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Office of the Secretary of Higher Education Announces \$1 Million to Rutgers University to Establish State Policy Lab

The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) today announced that Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, will receive a total of \$1 million in funding to establish a state-of-the-art policy lab that will provide timely and thoughtful analysis of policy-based solutions and issues facing New Jersey.

“As we look toward economic recovery post COVID-19, we’ll need new and smart government policies to emerge as a stronger, fairer, and more resilient New Jersey,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “Partnering with Rutgers University, today’s funding will invest in transformational research and analysis that will advance positive and lasting impact to ensure a prosperous future for all New Jerseyans.”

“High-quality research and analysis is crucial to ensure New Jersey remains at the center of innovation. This will be even more critical as our economy recovers from the pandemic, as the Policy Lab will examine how to address long-term issues facing the State and improve the lives of New Jerseyans,” **said Dr. Brian Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education**. “I look forward to Rutgers’ leadership in this high quality research endeavor.”

Governor Murphy’s Fiscal Year 2021 budget allocated \$1 million to establish and operate a policy lab at a New Jersey research institution. The main purposes of the State Policy Lab are to:

- Provide policy-makers throughout New Jersey with clear and accessible research on state and local governance as well as public decision-making and assist stakeholders in troubleshooting unanticipated policy implementation issues;
- Generate data modeling for policy recommendations to enable state policymakers to test different budgetary and legislative scenarios; and
- Build coalitions across governments, institutions of higher education, and community organizations to support evidence-based policy initiatives.

The State Policy Lab will be housed in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, New Brunswick and will include expertise from a network of scholars, community members and external policy experts. Rutgers University identified additional partners in this work, including the School of Public Administration and Affairs (SPAA) at Rutgers University-Newark, Walter Rand Institute (Camden), the Cornwall Center (Newark), the Eagleton Institute for Public Interest Polling (New Brunswick), the Center for Urban Research & Education (Camden), the Rutgers Law School Center on Law, Inequality, and Metropolitan Equity, Kean University, and New Jersey Institute of Technology.

The State Policy Lab will utilize an equity framework to analyze policies and programs with the goal of identifying improvements that benefit all residents, particularly those from low-income backgrounds and those who have been historically disadvantaged.

“Rutgers-New Brunswick and its Bloustein School have always focused on serving the people of New Jersey,” **said Christopher J. Molloy, Rutgers-New Brunswick Chancellor.** “We are proud to collaborate with the state on this partnership, which provides another important venue by which our world-class research will help enhance the quality of life in the Garden State.”

“The policy lab and its capabilities will provide the data necessary for New Jersey residents to understand significant decisions made by policy-makers and allow them to recognize how they impact taxpayers,” **said Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker, Chairman of the Assembly Science, Innovation and Technology Committee.** “With clear and accessible research, we will be able to test various scenarios, and further evaluate if legislative measures or budget proposals are beneficial for State and local governments and more importantly the nine million residents of New Jersey.”