026 Back 2 School Store will help ensure students in need have the critical items necessary to thrive in the upcoming school year!***

Additional information on sponsorship opportunities is attached or you can visit www.ncjwessex.org to learn more. You may also contact Caitlin Higgins Joy, NCJW/Essex Executive Director, at 973-740-0588 or chigginsjoy@ncjwessex.org.

2026 SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES

***Commit to making a difference**. Help support more than 1,000 students and their families in your community with your sponsorship. All sponsors are recognized through a listing on the NCJW/Essex Back 2 School Store website and on event signage. All sponsors are invited to provide branded item(s) as giveaways for families. Sponsor and provide your logo by June 15 for inclusion on printed materials.*

PLATINUM SPONSOR (1 Available)

$25,000 and above

- EXCLUSIVE PRESENTING SPONSOR of the 2026 Back 2 School Store
- LOGO printed on vibrant tote bags for each child to use while shopping and beyond
- VOLUNTEERING: 10 reserved slots, with opportunity to register additional volunteers
- PHOTO of volunteers at Back 2 School Store for NCJW/Essex and Sponsor media purposes
- RECEIVE a post-event report, including pictures and testimonials from families served
- Promotional Benefits:
    - Primary placement in sponsorship listings (print and digital) and Step & Repeat
    - Recognition through NCJW/Essex social media
    - Verbal recognition at each Back 2 School Store Committee Meeting (36 members)
    - Recognition in post-event NCJW/Essex recap of Back 2 School Store (shared with approximately 1,500 contacts)
    - Press release and social media templates, upon request

GOLD SPONSOR (7 Available)

$10,000 - $24,999

- EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES with department or related signage:
    1. Shopper Welcome Area
    2. Food Cards (*each family receives a gift card to a local grocery store*)
    3. Backpack & School Supplies Department
    4. Coats Department
    5. Clothing Department - Shirts
    6. Clothing Department - Pants
    7. Sneaker Department
- VOLUNTEERING: 8 reserved slots, with opportunity to register additional volunteers
- PHOTO of volunteers at Back 2 School Store for NCJW/Essex and Sponsor media purposes
- Promotional Benefits:
    - Secondary placement in sponsorship listings (print and digital) and Step & Repeat
    - Recognition in post-event NCJW/Essex recap of Back 2 School Store (shared with approximately 1,500 contacts)
    - Press release and social media templates, upon request

2026 SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES

SILVER SPONSOR (Unlimited)
$5,000 - $9,999

- NON-EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES with department or related signage:
    1. Hats and Gloves Department
    2. Underwear Department
    3. Child Pickup Room
    4. Picture Yourself… Ready for School! *(photo-taking station)*
- VOLUNTEERING: 6 reserved slots, with opportunity to register additional volunteers
- PHOTO of volunteers at Back 2 School Store
- Promotional Benefits:
    - Inclusion on Step & Repeat
    - Press release and social media templates, upon request

BLUE SPONSOR (Unlimited)
$2,500 - $4,999

- VOLUNTEERING: 4 reserved slots, with opportunity to register additional volunteers
- PHOTO of volunteers at Back 2 School Store
- Promotional Benefits:
    - Inclusion on Step & Repeat
    - Press release and social media templates, upon request

GREEN SPONSOR (Unlimited)
$1,000 - $2,499

- VOLUNTEERING: 2 reserved slots, with opportunity to register additional volunteers
- Promotional Benefits:
    - Inclusion on Step & Repeat
    - Press release and social media templates, upon request

Should you wish to make an in-kind donation to the 2026 Back 2 School Store, please reach out to Caitlin Higgins Joy at chigginsjoy@ncjwessex.org. ***All in-kind donors are recognized on the NCJW/Essex Back 2 School Store website and on event signage.*** *Please provide your logo by June 15 for inclusion on printed materials.*

Gifts in any amount to the NCJW/Essex Back 2 School Store are deeply appreciated! Visit www.ncjwessex.org to make an individual donation.

On behalf of the children we serve, thank you!

BACK 2 SCHOOL Store
a project of NCJW/Essex

2026 STEERING COMMITTEE

ANDREA RAKITTA MINTZ, PRESIDENT
LAUREN TABAK FASS, VICE PRESIDENT
CAITLIN HIGGINS JOY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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TRAINING
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TREASURER
Sherri Fendelman

VOLUNTEERS
Susie Botwinick
Laurie Schuftan

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN

What People Are Saying About the NCJW/Essex Back 2 School Store

"The girls and I can't thank you and your team enough for the wonderful school supplies and clothes!!! [Child] loves her jacket, outfit, gloves, hat and bookbag! The school supplies are perfect, and [Child] is SO happy to be so well prepared to start school! This support is beyond helpful, saves me from some financial stressors, and is very much appreciated."
Back 2 School Store Parent

"[To] see the children's faces when they finish their shopping melts my heart."
Back 2 School Store Partner Agency

"I took pride in helping the children find outfits they would love because it was a special day for them… but what I didn't realize was how much it would be a special day for me." *NCJW/Essex Volunteer*

"I am so appreciative of all the hard work you all put into ensuring children get the additional support needed in preparation for getting back to school. My families who attend were extremely grateful… The work you all put into this project is extreme dedication and love. Everything was well organized, and the family attendees had a wonderful time."
Back 2 School Store Partner Agency

Additional information and sponsorship opportunities:
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