



## COVID-19 Grantee Spotlight: Newtown Florist Club



The Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) has listed Hall County-Gainesville, home to the [Newtown Florist Club](#) (NFC) nonprofit, as having the sixth highest number of positive cases in the state. As of April 29, the number of confirmed cases in Georgia reached 26,173, including 1,312 in Hall County; 1,124 have died statewide, including 21 in Hall County. North Georgia Health Systems, the county medical center is treating 181 patients with confirmed cases. **This rate places our county in the most severe category as determined by the GDPH.**

*“Without a conversation around race, aggressive testing and strategies to inform at-risk populations of COVID-19’s impact on their communities, life in Hall County will worsen dramatically.”*

Rose Johnson, Executive Director,  
Newtown Florist Club

As medical center staff work tirelessly to keep the community informed, recent published statements by the health system underscore a concern for the lack of staff capacity needed as the hospital anticipates reaching its peak by June.

Prior to the Pandemic, the Gainesville community faced severe problems: a lack of affordable housing, homelessness, and hunger. More than 600 families (parents with school age children) are living in cramped hotel rooms, cars, and even in the woods. Access to quality health care has also been a constant challenge for those without health insurance who often wait to seek medical attention until conditions worsen.

The greatest threat to public health in Black and Brown communities is the lack of free COVID-19 testing. Without access to aggressive, free testing and treatment in our communities, the likelihood of the virus continuing to spread out of control is the danger we face today and tomorrow.

In response to COVID-19, NFC is building upon efforts to:

- increase the availability of free testing in communities of color;
- educate low income residents about the importance of sheltering in place;
- serve as a community base resource for people to call with questions;
- maintain a list of resource providers for community residents to access food, get help paying utilities and ease eviction concerns;
- distribute essential supplies to the most vulnerable, and
- provide limited financial support to families with children who face challenges caused by food shortages.

In the coming weeks NFC will also convene online Community Conversations about the impact of COVID-19 in the African American community. We are working to bring community stakeholders together to discuss the reality of over 8,000 African Americans testing positive for COVID-19, exceeding any other racial group in the state, [according to the GDPH](#).

**For more information or to submit a donation, please contact Southern Partners Fund or the Newtown Florist Club.**

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Established 1950

*Our mission is to promote youth development and to organize for social, economic and environmental justice in Gainesville-Hall County, Georgia.*

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